

NORTHERN REGIONAL UMPIRING COMMITTEE



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BRITISHROWING
NORTHERN REGION

Report to the Northern Rowing Council Executive 21st September 2020.

MEETINGS OF COMMITTEE

None since last report.

UMPIRING MATTERS

Tyne Single Scullers Head went ahead as a British Rowing test competition on 20th September. This was fully supported by the Northern Region umpires many of whom were on duty in addition to umpires from the British Rowing Return to Rowing team. Initial observations are noted later in this document but it must be stressed that these are raw umpiring observations and may differ from any British Rowing reports which are looking at the whole competition from a Return to Rowing perspective.

From 10th October a wider return to competition is allowed nationally. The regional umpiring community is aware of this and has broadly indicated a willingness to take part. Each individuals circumstances are different and all NRUC communications issued have mentioned that no-one should feel compelled to take part. We are obviously interested to hear of any barriers preventing a return to umpiring but will not press for anyone to provide information.

The Northern Region Autumn umpiring seminar was due to run on 20th September. This clashed with the revised date for TSSH and unfortunately the seminar was cancelled as a result. We are considering whether it is feasible to re-arrange but preparations for a wider return to racing may preclude this.

NATIONAL ISSUES

The NUC met on 15th September. The main focus of the meeting was "Return to Racing" and it was agreed that a key to success of all competitions was to broadly share good ideas (and less good ones) to allow later competitions to adjust plans accordingly. Also noted that each competition is very different in terms of location, nearby facilities, river and local authorities so there is no one-size-fits-all way of organising things.

The NUC working groups generally reported slow progress over the July/August vacation period. The exam working group has however completed updates to the online umpiring quiz required for the licence renewal deadline. The other groups are starting to return to business and expect more reports of progress by the next NRC meeting.

Rules of Racing. Due to a typesetting error the 2020 Rules of Racing was missing a section on Heel Restraints. In section 7-2-8 "Equipment Check" did not contain the wording for foot release where the shoes remain in the boat (rather than detaching from the footplate) in the event of emergency egress. The rule remains unchanged from 2019 specifically that it should not rise above the horizontal position before the foot is released from the shoe.

A corrected version of the rules has been placed on the British Rowing website. You can find that via "Events" -> "Entering Competitions" -> "Rules of Racing". In addition BR have added a new, permanent, short URL that will always take you to the latest copy of the rules <https://www.britishrowing.org/rulespdf>

For convenience the appropriate wording is below (missing section highlighted by me in bold).

- Foot Release. In all boats the foot stretchers, shoes or other devices holding the feet of the rowers shall be a type which allows the rowers to get clear of the boat with no delay in an emergency.
- **Where shoes or other devices holding the feet will remain in the boat, each shoe or device shall be independently restrained such that when the heel reaches the horizontal position the foot will be released from the shoe.**

- Where shoes or other devices holding the feet will not remain in the boat, each shoe or device must be able to be released by the rower without using their hands or with a single quick hand action of pulling on one easily accessible strap or release device.
- In addition, where laces, Velcro or similar materials must be opened before the rower can remove their feet from the shoes or other device, all such materials must be able to be released immediately by the rower with a single quick hand action of pulling on one easily accessible strap

TYNE SINGLE SCULLERS HEAD

This report primarily contains raw, personal, observations of the Tyne Single Scullers Head from an umpiring perspective. Members of the British Rowing "Return to Rowing" (Racing) team were at the competition and they will be producing a report/guidance based on a full view of Covid related issues.

Points:

- The TSSH team engaged with the NRUC early in the planning process. We met a number of times with them and other regional competition organisers to discuss specific and common areas that would need addressing. The TSSH team were responsive and have taken issues into account.
- Documentation was excellent. A few individuals expressed a desire for detailed start and finish area maps and we would suggest that these are added for 2021 and beyond.
- Upon arrival on site it was very clear that mask use and similar was expected to be the norm. All the parking marshals (and indeed all the competition marshals) were wearing masks throughout the whole day. On entry to any building (mainly toilet purposes) a marshal was on hand to politely remind anyone to wear a mask.
Noted that masks were used at control commission and at start and finish locations amongst others.
- Control commission boat checks were primarily performed in the boat preparation areas rather than at landing stages. This seemed to work well and allowed elimination of queues for boating. This may be less practical with larger numbers of boats – or may take two people one to control boating and one to check boats.
- Control commission boat checks were mainly conducted by visual inspection and where appropriate by asking competitors to demonstrate heel restraints etc. It was reported that a few competitors did not know how to check restraints – we should remind clubs/coaches that this is an important thing to teach.
- Boating was very smooth and ran to time. The reduced competitor numbers undoubtedly helped that and future competition organisers will need to consider numbers to allow for this.
- Noted that competitors (and officials) did leave the site promptly after racing. What would normally have been a busy area looked rather empty at times.
- Spectators had largely stayed away as required by local lockdown rules. A couple were spectating on Newburn Bridge in division one. The appropriate club were spoken to and will be having words with those involved. The Race Committee decided that no further action was required. This was an isolated incident and did not recur in later divisions.
- At one stage a group of competitor chaperones/boating helpers were asked to space themselves out. They were waiting, individually, to help with de-boating near a set of steps.
- One club reported that single scullers without boating helpers had difficulty attaching paper numbers onto their back. It requires a little bit of forethought to attach especially when changing facilities are limited.
- At times landing marshals did need to get "hands on" with a few boats to assist mainly with de-boating. Unfamiliar landing stages can be an issue even with a crew boating helper present.
- The organisers took note of our request to have "back" numbers on each crew. This definitely helped for spotting crews, especially at the finish.
- Spotting crew numbers at the start was somewhat difficult. The crews were against the far bank and that combined with the lack of dedicated start timing spotter caused difficulties especially in division 1

when everyone was rusty. Once Covid mitigations can be relaxed it would be useful to add the extra people back into both start and finish timing teams.

- Results collation and QA took slightly longer than normal especially in division 1. No concerns noted and primarily down to: the enforced layoff period/being rusty; not having the timing teams direct to hand to answer questions regarding what happened (distancing mitigations); and the block of misclicks due to spotting difficulties. The team was happy that the issued results were correct once the circumstances had been investigated/mitigated.
- Some umpires mentioned that they had got cold over the course of the day due to not being able to access the buildings to get warm between divisions. Whilst only a mild issue now it is likely to be more of an issue as we get into winter. It may be that umpires/marshals will only be able to cover part of the day so that needs factoring into staffing requirements.