

# NORTHERN

## REGIONAL UMPIRING COMMITTEE



Chairman: Dr. R. Mortimer Vice-Chairman: Mr. C. Curtis Secretary: Dr. D. Jones  
Members: Mr. M. Bell, Ms. L. Forster, Dr. P. Hoare, Mr. J. Mulholland, Dr. A. Oakenfull, Mrs. L. Pain

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Report to the Northern Rowing Council Executive 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022.

### **MEETINGS OF COMMITTEE**

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17<sup>th</sup> January 2022. Full committee present. The committee discussed a range of topics as we move from the head racing season and begin to prepare for regatta racing. Training matters took up a large portion of the meeting as we prepare to address the pre-existing shortfall and additional deficit with the lack of new umpires over the 2 years of Covid.

### **UMPIRING MATTERS**

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The head racing season has so far gone mainly incident free. A few issues have been raised and these have been progressed with the various Organising Committees and the associated Race Committees. Where appropriate the NRUC has provided feedback on matters of best practice and improvement for future competitions.

NRUC members have been reviewing the Notice of Competitions (posters) and supporting documentation for upcoming competitions. Thank you to the various organising committees for providing this in good time before entries open.

Looking forward the NRUC notes the following:

clubs must remember that boat safety checks should be a standard part of every outing. In particular bow balls and heel restraints are the most common failures at competitions. We have some concerns that larger boats (eights and fours) may not have been used in competitions for some time. Please make sure you check your boat over before race day!

we remind clubs that published boating times are there to enable the smooth running of a competition and to equalise the time that crews at the beginning and end of the start order spend on the water. The onus is on the club/crew to boat on time. In absence of instructions to the contrary a crew should be boating at the specified time.

over the past 18 months the NRUC has been sanctioning local rules that permit self-certification of cox weights with spot checks on compliance. With Covid restrictions easing we feel that this is no longer justified and do not plan to approve local rules on self-certification after 1<sup>st</sup> April when the 2022 Rules of Racing come into force. We do of course suggest that weighing is done in a Covid secure way to minimise the risk of cross infection.

we remind clubs that they should be racing in their official club colours as registered with British Rowing. Consistent kit and blade colours are key tools that race officials use to help identify crews at a distance. In exceptional circumstances Control Commission may allow a crew to wear plain colours (usually white) but this is at the discretion of the Organising Committee and Race Committee.

On a similar note the competition entries team tries to be accommodating when last minute changes are necessary, particularly those due to Covid, but we do note that some clubs are making a rather large number of changes after entries close, generally resulting in time-only crews. Please note this takes a lot of time to administer and we ask that changes requiring entries team processing (normal substitutions are fine) are kept to a minimum. If this continues at current levels we will suggest that organising committees stop being flexible to keep volunteer effort within reasonable bounds.

### **TRAINING AND RENEWALS**

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As of 1<sup>st</sup> January the region had 24 qualified umpires with two retirements in 2021 and one umpire moving away to another region. Thanks to Dilwyn Jones for guiding the ten umpires whose licenses were up for their periodic renewal. One umpire still has to complete their renewal and is currently suspended from the

We recognise that this is the lowest number of umpires in our region this century and thus presents a high risk that we may have to cancel affiliated competitions due to lack of available umpires. In order to mitigate this we are proactively inviting umpires from other regions (mainly the adjacent Yorkshire and North West) to our competitions.

Our target continues to be that each club should have two licensed umpires per day of competition that the club organises. If we achieve this target then all of our competitions should be comfortably staffed. Clubs that do not organise competitions are also welcome to provide umpires to the regional pool.

We are making steps to progress ongoing trainees and to bring additional candidates into the system. We plan to conduct umpiring theory exams for a small number of candidates during the day of Durham Small Boats Head on 5<sup>th</sup> February. In addition to this we will be running a number of theory refresher and full theory courses prior to the end of April with a view for conducting theory exams for those prior to the start of the regatta season.

The bulk of the practical season will take place during the regatta season and we hope to conduct theory exams for some existing candidates early in the season and hope to have at least some new candidates ready for practical exam prior to the end of the regatta season. This is of course contingent on competitions being able to go ahead without Covid, weather or other adverse factors affecting causing cancellation.

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## **NATIONAL ISSUES**

Richard Mortimer attended the National Umpiring Committee (Zoom) meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> January. A variety of topics were covered with key highlights below.

Progress has been made on the national umpiring theory exam. The Northern Region has been asked to trial the new online exam between now and 1<sup>st</sup> April. We hope to get the bulk of our candidates examined in this time and will provide feedback to the other regions to help the national rollout of the online exam.

The 2022 Rules of Racing are undergoing final committee approvals pending formal approval by the British Rowing Board. Changes for 2022 are fairly minimal and are mainly clarifications and consistency adjustments. Of particular interest the masters handicap start procedure will be simplified to remove much of the explanation of the countdown from each start – masters competitors are expected to know the start procedures in the same way that other competitors are expected to know them. Clubs and coaches should ensure that competitors are aware of the start procedure as part of the preparation for racing. The NRUC can help where appropriate.

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## **EQUIPMENT**

We still have not identified a supplier for additional Yellow Umpiring jackets. We hope that the Northern Rowing Council is still willing to fund the purchase of additional jackets to allow us to provide kit for newly qualified umpires in the coming months.