

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

Report to the Northern Regional Rowing Council Executive 19th June 2023.

MEETINGS OF COMMITTEE

The NRUC has not met formally since the last NRRC executive meeting. General competition specific matters have been discussed via email as appropriate.

UMPIRING MATTERS

The regatta season is now drawing to a close competitions have for the most part run smoothly. Thanks to the individual organising committees for their diligence in preparing things in advance of race day.

The number of Control Commission Boat Safety Check failures provides cause for concern. The checks prior to boating are intended to act as a final quality assurance check and not as a primary safety mechanism. As an example at Durham Regatta around 15% of 550 crews had a boat inspection failure. Breakdown as follows:

By Failure Type		By Club	
Heel Restraint	52	TYN	9
Bow Ball	10	SHB	8
Cox PFD incorrectly fitted or loosely worn	10	COC, YRM	6
Hatches, Seals & Covers	7	DUS, UYO	5
Missing Backstay	4	BTL, DUB, DUR	4
Missing boat ID	2	CSH, CSN, GRC, LAU, SCH, SHU	3
Top nut/Footplate loose	2	HAT, LDU, NRC, QEH, SCB	2
Unknown	2	AID, CBS, HDN, NEW, NUN, SJC, SMC, TEE, 1	1
PFD cylinder not tight	1	TRV, UCD	
No buoyancy compartments	1		
Rudder/Steering	1		

We should also remind clubs that boat ID is a British Rowing Regulation and not just part of the Rules of Racing. The above list contains Boat IDs from at least two non-Northern Region clubs that did not compete at the Regatta. Whilst the boats may have been borrowed it equally could be the case that boats have not been assigned new IDs when they have been bought by different clubs. Points 6.5 and 6.6 of the 2022 British Rowing Regulations are applicable.

“6.5 All boats being used from Clubs for racing, training, and recreation, including private craft, safety and coaching launches shall be identifiable by the three letter code, as issued by British Rowing, together with a three digit fleet number (including zeros) as determined by the Club. The lettering shall be in capitals, in a regular sans serif font, with a minimum height of 6cm and clearly readable (in a contrasting colour) on both port and starboard saxboards, or vertical surface.”

“6.6. Clubs must keep, readily available, an up-to-date list of their fleet number/boat reference, including that issued to any member with a privately owned boat. Club members with private craft who move Clubs must change the identification code to that issued by their new Club before taking to the water.”

A number of instances of crews, coaches, clubs not following the Competition Local Rules have resulted in crews getting disqualified. Can we remind clubs that Local Rules exist for good reason and rules prohibiting cycling in particular exist to stop members of the public getting injured if a coach or supporter becomes too engrossed in following a race. Serious or repeated breaches of Local Rules could result in an entire club being disqualified or in fines being imposed should the relevant Race Committee (senior umpires at a competition) deem it appropriate.

A reminder that Entry Fees are generally due to be paid by close of entries. A number of competitions have noted that some clubs take many reminders before they pay. Some competitions have shown good will and allowed competitors to race pending late payment of entry fees however some clubs seem to be making this standard practice and this is not acceptable. Please show consideration to the Organising Committees/Entries Teams and pay promptly.

Finally a reminder to clubs/coaches to consider whether crews are ready to race before entering them into competitions. Whilst crews do need to learn and things do go wrong from time to time coaches need to be mindful whether a crew is ready to race. 12 races at Durham Regatta took 2.5 hours of racing time on the Saturday in near perfect racing conditions. This contributed to delays for all and is difficult for any timetable to mitigate against.

TRAINING AND RENEWALS

Congratulations to Izzy Friedlander who qualified for a National Umpiring License on Thursday 25th May.

Two more trainees have been offered exams and we hope to schedule these within the next 10 days. One more is expected to be offered an exam following successful training sessions at Talkin Tarn Regatta.

The remaining trainees have undertaken limited practical training during the regatta season and thus will be unlikely to qualify until the 2024 regatta season at the earliest.

The take up and training of umpires continues to be a concern. We have a limited window for training (around two months) and candidates need to attend many of the competitions to get sufficient practice to qualify. The: cancellation of Chester-le-Street Spring, conversion of Chester-le-Street Autumn into a head race; and likely disaffiliation of Durham Autumn Sprint all reduce our capacity to train new umpires. We may have to insist on candidates committing to most regional competitions within a season to improve our rate of completion.

NATIONAL ISSUES

The National Umpiring Committee has selected a new chair following the retirement of Sam Simons at the end of his maximum two three year terms. The new chair requires ratification by the British Rowing Board and is expected to take post following the next board meeting on 3rd July.

A series of videos on Start Umpire and bank-based Race Umpire techniques/procedures is about to be released by the National Umpiring Committee. It was originally hoped these would have been released before the start of the regatta season but filming, production and review delays have conspired to delay release until now. Once released these will be a good resource for both trainees and already licensed umpires alike.

RULES OF RACING

The 2023 Rules of Racing came into force on 1st April. No particular issues have been noted with the changes. Competitions/competitors have adjusted to the new cox weight requirements for Women's crews.

The British Rowing Board meeting in May signalled that it was not making any changes to the rules on gender eligibility at this moment. If any changes are made they will be announced ahead of time to give competitors and competitions chance to evaluate and adjust to the changed rules.

EQUIPMENT

Following questions regarding the suitability of the yellow jackets we have discussed the matter with some of the umpires involved in earlier purchase runs. General consensus is that the new jackets are suitable and we would propose to progress the purchase in due course.