

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 29th April 2024.

MEETINGS OF COMMITTEE

The NRUC met via Zoom on 19th February 2024. Agenda items included reviewing the head racing season so far, considering cox weighing regimes and preparing for training umpires in the upcoming regatta season.

SEMINAR

The regional spring umpiring seminar took place on Wednesday 10th April 2024. Topic covered included: cox weighing; rules of racing changes; start procedure; safety and radio protocols. An autumn seminar is planned for Sunday 15th September.

RULES OF RACING

The 2024 Rules of Racing came into force on 1st April 2024. Changes are relatively minor and mainly clarify technical aspect of rules. The Rules officially recognise digital membership cards and day tickets as being the primary way for competitors to demonstrate their racing licence to competition staff. The post of Competition Welfare Officer has been formally added to the rules. This post was previously required in general British Rowing Regulations but is now listed in the Rules to make it clear who is responsible for preparing and overseeing implementation of welfare plans for a competition.

COX WEIGHING

Cox weighing was raised as an issue at the NRRC AGM. Since then the NRUC has considered the issue and has consulted with the National Umpiring Committee regarding the requirements and application of the Rules of Racing in this regard. It is clear that British Rowing sees the issue of cox minimum weights as a key cox welfare issue. Clear feedback has been received that it is appropriate to continue to weigh coxes at all competitions.

The NRUC agrees that there is room for improvement in the implementation of weighing regimes at individual competitions. NRUC is working internally and with the NUC to produce specific briefing materials for competitions and control commission weighing teams. A new cox weighing quick reference guide is in production by NUC and NRUC is preparing other appropriate excerpts from the various British Rowing documentation. The regional Competition Co-ordinator now includes specific items on cox weighing in pre-competition notices and in documentation reviews.

RACING

The weather continued to frustrate the remainder of the head racing season placing challenges in the way for Organising Committees. The final few races were otherwise uneventful and the we now look forward to the regatta season.

As we start the regatta season we are feeling the effect of our low umpire numbers. Durham City Regatta is very much at the borderline of available umpires with BUCS regatta and York Spring Regatta effectively cutting off any opportunity to recruit from neighbouring regions. We hope that other regatta have better umpire availability but it does underline the need to recruit new umpires ideally primarily from competition organising clubs who are under-represented in the current umpiring cohort.

Control commission boat and equipment safety checks are still at the forefront of our minds. The number of failures in the 2023 regatta season was far too high and the large number of cancelled head races mean that we have not been able to collate a representative record of failures since then. During the upcoming regatta season we will be working with Organising Committees to collate failures and will publish overall statistics to raise the profile of the importance of providing well maintained/safe boats for competition and general training.

We continue to remind Organising Committees that radios have been generally failure prone/unreliable over the past year. Organising committees need to ensure that they have proper radio allocation plans and order enough to cope with cover plans with allowances for potential failures.

UMPIRE TRAINING

The NRUC ran theory courses for prospective umpires during March. Turnout was inconsistent and the region, especially clubs hosting competitions, needs to do a better job on recruitment of additional trainees in the future. We have four active trainees, most continuing from previous intakes, who we hope will proceed to practical exams/qualification in 2024.

MULTI LANE

Helen McMillan has been accepted as a candidate for the multi-lane umpiring endorsement. She has completed the seminar portion of the training and is now officiating at many of the multi-lane venues with the exams expected early in the Autumn. Four other Northern Region umpires have expressed an interest in multi-lane endorsement in future years and we are taking steps to prepare them as candidates.

NATIONAL ISSUES

Nothing of note.

EQUIPMENT

No progress on purchase of new yellow jackets and other umpiring equipment. These will be actioned in the coming months.