

USRowing Drone Policy (Updated 2/15/2016)

USRowing recognizes the need to provide competitors, spectators, and other people in attendance at regattas a fair and safe environment, while continuing to provide spectators, coaches and fans – both onsite and via live streaming – a more dynamic environment in which to watch and enjoy the sport of rowing.

To this end, USRowing developed a Drone Policy in 2015. The overarching principle of the USRowing drone policy is that drones should be positioned in such a way that the safety and health of every participant, spectator and volunteer during the competition and across the entire field of play is paramount. After a year of implementation, USRowing has made some revisions and has updated its policies regarding the use of drones at USRowing Registered Regattas.

The Local Organizing Committee, working in conjunction with the chief referee, is charged with approving the use of any and all drones at the regatta venue both on shore and in the field of play, including the airspace above the course (in accordance with local and FAA drone regulations for the specific venue).

Anyone wishing to operate a drone at the regatta venue, including media, competing organizations (including athletes, coaches, support personnel, parents or fans) or spectators, must have prior approval from the LOC. The LOC, in conjunction with the chief referee, will set the exact approval procedures required at each regatta, including any specific on site check-in procedures required prior to operating a drone.

Any drones operating in the field of play must be controlled from the shore with an experienced drone operator. The drone itself must remain at least 10 meters behind the crew in its lane and at least 10 meters above the highest point of the referee launch. A drone may not operate in front of a crew in the field of play. At no time may a drone fly directly above a crew or referee in the field of play.

A drone may follow racing on the side of the course, but it must remain at least five meters away from the outside lane and 10 meters above the highest point of the referee launch. A drone may not follow racing on the side of the course being used as the travel lane for launching crews unless there is enough space to have both a five-meter buffer between the drone and the side of the course, as well as a five-meter buffer between the drone and the travel lane.