

Date: August 29, 2014
To: USRowing Referee Committee
CC: Glenn Merry, CEO, John Wik, Director of Referees, Gary Caldwell, Frances Mennone
From: Howard Meisner, Kirsten Meisner, Laura Kunkemueller

Summary

In accordance with the established protocol for proposing rule changes, we have attached our suggested amendments to the 2014 Rules of Rowing. The intent of these changes is to separate the current rule book content which combines rules, procedures, course specifications and local organizing committee (LOC) suggestions into a “book” of knowledge that is organized to efficiently deliver content to the end user.

Types of amendments

The proposed rule book contains many modifications including:

- **The removal of content that is not directly applicable to the competitor** such as referee procedures, course specifications and LOC guidance. As mentioned above, this content is captured in either the referee procedure document or the LOC guidance document. For example, the competitor needs to know that there will be a flag and/or horn at the finish but does not need to know that the referee will give the finish line a time from the water.
- **Capitalizing all terms defined in Rule 1-202 when the term is used in the defined context.** For example, if “event” is used to describe a race or series of races, it is capitalized. If the statement is “in the event that...”, “event” would not be capitalized.
- **Clarification to align with current governance practice.** For example, rather than explaining the types of information that might be relevant to the National Team Selection process, the definition for “Selection criteria” now directs the reader to the approved selection procedures publically available at USRowing.org. In this way, the rule will always support and point to the most up-to- date, competitor-relevant information.
- **Clarification where a portion of the current rule has been moved to the referee procedure or LOC document.** For example, Rule 2-203 Traffic Patterns has been amended to clarify that it is the competitor’s responsibility to know the traffic pattern.
- **Renumbering** based on the amended content.
- **Corrections of grammar or typographical errors.**
- **Grouping of like concepts** so that related rules are together thereby reducing the need for flipping to different sections to get a complete understanding of the applicable rule. This includes the movement of some definitions from the body of the rules to Section 1-202 Definitions.
- **Simplification.**

Content changes to specific rules

In some cases, we are recommending content changes. Although we have included the reasons for change in the revisions document, we want to specifically highlight those we believe to be of greatest importance:

- **Change of references to the Referee Committee to USRowing.** This change is intended to provide competitors with a consistent point of contact. From a practical standpoint, USRowing has delegated several activities to the Referee Committee. This change is NOT intended to suggest a change in the duties or authority of the Referee Committee merely to make the connection between the competitor and the NGB more direct.
- **Clarification of 2-310 Broken Equipment** to include broken equipment experienced only after the start of a race and before the crew has left the Starting area. This change precludes delaying a race for broken equipment experienced in the warm up area or in the body of the Race. In practice, we generally try to accommodate crews who experience broken equipment in the warm up area. The clarification indicates that this practice is a courtesy if the regatta format and setup allow; the delay of a race due to broken equipment is not a right of the crew unless it happens in the first 100 meters of a Race.
- **Changed Rule 2-604(c) Matters Subject to Protest** from “...make explicit findings of fact, those findings shall be final and not subject to review by protest, appeal, or otherwise...” to “... make explicit findings of fact, those findings shall be final.” This is intended to reduce the confusion around when a crew may protest. Some referees still refuse a crew’s right to protest based on the current wording; however, the crew always has the right to protest. This amendment clarifies that even if the crew protests, an explicit finding of fact will not be changed.
- **Rule 5-203 General Requirements for Entries and Affiliation** has been amended to allow competitors who are members of their country’s NGB to row in a registered regatta without becoming members of USRowing.
- **Rule 6-308 Protests and Appeals** is amended to reflect the Trials specific protest and adjudication procedure contained in the CEO Manual, Article III: National Selection Event Due Process Checklist. This Checklist states: “If an issue arises during a selection regatta event for an athlete or boat of athletes the following process shall be used to hear their concern, protest or petition...”. Changing this rule eliminates the possibility of confusion or inconsistency between the protest procedure outlined in the Rules of Rowing and the procedure used for Trials.

Conclusion

We are excited about the changes outlined above and strongly believe that the resulting rules will be more accessible and understandable to those who need them most, the athletes. We appreciate the feedback we have received so far and believe that this submission reflects our best thinking.

Thank you for your consideration.