



Rowing BC Competition Review Taskforce

Final Taskforce Report

October 2020



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INTRODUCTION

During the 2018 Rowing BC Conference, open sessions were held to discuss in depth the competition system in BC. Rowing BC's Board of Directors initiated the Rowing BC Competition Review Taskforce (CRT) following the conference and approved its Terms of Reference (TOR) in January of 2019 ([available here](#)). The TOR were updated in August 2020 ([available here](#)).

Steps related to the Rowing BC Competition Review have been in progress since the 2015 formation of the Rowing BC Regatta Review Working Group. In January of 2019, Rowing BC published a brief report that highlighted the CRT's progress made through the end of 2018, and to frame the establishment of the CRT ([available here](#)). In 2019, the CRT solicited additional member input to create a list of recommendations for Rowing BC to implement to make meaningful progress towards a better athlete-centered regatta system. These recommendations were published in March 2019 ([available here](#)). A progress update was provided to Rowing BC's members in November 2019 ([available here](#)).

The term of the current CRT ends in November 2020 at the Rowing BC Conference and AGM. This report has been created to report on the success of the CRT during its tenure, and to outline Rowing BC's next steps.

Rowing BC thanks CRT Member Representatives for their significant contributions:

- Drew Edwards, Delta Deas Rowing Club, Representing the Junior Stream
- Laryssa Biesenthal, Brentwood College School, Representing the High School Stream
- Brenda Taylor, Victoria City Rowing Club, Representing the Senior Stream
- Mike Pearce, University of British Columbia, Representing the University Stream
- Connor Elsdon, Gorge Narrows Rowing Club, Representing the Masters Stream
- Jessica Lowe, False Creek Rowing Club/Vancouver Rowing Club, Representing the Masters Stream

Rowing BC thanks CRT Board Representatives for their significant contributions:

- Kris Davis
- York Langerfeld (CRT Chair)
- Susan Wilkinson

Rowing BC Staff Support included: David Calder (Executive Director), Martin George (Manager, Coach Education and Para Provincial Coach), Sonja Lonne (Manager of Membership Services), and Rob Richards (Rowing BC Provincial Head Coach).



TERMINOLOGY

For the purpose of this report, the competition streams have been defined as follows:

Junior Competition Stream - applying to athletes who have not yet graduated from high school, training and racing in a club-based program structure.

High School Competition Stream - applying to athletes who have not yet graduated from high school, training and racing for their school, either short term through a club-based program structure or long term in a year-long school-specific program.

Senior Competition Stream - applying to athletes who have graduated from high school but are not training or racing for a university team and do not yet consider themselves Masters.

University Competition Stream - applying to athletes who are training and racing for a recognized university rowing team.

Masters Competition Stream - applying to athletes training and racing age 21+ who do not consider themselves in the Senior or University categories.

Coastal Competition Stream - applying to athletes training and racing in coastal or touring equipment.

Para Competition Stream - applying to PR1, PR2 and PR3 athletes regardless of whether or not they have been officially classified.



PROGRESS ON IDENTIFIED RECOMMENDATIONS

The table below represents all of the short term recommendations suggested in the March 2019 CRT report ([available here](#)). Each recommendation has been labelled to indicate which streams of competition its completion will support (J = Junior, H = High School, S = Senior, U = University, M = Masters, C = Coastal, P = Para). Notes below each recommendation detail it's completion status.

Note: Rowing BC recognizes that even a recommendation marked as complete requires continued consideration for the advancement of the athlete-centered regatta system in BC.

Recommendation	J	H	S	U	M	C	P
<p>Develop a framework that supports rowing organizations and local organizing committees to develop boat pools as part of their events.</p> <p>Completed. <i>Local Organizing Committees (LOCs) are encouraged through the Rowing BC Regatta Committee and the event sanctioning process to consider the inclusion of boat pools. Additional support is provided as required.</i></p>	✓	✓	✓		✓		
<p>Develop more novice events with fewer category restrictions in consultation with specific regatta local organizing committees with the distinct intention of reducing barriers to participation.</p> <p>Completed. <i>The expansion or clarification of the “novice” category was considered by the Rowing BC Regatta Committee and discussion with LOCs. The final decision was to keep the category title consistent, and use the development of an updated BC Regatta Calendar to further funnel participants into appropriate events.</i></p>	✓		✓		✓		
<p>Explore strategies to support the inclusion of Interior athletes in more regatta opportunities.</p> <p>Completed. <i>Rowing BC began an Interior Development Taskforce in 2019 that adjusted into an Interior Development Committee in 2020 made up of at least one representative from each Interior rowing organization. This committee is one avenue through which to coordinate attendance at regattas. The inclusion of boat pools at regattas contributes to reducing barriers for Interior teams to travel and participate in additional competitive opportunities. The updated BC Regatta Calendar additionally addresses the needs of Interior athletes by adding new events within their region.</i></p>	✓		✓		✓		
<p>Explore ways for all regions of the province with high school rowing to work together for the purpose of harmonizing opportunities offered.</p>		✓					



<p>In progress. The updated BC Regatta Calendar partially addresses this recommendation with the addition of new highschool-specific opportunities to meet the needs identified on the Lower Mainland. Rowing BC acknowledges that additional progress towards this goal requires an opportunity for those invested in the high school rowing system from across the province to come together for discussion of goals and opportunities. This will be arranged in late 2020/early 2021.</p>						
<p>Explore with the Independent School rowing programs the idea of an Independent Schools Championships.</p> <p>In progress. Initial interest in the general idea has been solicited and received from stakeholders in the Independent School rowing programs. Rowing BC acknowledges that additional progress towards this goal requires an opportunity for those invested in the Independent School rowing system from across the province to come together for discussion of goals and opportunities. This will be arranged in late 2020/early 2021.</p>	✓					
<p>Develop additional high performance racing opportunities for Senior athletes at existing regattas including more flexible race categories.</p> <p>Completed. The updated BC Regatta Calendar includes the addition of Senior racing opportunities at many regattas that did not previously include these athletes, spread out throughout the season and across the province. Of specific note, the Provincial Indoor Rowing Championships (February), Provincial Championships (May), and Provincial Season Ender Regatta (August) run by Rowing BC have been designed to include Senior racing.</p>		✓				
<p>Develop additional Recreational Senior/Masters events throughout the province that incorporate social aspects.</p> <p>Completed. Rowing BC ran the “Friday Night Challenge Series” in Summer 2018 to test out a new approach to recreational/social events. In addition, Rowing BC ran a series of Masters Camps with a variety of topics (Technical, Head Race Preparation, Coastal, Multi-Sport) in 2018 and 2019 bringing together interested athletes from across the province. Now in the pandemic reality, new approaches will be required to continue the progress in this area.</p>		✓	✓			
<p>Develop an ideal “Rowing BC Senior Yearly Training Plan” to support more meaningful alignment between training and racing periods.</p>		✓				



<p>Completed. Rowing BC Provincial Coach, Rob Richards, developed and shared a YTP suggestion with interested coaches of Senior athletes. This continues to be an available resource for any interested coaches.</p>						
<p>Explore the viability of including university 1x and 2- in future Rowing BC-hosted performance regattas.</p> <p>Completed. The updated BC Regatta Calendar includes the addition of Senior racing opportunities at many regattas that did not previously include these athletes, spread out throughout the season and across the province. Of specific note, the Provincial Indoor Rowing Championships (February), Provincial Championships (May), and Provincial Season Ender Regatta (August) run by Rowing BC have been designed to include Senior racing.</p>			✓			
<p>Explore options for a small boat university regatta at Burnaby Lake that would attract a diverse field.</p> <p>Completed. The updated BC Regatta Calendar includes a revised Burnaby Lake Small Boat Invitational Regatta that is intended to include both Senior and University participants. Additional planning and preparation will commence in 2021.</p>			✓			
<p>Explore ways to integrate Junior and/or high school athletes into the Brown Cup experience in a meaningful way that expands the profile of university rowing.</p> <p>Completed. A Brown Cup Society has been officially established as a legal society and now plans the annual Brown Cup distinct from either of the two involved universities. Among other details, the main staff associated with this new society is also overseeing the creation of avenues through which to include Junior participation in a meaningful way during the event.</p>	✓	✓	✓			
<p>Develop a plan for the inclusion of additional Novice events within regattas in 2020 and beyond, including a more flexible definition of Novice.</p> <p>Completed. The expansion or clarification of the “novice” category was considered by the Rowing BC Regatta Committee and discussion with LOCs. The final decision was to keep the category title consistent, and use the development of an updated BC Regatta Calendar to further funnel participants into appropriate events.</p>			✓	✓		
<p>Develop a BC Coastal Regatta series in partnership with existing coastal rowing organizations.</p>					✓	



<p>Completed. Rowing BC has a designated Coastal section on the website which includes information about race opportunities across the Pacific NorthWest. In addition, the updated BC Regatta Calendar includes specific coastal opportunities within BC. Rowing BC formed a Coastal Committee in 2019 that will continue to promote the needs of this group of athletes.</p>						
<p>Develop education opportunities for Umpires, Coaches and Athletes in coastal rowing.</p> <p>In progress. The Rowing BC Coastal Committee has taken initial steps in this area, but additional work is required before new education opportunities will be available publicly to the overall rowing community.</p>					✓	
<p>Develop and promote a calendar of pre-existing BC coastal events.</p> <p>Completed. Rowing BC has a designated Coastal section on the website which includes information about race opportunities across the Pacific NorthWest. In addition, the updated BC Regatta Calendar includes specific coastal opportunities within BC. Rowing BC formed a Coastal Committee in 2019 that will continue to promote the needs of this group of athletes.</p>					✓	
<p>Explore strategies to support the inclusion of para athletes in more regatta opportunities.</p> <p>In progress. Para athletes are now welcome at any regatta in BC, either by racing in their age category or in a specific para category. Additional work continues related to publishing para adjusted times that may improve the fairness of races where para athletes race against able-bodied participants in age-based categories but want to be able to meaningfully compare results.</p>					✓	



UPDATED BC REGATTA CALENDAR

Completion of a substantial number of the recommendations above necessitated that adjustments be made to the BC Regatta Calendar. Adjustments to the regatta calendar have cascading impacts across the rowing community, so changes must be made in a stepwise manner over a series of years. The CRT has prepared, and is now launching to membership, an updated BC Regatta Calendar as detailed below. The initial changes have been made in an effort to:

- Ensure each stream of athletes is provided with sufficient race opportunities
- Create a competitive progression of events throughout each season
- Protect the importance of rest weekends within each athlete stream
- Provide more clarity around a pinnacle event for each stream, in each season
- Balance opportunities available in each area of the province to minimize required travel
- Introduce one or more targeted provincial events each season, to be hosted by Rowing BC in combination with a Local Organizing Committee
- Focus attention each season on a primary race type

The following will assist with interpreting the calendar:

- Dates are listed using the Saturday of each weekend.
- Locations have been abbreviated.
 - ISL = Island, INT = Interior, MNL = Mainland
 - REF = outside of BC, used as a reference point in the season
- Athlete streams are described as follows:
 - JR = Junior (This is used to denote all events open to Junior-aged participants. When there is a race category open only to Junior-aged participants associated with a highschool team, HS is used instead).
 - SR = Senior (This is used to denote all events open to Senior-aged participants. When there is a race category open only to Senior-aged participants associated with a university team, UN is used instead).
 - MA = Masters
 - C = Coastal
 - Para participants are welcome at all regattas - either in a designated para race, or by racing in their age category.
- Where new events have been added, Rowing BC will be releasing a Request for Proposals from interested Local Organizing Committees before announcing additional details.

The dates on this calendar correspond with the weekends in 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 regatta season may not be able to fully align with the original intentions of this calendar. In that case, the intention behind the chosen dates and event placements will be maintained for future years. This updated regatta calendar represents the culmination of the current CRT mandate.

Access the [Updated Rowing BC Regatta Calendar HERE](#).



Additional copies of the calendar have been created to highlight each stream and location for easier viewing. These versions do not include the paragraph about each regatta's intention that is included on the overall Updated Rowing BC Regatta Calendar (linked above).

Junior Stream (including Highschool):

- [JR \(including HS\) stream, all locations](#)
- [JR \(including HS\) stream, MNL and INT locations only](#)
- [JR \(including HS\) stream, ISL locations only](#)

Senior Stream (including University):

- [SR \(including UN\) stream, all locations](#)
- [SR \(including UN\) stream, MNL and INT locations only](#)
- [SR \(including UN\) stream, ISL locations only](#)

Masters Stream:

- [MA stream, all locations](#)
- [MA stream, MNL and INT locations only](#)
- [MA stream, ISL locations only](#)

Coastal Stream:

- [C stream, all locations](#)

Aspects for further consideration:

While the Rowing BC Competition Review Taskforce is proud of the work completed and adjustments made to create this Updated Rowing BC Regatta Calendar, it is known that additional work will need to continue. Some areas already identified for continued adjustment include:

- Date conflicts in early March
 - As written, the Elk Lake Spring Regatta and Dueling Over a Grand Regatta are on back-to-back weekends, both drawing on athletes from Vancouver Island. The LOC for the Elk Lake Spring Regatta has indicated that they intend to continue running that event in a manner similar to previous years. The LOC for the Dueling Over a Grand regatta, needed to move their date before Spring Break as the historical date was no longer working. Over a series of years, it is likely that more changes will take place to the form and function of this regatta, so although it currently appears as a potential conflict, this will likely change over time.



- Close proximity of MetroVancouver Regatta and Brentwood Regatta
 - The MetroVancouver regatta has identified this event as being an important race experience opportunity for newer Lower Mainland based athletes who will not travel to attend the Brentwood Regatta, but also a chance for more experienced crews to try out certain combinations before continuing to events like the Brentwood Regatta. The MetroVancouver Regatta date is not currently flexible. However, continued adjustments to the form and function of both events are likely to take place over a series of years. Rowing BC will remain involved in this process to ensure the competitive needs of both Island and Mainland athletes are met.
- Apparent gap in regatta opportunities in July
 - Over the coming years, further adjustments to the placement of the Coaches Regatta at Burnaby Lake, the Cascadia Regatta, and the BC Provincial Championships Regatta will take place to better spread regattas throughout the summer, while still taking into considering the placement of the NorthWest Masters Regatta and Canadian Henley.
 - Depending on the finalized location(s) for the BC Provincial Championships Regatta, there may still be a need for a Challenge West Regatta at Elk Lake in early July to meet the needs of the local rowing community. The location choice for the BC Provincial Championships will be made by Rowing BC in combination with the existing LOC of the historical Challenge West Regatta to ensure the needs of all are met.
- October 2nd
 - This looks like a very busy date! The intention is to have a regatta opportunity open for all interested participants, but that is not possible within the constraints of historical events on the calendar for this date. Additional work is being done with LOCs to determine if adding additional categories to existing regattas, or adding a new regatta, is the best way to address this. More work will be done before Fall 2021.
- Addition of virtual winter competitions
 - There is currently nothing to draw the community together in November or December, but some athletes may like a reason to complete a various workout etc. The idea of adding some virtual events to the calendar has been raised, and will be trialed this coming winter. Ideas that are well-received will be added to future calendars.
- Lack of clarity for coaches in determining the appropriate regatta progression for athletes
 - This has been initially addressed through the new intent paragraphs about each event added onto the Rowing BC Updated Regatta Calendar in this report, and on the Rowing BC website calendar. The next iteration of this will be further work towards a regatta classification system and possible regatta circuit. Rowing BC is also investigating options for a coaches portal and chat area that could help to facilitate conversation between coaches to ensure athletes of similar level and with similar focus are being streamlined to the same events.
- Purpose-driven, but not competitive, events



- This calendar is about sanctioned regattas. However, Rowing BC recognizes the need for, and importance of, non-regatta events that still bring participants together to expand skills or knowledge. This will continue to be developed with interested member organizations and LOCs.

CONCLUSION

This report marks the conclusion of the CRT's mandate leading into the 2020 Rowing BC AGM and Conference. Rowing BC wishes to thank the members of the taskforce for their contributions towards a better athlete-centered competition system in BC. This report shows significant advancements over the past two years that positively impact all competition streams.

Rowing BC acknowledges that work on the competition system in BC must continue on an annual basis in order to maintain alignment with an athlete-centred system. Please direct any questions about the CRT and this report to memberservices@rowingbc.ca.