

Holding a Safe Regatta – An Umpiring Perspective

- **Sprint, Head and Indoor Races**

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Where does our authority come from with respect to Safety?

Canadian Rules of Racing – January 2022 edition

- Voted on and agreed to by the membership of RCA at a General Meeting of the Membership.
- <https://rowingcanada.org/uploads/2022/04/Rules-of-Racing-Booklet-EN.pdf>



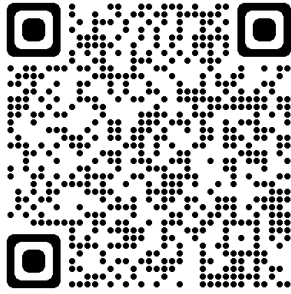
Chief Umpire Discussions prior to submitting a Sanction Request

- Location of the event
 - 4.3 Wind and Water Conditions
 - The course should be located on a water body that is sheltered from wind as far as possible.
 - The running of the race must not be influenced by natural or artificial waves.
 - 4.4 Plan of Regatta Site
 - A plan showing the location of the course on the body of water, the number of lanes, and the layout of the technical installations of the course must be included in the Regatta Package/Bulletin and be posted at or near the launch site.
 - 4.5 Non-Standard Course
 - A non-standard course must provide for safe and fair competition.
- 5.2 Role of the Regatta Chair
 - The Regatta Chair:
 - 1. Plans the regatta, and ensures the direct participation of the Chief Umpire in the planning process
 - 2. Represents the Organizing Committee during the regatta
 - 3. Co-ordinates all regatta logistics
 - 4. Collaborates with the Chief Umpire to ensure the safety and fairness of the regatta, and that the regatta is run in accordance with the RCA Rules of Racing, and
 - 5. Does not participate as a competitor in the regatta
 - 5.3.1. The Organizing Committee is responsible to make available a stretch of water, rescue and medical services, and all necessary installations and equipment, both on land and on the water. The Organizing Committee is also responsible for the overall organization of the regatta
 - 5.3.4 The regatta site must have adequate drinking water and sanitation/toilet facilities to accommodate the number of participants attending.
- Numbers of safety boats?
 - What is the right number of support boats for the regatta
- Locations of safety boats?

- Do the safety boats operating from static locations, or in a zone
- What happens if a local safety boat is deployed – who provides coverage to those athletes not part of the deployment? Does the regatta continue?
- Number of umpires and are the race umpires considered safety boats?
 - If the race umpire boats are considered the safety boats, will there be times when all umpire boats will be at one end of the course, for example, at the start of the day for a sprint event?
- Medical First Response plan
 - What type of response are you offering: can treatments be performed locally, or do you need to wait for certified professionals (9-1-1 emergency response teams) to arrive?
- Safety Plan – how to avoid problems from arising
 - Weather Protocols
 - Local site Conditions
- Emergency Action Plan – what happens when something bad happens
 - Evacuation Plan – how do you clear the course?
 - Who has authority to make decisions? Decide before something happens
 - Who can call an end to the emergency?
- Communication
 - Is there a communication plan or process to disseminate information?
 - 5.4 Radio and Telecommunications
 - It is essential that there should be telecommunication capacity between the Chief Umpire, the Start, the Finish, and the Control Commission in order to enable the members of the Jury to carry out their duties. It is also essential that telecommunication be provided between the rescue service on the water and the medical advisor on duty on land at the course, to deal with any emergency. The Race Umpires’ boats must be equipped with telecommunication between each other and the rescue services on the water and for contacting the Chief Umpire, Starter, Control Commission, and the Finish Judges.

LOC obligations

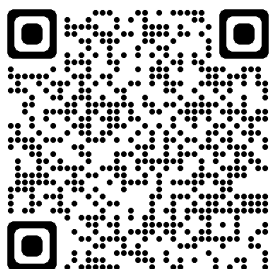
- Rowing BC Templates and Guides <https://rowingbc.ca/regatta-sanctioning/#1646682158888-3cd8dd39-4d26>
 - The resources below are intended to assist Local Organizing Committees in the process of preparing a regatta sanction application, or while planning aspects of the regatta:
 - [RCA Regatta Manual](#) (.pdf)
 - [RCA Event Sanction Policy](#) (.pdf)
 - [RCA Event Sanction Overview](#) (.pdf)
 - [RCA Sanction Application Supporting Information](#) (.pdf)
 - [First Aid/Emergency Action Plan Fillable Template](#) (.docx)
 - [Outdoor Event COVID Safety Plan Fillable Template](#) (.docx)



- Provisioning Safety Boats
 - Education – how to recover people, boats
- Safety boats during launching, breaks, while boats are on the water.
- Safety boat communication
- Spectator safety
- Dogs, Snakes, Raptors
 - (adding the snakes and raptors so the dog people don't think they are being picked on)
 - Restrictions of action.
- Medical First Response availability
- 6.5 Substance Free Field of Play
 - For the health and safety of the participants, the field of play area for all regattas in Canada should be cannabis, e-cigarettes, alcohol, and tobacco free. The field of play includes the regatta course and installations, as well as the boat storage areas, boat houses, docks, and all areas under control of the control commission. Spectator and public areas are excluded.
- APPENDIX 2 – HEAD RACING RULES
 - 1. Course
 - 1.1 Head races shall be conducted on a course that is wide enough for a participating crew to navigate safely, for overtaking crew to pass another crew, and for nonparticipating crews to travel to and from a launching area without impeding crews involved in a race.
 - 1.2 The course should be identified on the water by buoys and off the water by distance markers at appropriate points along its entire length.
 - 1.3 Hazardous areas, such as shallows, underwater obstructions, narrow areas, an area where water traffic crosses a course, shall be conspicuously marked with buoys or other markers that are visible from both directions of the course.
 - 1.8 A map of the course indicating traffic patterns and navigational hazards shall be included in the Regatta Package and prominently displayed at the regatta site.
 - 2.1.5 The map of the course showing the starting area, finish area, paths to be taken by launching and returning crews, the location of the first aid station, and the course itself. In showing the course itself, the map shall indicate the location of turns, any known hazardous conditions, course markings, the assigned positions of Umpires, and any no passing zones.
- APPENDIX 5 – INDOOR ROWING RACING RULES

- 8. Safety: The OC is to have in place an Emergency Action Plan to deal with rowers requiring medical attention, crowd control, building evacuation and other safety matters and the plan shall be attached to the sanction application. The OC is required to communicate the emergency procedures adequately to the volunteers and Umpires, prior to the start of competition.
- **Where can you get maps printed for outdoor use?**
 - My personal experience has been positive with VistaPrint, an Ontario based company that can print Vinyl banners with reinforced edges and grommets for hanging up.

<https://www.vistaprint.ca/signs-posters/vinyl-banners>



Competitor Obligations

2.3.1 Health

- **Each competitor shall be responsible for their own health and fitness. In the case of a minor, the club, province, or other organization who enters the competitor in a regatta shall be responsible for the health and fitness of the competitor.**

11.1 Safety of Rowers

- The safety of rowers must be the prime concern of the Jury at all times during the regatta. The Chief Umpire shall ensure proper coordination between the Jury and the Organizing Committee, in particular with the appointed Safety Advisor and the Medical Advisor.

11.7 Role of the Jury

The Jury shall ensure that the regatta is run as safely as possible and in accordance with these Rules of Racing and that all crews race under the same conditions.

11.8 Collaboration with the Organizing Committee

The proper running of a regatta requires close collaboration between the Organizing Committee and the Jury. The members of the Jury shall, within the scope of their duties, observe whether the technical equipment on the course is functioning properly and report any equipment malfunction or failure to the Chief Umpire.

11.11 Chief Umpire

The Chief Umpire is responsible for the application of the Rules of Racing to a sanctioned regatta and shall uphold the principles of safety, fair competition, and good sportsmanship.

The Chief Umpire is in charge of the Jury and shall allot duties to each member and supervise their activities. The Chief Umpire shall chair Jury meetings and attend Organizing Committee meetings to ensure proper coordination with the OC.

When a Deputy Chief Umpire (DCU) is appointed, the DCU will assist the CU in their duties and replace the CU if needed. The DCU shall be a certified Chief Umpire. Should it be necessary to make extraordinary decisions, the Chief Umpire, or the DCU may do so.

APPENDIX 2 – HEAD RACING RULES

- 3.2 For each race, the Chief Umpire, in collaboration with the Regatta Chair, will assign Umpires and Marshals (where specified) to perform various duties that may consist of the following:
- 3.2.3 Race Umpires or Marshals: The Race Umpires or Marshals shall be strategically positioned along a course and must have telecommunication capability at points along the course so that no portion of the course is at any time out of sight to one or more Race Umpires'/Marshals' launches.

Control

- Bow balls 3.3
 - The bows of all boats shall be fitted with a solid white ball shape, minimum diameter 4 cm, which covers the point of the bows. If this is an external part it shall be firmly affixed to the bow of the boat such that it does not significantly deflect if a side force is applied. If it is an integral part of the hull construction, it shall afford equivalent protection and visibility. Any racing shell failing to meet the requirements above shall not be allowed on the water.
- Heel Ties & One handed releases
 - 3.5 Quick Release Foot Stretchers
 - In all boats, the foot stretchers, shoes, or other devices holding the feet of the rowers shall be a type which allows the rowers to get clear of the boat with no delay in an emergency.
 - 3.5.1 Where shoes or other devices holding the feet are fixed and will remain in the boat, each shoe or device shall be independently restrained to limit heel lift to a maximum of 7 cm for each shoe or type of foot gear fitted to the boat. In addition, where Velcro or similar materials must be unfastened before the rower can remove their feet from the shoes or other device, all fastenings must be able to be released immediately by the rower with a single quick hand action of pulling on one easily accessible strap.
 - 3.5.2 Where shoes or other devices holding the feet will not remain in the boat, each shoe or device must be able to be released by the rower without using their hands, or with a single quick hand action of pulling on one easily accessible strap or release device
- 3.8 Flotation Requirement

- Boats constructed or delivered after 1st January 2007 must show on the production plaque whether the boat meets the WR Guidelines for the Safe Practice of Rowing. *“A boat when full of water with a crew of average weight equal to the design weight stated on the boat’s production plaque, seated in the rowing position, should float such that the top of the seat is a maximum of 5 cm below the static waterline.”*
- 3.9 Para Boats
 - 7.d. Standard Para Rowing PR1 1x and PR2 1x Boat
 - The WR Standard Para Rowing PR1 1x boat has a fixed seat and must have stabilising pontoons installed, attached to the riggers at a minimum distance of 60 cm from centre line of pontoon to centre line of boat.
 - The pontoons should be fixed in position so that when the rower is seated in the balanced boat both pontoons shall be horizontal to the boat when checked from the side and shall, at a minimum, touch the water. The hull and the pontoons shall comply with the WR Standard Design specifications.
- 3.9 Strapping for para athletes
 - 7.e.i . PR1 1x Strapping Requirements – PR1 rowers shall use a mandatory trunk strap which is for safety purpose only. This strap must be secured to the seat back and go around the trunk. In addition to the mandatory trunk strap, rowers may use additional strapping. The design and placement of the seat and all straps must allow the lumbar region to be visible from the side during rowing. The straps must be attached to the seat on both sides.
 - 7.f. General Strapping, Shoes and Stretchers Requirements
 - f.i. Where used, all straps, whether optional or mandatory under these Regulations, must be a minimum width of 50 mm, be of non-elastic material, be without mechanical buckles and must be able to be released immediately by the rower with a single quick hand action of pulling on the free end of the strap.
 - f.ii. The colour of all the straps must be a contrasting colour from the rowers’ racing uniform so that they can be clearly seen.
 - f.iii. All straps for each rower must be released in the same manner and direction.
 - f.iv. Any hand strapping must be able to be released immediately independently by the athlete with a single hand movement.
 - f.v. Additional strapping may be used by any rower provided the requirements of these Regulations are met.
 - f.vi. Foot stretchers, shoes and other devices to hold the feet shall comply with Appendix R2 (Bye-Laws to Rule 28).
 - **f.vii. It is solely the responsibility of the rower to ensure that all strappings, shoes, stretchers and other equipment are compliant with these Regulations.**
- 11.23 Duties of the Control Commission
 - A member of the Jury shall be on the Control Commission and shall supervise the activities of this body. In particular, the Control Commission is responsible for checking the following:
 - 7. Boats and equipment:
 - a. White ball on the bow of each boat (or equivalent construction).

- d. Heel tie-downs and foot stretcher or quick release shoe mechanisms.
- 8. Para Rowing Events — safety measures such as foot stretchers, strapping and/or pontoons, which must be checked by the Control Commission Umpire.

Control – Weigh-Ins

- Are they prepared for the weather?
 - Smaller competitors have higher surface area to mass ratio and will experience cold and heat quicker than larger competitors.

Start

- Have crews arrived?
 - where are they? Contacting control
 - Burnaby Lake versus Head of Shawnigan Lake
- Are they straight
- What can you see looking down the course?
 - Are there people in distress on the side of the course
- 11.13 Duties of the Starter – General Duties
 - Before taking up their duties, the Starter must be satisfied that all equipment and installations required under the Rules covering the start and the course are present and in working order. The Starter shall check that telecommunications with the Judge at the Start, the Chief Umpire, the Chief Judge at the Finish, the timer(s), and the Control Commission are in working order. The Starter shall also make certain that any crews on the water in the start area are following the prescribed traffic patterns.
- 11.8. Postponement
 - Should it be necessary to postpone a race or should some other unexpected event occur (e.g., lightning), the Starter should consult with the Race Umpire and the Chief Umpire. The Starter shall then inform the crews of the new starting time. The Starter shall also inform the Control Commission, the Judge at the Finish, and the timers of the new starting time. In all cases of postponement, crews must inquire from a member of the Jury regarding any further changes before getting out of their boat. Rowers are responsible for their equipment. Equipment breakage should not result in a postponement.

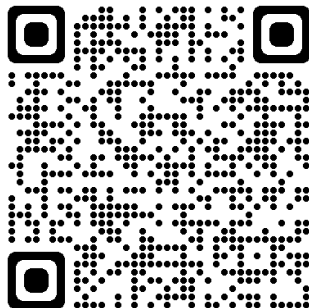
Judge At The Start- Aligner

- You are the only people that can see all individuals at the start.
 - Does anyone look like they are in distress? Why? Do you need to let someone know?
- 11.14 Duties of the Judge at the Start
 - 1. Communications Before taking up their duties, the Judge at the Start shall ensure that telecommunications with the Starter and/or the Judge at the Start and the support personnel on the starting platforms are in working order.

Race Umpire

- 10.9 Responsibility of the Rowers

- All rowers shall compete in their races in accordance with the RCA rules. Rowers are responsible for their own steering. Each crew shall have a lane reserved for its own use and shall remain completely (i.e., including its oars or sculls) within this lane throughout the race. If a crew leaves its own lane then it does so at its own risk. If it impedes or interferes with any of its opponents or gains any advantage thereby, it may be penalized.
- 10.10.2 Stopping a Crew
 - To ensure the safety of the competitors and to prevent damage to boats and equipment, the Race Umpire may intervene by raising their white flag, naming the crew, and giving the command “Stop”.
- 11.15 General Responsibility of the Race Umpire
 - The Race Umpire shall ensure the proper conduct of the race and the safety of the rowers.
 - 4. The Race Umpire shall not give any steering instructions to crews. Nevertheless, the Race Umpire shall ensure that accidents are avoided and prevent crews from being impeded by their opponents.
- 11.16 Duties of the Race Umpire
 - 2. On the Way to the Start
 - The Race Umpire shall inspect the course installations to ensure that they are in proper order and shall satisfy themselves that there are no obstacles on the course. Should the Race Umpire find any defect in the installations, they shall inform the Chief Umpire and also inform any crews that may be affected. The Race Umpire also ensures that any crews on the water are following the prescribed traffic patterns.
 - 3. Equipment and Communication
 - The Race Umpire shall have all the equipment required by the Rules of Racing for the safe conduct of the regatta. In particular, the Race Umpire shall have a red flag, a white flag, a proper megaphone, both a yellow and Red Card and a horn or audible device. The Race Umpire shall ensure the Race Umpire’s boat carries the prescribed Transport Canada safety equipment.
 - **Reference: Transport Canada Safe Boating Guide**
 - https://tc.canada.ca/sites/default/files/migrated/tp_511e.pdf
 - *Page 17: Sail and Power Boats up to 6 m (19’8”)*



- 1. One (1) lifejacket or PFD for each person on board

- 2. *One (1) reboarding device (A reboarding device is only required if the vertical height that a person must climb to reboard the boat from the water (freeboard) is over 0.5 m (1'8").)*
- 3. *One (1) buoyant heaving line at least 15 m (49'3") long*
- 4. *One (1) watertight flashlight*
- 5. *One (1) manual propelling device OR One (1) anchor and at least 15 m (49'3") of cable, rope or chain in any combination*
- 6. *One (1) bailer or manual bilge pump (A bailer or manual bilge pump is not required for a boat that cannot hold enough water to make it capsize or a boat that has watertight compartments that are sealed and not readily accessible.)*
- 7. *One (1) sound-signalling device or appliance*
- 7. Safety
 - The Race Umpire shall take every care to ensure the safety of the competitors. The Race Umpire must also try to prevent damage to boats and equipment. When necessary, the Race Umpire may call a crew's attention by raising the white flag, stating the name of the crew, and stopping it by giving the command "Stop". Should one or more competitors fall into the water or should any boat capsize, the Race Umpire must be sure that the on-water rescue service is aware and attending to the situation, or if there is another Race Umpire's launch that may be called to intervene and, if not, the Race Umpire will take any necessary safety measures themselves.
- 8. Adverse Weather
 - In the case of squalls or other deterioration of the conditions on the water, it is the Race Umpire's responsibility to decide if the race may be started, is to continue, or if it is to be stopped. The safety of the competitors is more important than any other provisions in the Rules of Racing.
- APPENDIX 2 – HEAD RACING RULES
 - 3.2.4 Launches for Race Umpires/Marshals shall normally be stationary while the race is in progress, but may move to respond to emergencies. Race Umpires or Marshals shall note any violation of the local regatta rules, including traffic patterns, right of way rules, passing rules, no passing zone rules, and report such violations to the Chief Finish Judge or the Chief Umpire for the appropriate penalties. Race Umpires or Marshals shall give instructions to crews to avoid collision or accident.
 - 3.2.7 A Race Umpire or Marshal in the finish area to ensure that finishing crews clear the finish line safely and that crews returning to the docks do not interfere with crews finishing their race.
- Interactions between Crews – fairness issue not covered here
- Crews Flipping
- Crews Going on Tour
- What is happening around you – people rowing to the start
- Where are the safety boats in relation to you
- Who goes to provide support to a crew
- Stopping a race to support a crew.
- At the end of the race

Finish

- Do you see anything amiss?

8.1 Safety – General Principles

A regatta Organizing Committee, in accordance with the RCA Regatta Sanction Policy, shall submit an application for regatta sanction, in consultation with the Chief Umpire. The Chief Umpire must be satisfied that the application for sanction provides for a safe and fair regatta. The Organizing Committee and the Chief Umpire must check the particular safety aspects of its regatta and impose further safety measures as indicated by the sanction requirements or as appropriate.

The responsibility for safety matters rests with the Organizing Committee.

1. The safety and health of all participants in the sport of rowing is a matter of paramount concern. Rowers entering regattas shall be responsible for ensuring they have a state of health and fitness which allows them to compete at a level commensurate with the competition level of the particular event.
2. Every Organizing Committee shall comply with all safety and health requirements of RCA and other relevant authorities and shall ensure that the facilities at the regatta are of a sufficient standard to provide a safe, hygienic and healthy environment for rowers and other regatta participants.
3. Organizing committees shall respond fully and promptly to any inquiry by RCA as to any issue relating to the health and safety requirements as provided by these Rules.

Serious hazards to the safety and health of regatta participants must be reported promptly to an Umpire or member of the Organizing Committee so that the hazard may be assessed and appropriate action taken. All such reported hazards must be reported to the Chief Umpire as soon as is practical.

During the period when the course is officially open, a medical and rescue service shall be on site and available to act both on the land and on the water.

The Organizing Committee shall announce when the course is officially open for training. It shall also announce the hours when the course is opened and closed on each day of racing.

At any time, if the Chief Umpire determines that conditions are unsafe, the Chief Umpire may declare the course closed until further notice.

All rowers shall compete in their races in accordance with the rules relating to the safety of their boats, oars, sculls, and other equipment. In addition, it is the responsibility of rowers, coaches, and their club to ensure that all their equipment is appropriate for the prevailing water conditions during the event. They shall comply with the instructions of the Chief Umpire and members of the Jury and the Organizing Committee on any matter relating to safety.

Para Rowers may require special considerations for safety. A cautious approach should be taken in weather conditions that could generate extreme uncontrolled body temperatures for specific classes of rowers.

8.2 Safety Advisor

The Organizing Committee shall appoint a person as the regatta Safety Advisor. The focus of the Safety Advisor is to ensure that appropriate safety measures have been implemented for the safe running of the regatta and observe any breaches of safety practices during the regatta. Those measures should include, but are not limited to: emergency plan; traffic patterns [both practice and racing]; safety launches [including clear directions for training of safety boat drivers] and weather monitoring.

8.3 Medical Advisor

The Organizing Committee shall appoint a qualified person as the regatta Medical Advisor with specific responsibilities for ensuring that appropriate medical support and facilities are readily accessible to the regatta. First aid facilities on land at the regatta site and a rescue service on the water must be available at all times.

8.4 Race Umpire and Safety Boats

The Organizing Committee will provide boats for Race Umpires and safety personnel equipped as per Transport Canada regulations and with Transport Canada certified boat drivers who are competent in operating their assigned boats. In addition, at least two of the safety boats shall be equipped with approved flotation devices for the largest rowing boat that could be attended to. Safety boat personnel must be capable of safely rescuing rowers from the water.

The Organizing Committee shall verify that all boat drivers follow a procedure which requires that the engine “kill” switch, if equipped, be attached to their clothing when operating assigned boats and that in the Race Umpire launches, the Race Umpires check to ensure this procedure is followed.

For Para rowing where strapping in of the rower’s hand and/or abdomen is used, a separate safety boat should be provided to follow each crew.

8.5 Rescue Services – During Races

In the event a participant falls into the water, the Race Umpires must be satisfied that the safety boat is attending to the participant. If not, the Race Umpires must attend to the participant, and if there is only one Race Umpire’s boat following the race and no other Race Umpire’s boat is nearby to take over the race, the Race Umpire must stop the race and attend to the participant in the water.

8.6 Coach and Team/Club Representatives Meetings

There shall be a meeting of coaches and club/team representatives prior to the start of the regatta, attendance at which is mandatory for a representative from each club/team. Failure of a Club to appoint a representative or to attend the meeting, may result in a club being penalized by the Chief Umpire.

The Chief Umpire shall attend this meeting of the coaches and/or team representatives and shall communicate information concerning racing and safety to all rowers and coaches via their team/club representatives. Coaches and team/club representatives must convey this information to their crews.

8.7 Traffic Patterns on the Course

The Organizing Committee must publish and clearly display the traffic pattern that illustrate the traffic pattern for training and for racing, to control the movement of the boats on the water, and on land (if applicable). It is the responsibility of every rower, coach, and club representative to read and follow all the traffic patterns.

In addition, the rowers while warming up or cooling down shall:

8.7.1 Not cross the finish line (in any direction) while boats from another race are in the process of finishing,

8.7.2 Stop when crews that are racing approach their position, and,

8.7.3 Not follow a race over all or part of the course, even outside the buoyed area, when not taking part in a race.

For safety reasons, the Organizing Committee may introduce a special traffic pattern for Para rowing.

The rationale for these changes should be identified and communicated to rowers and coaches.

8.8 Other Boats on the Water

During the official hours of training and racing no boat (moving or fixed) shall be allowed on the regatta course or the training areas without the specific authority of the Chief Umpire. The Chief Umpire shall determine the position and the movement of all approved vessels on the water during racing, i.e., Race Umpires' launches, rescue boats, media boats etc.

8.8.1 During official racing, and during official training hours, if the training (and warm up) areas are on the course proper, the Chief Umpire shall approve the access of any other vessels (moving or fixed) on the course and determine the position and the movement of said vessels on the course, i.e., Race Umpires' launches, OC rescue boats, utility boats and media boats etc.

8.8.2 If the training and warm up areas are outside of the course proper, the Chief Umpire shall approve the positioning of the Organizing Committee rescue boats and marshal boats.

8.8.3 Notwithstanding the above, if the control of the waterway is beyond the authority of the Organizing Committee and other boats or water users are present in the warm up area and/or the training area as described in 8.8.2, the Organizing Committee shall provide a sufficient number of traffic marshals to ensure the safety of regatta participants and other boaters by advising other boaters and water users of the regatta traffic patterns.

8.9 Damage to Equipment

Should a crew suffer damage to its boats/oars, the Board of the Jury shall, upon request from any of the crews involved, attempt to decide who is at fault. If appropriate the Board of the Jury may apportion fault.

8.10 Fairness – General Principles

All rowers shall compete fairly, showing respect for their opponents and for the Umpires and Organizing Committee volunteers. In particular, they shall be at the start on time, stay in their assigned lane throughout the race, and follow instructions of the Umpires at all times.

Failure to comply with these requirements may lead to a penalty being imposed on the crew. The Umpire shall ensure that the Rules of Racing are applied fairly to all competitors.