

2024 USRowing Rules of Rowing Proposals

To submit feedback, please email your comments to members@usrowing.org and state clearly which rule changes you are commenting on, whether you are for or against the change, and what your reasoning for your stated position is. Your comments may be made public.

The comment period ends October 31, 2023 at midnight PST.

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1-104 Scope and Exceptions (*) (Submitted by Meisner, H.)

Current text of the rule

1-104 Scope and Exceptions (*)

(a) These rules shall apply to all rowing Races and Regattas that take place in the United States and that are registered by USRowing. These rules shall not apply to any Races or Regattas that are within the exclusive jurisdiction and control of FISA.

(b) Any exceptions or amendments to these rules must be described in detail to USRowing at the time of registration, publicized in writing and distributed to every competing Team. USRowing may take the extent and nature of variation into account in determining whether to register a Regatta.

(c) Subsection (b) above notwithstanding, there shall be no exceptions or amendments to any provision designated as absolutely binding. In these rules, such provisions are noted by an asterisk (*) in the appropriate caption or subsection heading.

(d) Adaptive Rowing Races (Article X, "Adaptive Rowing"), Head Races (Article VIII, "Head Races"), Indoor Rowing Races (Article XI, "Indoor Rowing"), Races for Open Water Events (Part A of Article IX, "Open Water Racing"), and USRowing Trials (Article VI, "Trials Rules") shall be held under the specific rules designated for them.

Proposed text of the rule

1-104 Scope and Exceptions (*)

(a) These rules shall apply to all rowing Races and Regattas that take place in the United States and that are registered by USRowing. These rules shall not apply to any Races or Regattas that are within the exclusive jurisdiction and control of FISA.

(b) Any exceptions or amendments to these rules must be described in detail to USRowing at the time of registration, publicized in writing, and distributed to every competing Team. USRowing may take the extent and nature of variation into account in determining whether to register a Regatta. ***If no exceptions or amendments are described and accepted at the time of registration, these rules shall be binding.***

~~(c) Subsection (b) above notwithstanding, there shall be no exceptions or amendments to any provision designated as absolutely binding. In these rules, such provisions are noted by an asterisk (*) in the appropriate caption or subsection heading.~~

(c) Adaptive Rowing Races (Article X, "Adaptive Rowing"), Head Races (Article VIII, "Head Races"), Indoor Rowing Races (Article XI, "Indoor Rowing"), Races for Open Water Events (Part A of Article IX, "Open Water Racing"), and USRowing Trials (Article VI, "Trials Rules") shall be held under the specific rules designated for them.

Reasoning

This proposed change removes 1-104 (c) which describes the use of an asterisk to denote rules that explicitly cannot be changed at a registered regatta. The net effect of the proposal is to make all of the rules in the Rules of Racing binding. This subsection is one of the most commonly misunderstood parts of the rules because it's interpreted as "the rules that have to be followed" which isn't what the subsection says. The intention of the asterisk is to denote rules that shall not be modified at a registered regatta. At the time of the rules reorganization in 2015, it was proposed that we remove the asterisk and simply have the rules be the rules. This means that we would allow modifications to any rule at a registered regatta as long as it followed the publication criteria in subsection (b). There were concerns raised at that time about "unintended consequences" of the changes overall and people felt this change would be too much in the face of the other changes that were made. It's been 9 years since the reorganization and the concerns about "unintended consequences" have not materialized.

In 2018, there was a proposal to align rules that were not identified with an asterisk to add an asterisk either for safety and for standardization. Over the years, as the rules have evolved, the asterisk has not kept up with the modifications. This has led to a significant number of rules that involve the Race Official's interactions with the Competitors not being listed as absolutely binding. The net effect of the proposed change was to make more rules binding and clarify which rules are commonly

modified at Registered Regattas. It would have allowed USRowing to easily review those rules that are petitioned for a Regatta modification because there will be a smaller set of rules that may be modified. However, that proposal was voted down because it made the rules more complicated to interpret and we get agreement on exactly which rules to add to the list of binding rules.

This change simplifies the understanding of the rules by both Race Officials and Competitors. Our experience tells us that there are so few modifications to the rules at registered regattas (mostly around coxswain and lightweight weigh-ins and minimum weights of those competitors) that most rules are assumed to be binding regardless of their status with an asterisk. This does not impact the ability of a regatta to modify rules as they do today for their regatta as long as they are following the existing rule subsection b and describing the modification during the registration process as well as publishing the modification in the regatta packet.

The rules listed below are the current rules identified with an asterisk. Their titles would change to remove the asterisk, but the rule itself would remain untouched.

1-102 Purposes	2-404 Interference or Foul	5-301 National Championship Events
1-103 Interpretation	2-408 Instruction to Avoid Unsafe or Unfair Conditions	5-302 Course Requirements
1-104 Scope and Exceptions	2-410 Unsportsmanlike Conduct	5-303 Masters National Championships
1-105 Situations Not Covered	2-603 Restoring Opportunity of Winning; Altering Results	5-304 Youth National Championships
1-201 Rowing Defined	2-604 Matters Subject to Protest	8-101 Scope of Rules Regarding Head Races
1-202 Other Definitions	2-605 Raising an Objection	8-102 Course Configuration
2-101 Primary Duties of Race Officials	2-606 Filing the Protest Statement	8-104 Qualifications of Officials
2-102 Appointment of the Chief Referee	2-608 Appeal from the Jury	8-105 Local Regatta Rules
2-103 Duties of the Chief Referee	3-101 Free Construction of Equipment	8-106 Map of Course
2-104 Officials	3-102 General Requirements for Boats	9-101 Scope of Open Water Rules
2-105 The Jury	3-105 Bowballs	9-102 General Principles of Open Water Racing
2-201 Suspending Racing	3-107 Oars	9-103 Particular Rules of the Event
2-203 Traffic Patterns	3-108 Footgear Release	10-101 Scope of Rules Regarding Adaptive Rowing Races
2-204 Rowing Near the Course while Race in Progress	3-109 Boat Construction for Coxswains	
2-206 Number of Referees; Safety Launches	4-101 Amateur Standing	
2-401 A Crew's Water	4-102 Doping	
2-403 Referee's Position	5-203 General Requirements for Entries and Affiliation	

2-405 Stopping a Race in Progress (Submitted by Fortino, M.)

Current text of the procedure

Rule 2-405 Stopping a Race in Progress

The Referee shall stop the Race by giving the instructions described in Rule 2-407(d) ("Referee's Instructions to Crews"), if due to Interference or unfair condition, it is likely that a Crew in contention has been deprived of its opportunity of winning, placing, or advancing, and if further continuance of the Race would be of no further competitive value.

Proposed text of the Procedure

Rule 2-405 Stopping a Race in Progress

In the likelihood a Crew in contention has been deprived of its opportunity of winning, placing, or advancing, ***whether*** due to Interference or unfair condition, and if ***continuing*** the Race would of no ***more*** competitive value, the Referee shall stop the Race by giving the instructions described in Rule 2-407(d) ("Referee's Instructions to Crews").

Reasoning

For the sake of clarity, this revision states the rule in the form of "if this scenario, then this response," instead of its current reverse order; it simplifies the sentence structure; and it removes an unnecessary modifying word.

2-409 Outside Assistance (Submitted by McAuliffe, S.)

Current text of the procedure

- (a) No Crew shall receive any outside assistance, coaching, or advice during a Race. Nothing in this rule shall preclude communication to Crews from shore using the unaided voice.

Proposed text of the procedure

- (a) No Crew shall receive any outside assistance, coaching, or advice during a Race. Nothing in this rule shall preclude communication to Crews from shore using the unaided voice. **A Crew found to have violated this rule will be assessed a warning.**

Reasoning

Contrary to other rules in this section, the appropriate penalty was not listed with the rules. With the influx of electronic devices in recent years, we should clarify the outcome of violating this rule.

4-102 Doping (*) (Submitted by Zane, J.)

Current text of procedure

4-102 Doping (*)

- (a) It is absolutely forbidden for any Competitor, whether in competition or in practice, to engage in doping.
- (b) In determining which substances, or which methods, constitute doping, USRowing adopts the definitions contained in the Anti-Doping Code of the Olympic Movement, the Anti-Doping Bylaws of FISA, and the anti-doping rules of the United States Olympic Committee. The version of each of these provisions in effect at the time of the alleged violation shall apply.
- (c) Competitors at USRowing Registered Regattas, and athletes in training for membership on the National Team, thereby agree to such testing and anti-doping controls by the independent anti-doping agency designated by the United States Olympic Committee, both during competition and out-of-competition, with or without advance notice, as may be promulgated by that agency, and as may be permitted by law.
- (d) Upon the communication by the independent anti-doping agency to USRowing of a sanction imposed for violation of the rules against doping, the CEO shall take necessary steps to enforce those sanctions according to their terms. Sanctions imposed by the independent anti-doping agency are not subject to further review by USRowing, whether by protest, appeal, grievance, or otherwise.
- (e) As of October 2, 2000, the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) has been designated by the United States Olympic Committee as the independent anti-doping agency as that term is used in this rule. Further information about prohibited substances, and anti-doping procedures and protocols, can be obtained from the USADA website.

Proposed text of procedure

4-102 Doping (*)

- (a) It is absolutely forbidden for any Competitor, whether in competition or in practice, to engage in doping.
- (b) In determining which substances, or which methods, constitute doping, USRowing adopts the definitions contained in the Anti-Doping Code of the Olympic Movement, the Anti-Doping Bylaws of FISA, and the anti-doping rules of the United States Olympic Committee. The version of each of these provisions in effect at the time of the alleged violation shall apply.
- (c) Competitors at USRowing Registered Regattas, and athletes in training for membership on the National Team, thereby agree to such testing and anti-doping controls by the independent anti-doping agency designated by the United States Olympic Committee, both during competition and out-of-competition, with or without advance notice, as may be promulgated by that agency, and as may be permitted by law.
- (d) Upon the communication by the independent anti-doping agency to USRowing of a sanction imposed for violation of the rules against doping, the CEO shall take necessary steps to enforce those sanctions according to their terms. Sanctions imposed by the independent anti-doping agency are not subject to further review by USRowing, whether by protest, appeal, grievance, or otherwise.
- (e) As of October 2, 2000, the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) has been designated by the United States Olympic Committee as the independent anti-doping agency as

that term is used in this rule. Further information about prohibited substances, and anti-doping procedures and protocols, can be obtained from the USADA website.

(f) Athletes taking a banned substance for medical reasons may apply for exemption with USRowing and may ask for support in requesting a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE) from the appropriate doping agencies when necessary.

Reasoning

The USOPC and USADA have requested in 2023 that compliance with anti-doping regulations by individual members should be shifted from the Rules of Rowing to the Membership Agreement. Although the doping rules above were already applicable to all Competitors at all USRowing Sanctioned Regattas, including Owned and Registered events, the addition to the Membership Agreement further highlights the focus on these requirements.

The reasoning for the additional language regarding USRowing support and possible internal exemptions is meant to allow for USRowing to potentially dictate policies in which certain use of banned substances is allowed with a formal TUE. A key example is the common use of hormonal treatment for people recovering from illness, including but not limited to cancer, various forms of degenerative (neuro-)muscular conditions and auto-immune disease.

Although the chance of a formal drug test at a sanctioned amateur event have proven slim to none, as written and as required by USADA, athletes wishing to compete in those events may be required to file for TUEs with the rules as written. I believe this to be unnecessarily cumbersome given the use of the substance is not malicious and aids in recovering to or maintaining their health.

4-104 Classification by Age (Submitted by Anderson, B.)

Current text of the procedure

4-104.1 Classification by Age

(a) A Competitor's eligibility to compete in events classified by age is not affected by his or her classification by skill under Rule 4-104.2 ("Classification by Skill"). A Competitor's classification by skill in non-age category events shall be as provided in that rule.

(b) The following classifications are used to determine a Competitor's eligibility based on age: (1) U23: A Competitor may compete in the U23 category until December 31 of the year of their 22nd birthday.

(2) U21: A Competitor may compete in the U21 category until December 31 of the year of their 20th birthday.

(3) U19: A Competitor may compete in the U19 category until December 31 of the year of their 18th birthday.

(4) U17: A Competitor may compete in the U17 category until December 31 of the year of their 16th birthday.

(5) U15: A Competitor may compete in the U15 category until December 31 of the year of their 14th birthday.

(c) Youth: A Youth is a Competitor who in the current calendar year does not attain the age of 19, or who in the current calendar year does not attain the age of 20 and has been continuously enrolled in secondary school as a full-time student seeking a diploma. A Competitor thus ceases to be a Youth after December 31 of the year of their 18th birthday (U19), or upon completion of the 12th grade of secondary school, having been a full-time student within the year of their 19th birthday (U20). Athletes older than U20 are never eligible to compete as Youth.

Proposed text of the Procedure

4-104.1 Classification by Age

(a) A Competitor's eligibility to compete in events classified by age is not affected by his or her classification by skill under Rule 4-104.2 ("Classification by Skill"). A Competitor's classification by skill in non-age category events shall be as provided in that rule.

(b) The following classifications are used to determine a Competitor's eligibility based on age:

(1) U23: A Competitor may compete in the U23 category until December 31 of the year of their 22nd birthday.

(2) U21: A Competitor may compete in the U21 category until December 31 of the year of their 20th birthday.

(3) U19: A Competitor may compete in the U19 category until December 31 of the year of their 18th birthday.

(4) U17: A Competitor may compete in the U17 category until December 31 of the year of their 16th birthday.

(5) U15: A Competitor may compete in the U15 category until December 31 of the year of their 14th birthday.

Additionally, Junior categories may be used to determine a Competitor's eligibility based on age. The Junior categories are based on the age of the athlete on August 1 preceding the regatta. Competitors who had not yet attained the ages of 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 or 18 on August 1 preceding the regatta may compete in the J13, J14, J15, J16, J17 or J18 categories respectively. Coxswains in Junior categories must meet the age of the category.

(c) Youth: A Youth is a Competitor who in the current calendar year does not attain the age of 19, or who in the current calendar year does not attain the age of 20 and has been continuously enrolled in secondary school as a full-time student seeking a diploma. A Competitor thus ceases to be a Youth

after December 31 of the year of their 18th birthday (U19), or upon completion of the 12th grade of secondary school, having been a full-time student within the year of their 19th birthday (U20). Athletes older than U20 are never eligible to compete as Youth.

Reasoning

- The current age-group system represents a marked improvement over the previous novice/varsity system as it means that developing athletes compete with athletes of a similar age.
- However, due to the selection of the Jan 1 - Dec 31 window (presumably to align with World Rowing categories), there are a number of unforeseen side effects which limit the efficacy of the change and lead to operational issues in member clubs.
- The rowing season and, indeed, the end point of Youth Rowing is not just defined by age, but also education status.
- In fact, an athlete who is currently eligible for Youth Rowing by age, but has graduated High School, would be unable to compete at YNC - whereas an athlete who is over 1 year older, but remained in High School, would be eligible.
- This illustrates that USRowing is aware of the High School process and the years an athlete has as a youth rower. This proposal seeks to more closely align the age group windows with an athlete's grade (it is still an age-based system)

Benefits:

- Allows ALL 8th Grade equivalent athletes to be J15, rather than 1/3 U16, 2/3 U15
 - 8th Grade is too young to start sweeping, and U15 is just designed for 4x+
- This eliminates 8th graders from being in the U16 category
- 9-12 Scholastic Programs are not disadvantaged by club U16 programs who have access to 8th graders to add to U16 programs
- Keeps grades together, this is beneficial for club cohesion and scholastic team planning
 - The U16 category effectively becomes the Freshman category, so scholastic teams no longer have to split 9th graders into U16 / U17 age depending on birth year
 - U17 is a midway point between freshman and youth rowing
- Allows better experiences for athletes and their peer groups by moving through with their friends, rather than getting to 10th grade and some changing to U19 and others staying U17
- Fall racing categories are the same as spring racing categories
- Currently an athlete who is U16 in the fall season will be U17 in the spring season - and U17 becomes Youth etc.

4-105.1 Coxswain's Eight (Submitted by Zalkind, M.)

Current text of the procedure

4-105.1 Coxswain's Weight

(a) All Competitors who are competing as a Coxswain must meet the following minimum weights and their weights shall be determined as provided in Rule 4-106 ("Weighing of Competitors").

(1) A Coxswain in an Event for men's Crews shall weigh at least 120 lbs.

(2) A Coxswain in an Event for women's Crews shall weigh at least 110 lbs.

(3) A Coxswain in an Event for mixed Crews shall weigh at least 120 lbs.

(b) Coxswains who do not comply with subsection (a) above shall carry deadweight in order to achieve the minimum weight. Any such deadweight shall be placed in the boat as close to the torso of the Coxswain as possible and such weight shall remain in the boat throughout the duration of the race.

(c) It is specifically forbidden to distribute deadweight throughout the boat.

(d) A Crew whose Coxswain does not have their deadweight at the finish of the Race shall not be placed.

(e) At any time, before or immediately after the Race, the Referee, another Race Official, or a member of the Control Commission may require the weight of the deadweight to be checked.

(f) Excess clothing, Equipment, electronic systems, tools, or other utilitarian devices germane to competition, shall not be considered part of the Coxswain's weight and shall not be included as part of any deadweight required under subsection (b) above.

Proposed text of the Procedure

4-105.1 Coxswain's Weight

(a) All Competitors who are competing as a Coxswain must meet the following minimum weights and their weights shall be determined as provided in Rule 4-106 ("Weighing of Competitors"). **To make up this weight, coxswains may carry a maximum of 33lbs.**

(1) A Coxswain in an Event for men's Crews shall weigh at least 120 lbs.

(2) A Coxswain in an Event for women's Crews shall weigh at least 110 lbs.

(3) A Coxswain in an Event for mixed Crews shall weigh at least 120 lbs.

(b) Coxswains who do not comply with subsection (a) above shall carry deadweight in order to achieve the minimum weight. Any such deadweight shall be placed in the boat as close to the torso of the Coxswain as possible and such weight shall remain in the boat throughout the duration of the race.

(c) It is specifically forbidden to distribute deadweight throughout the boat.

(d) A Crew whose Coxswain does not have their deadweight at the finish of the Race shall not be placed.

(e) At any time, before or immediately after the Race, the Referee, another Race Official, or a member of the Control Commission may require the weight of the deadweight to be checked.

(f) Excess clothing, Equipment, electronic systems, tools, or other utilitarian devices germane to competition, shall not be considered part of the Coxswain's weight and shall not be included as part of any deadweight required under subsection (b) above.

Reasoning

The rule for World Rowing (FISA) is:

Section 4 Coxswains: Rule 21 Coxswains:

.. to make up this weight, coxswains may carry a maximum of 15kg deadweight.

The rule in US Rowing is 4-105.1 Coxswain's Weight. b. Coxswains who do not comply with subsection (a) above shall carry deadweight in order to achieve the minimum weight.

World Rowing does not differentiate between the weight of coxswains for men and women, both are 121. But, they do cap the weight any coxswain can carry. US Rowing sets a different minimum weight for men at 120 and women at 110 but has **no maximum on the weight carried by any coxswain to achieve that weight.**

We have coxswains who carry up to half their body weight. Both World Rowing and US Rowing require the weight to be carried in the immediate vicinity of the coxswain. This is a safety issue.

5-201 Submission of Entries (submitted by Laffer, S.)

Current text of the procedure

5-201 Submission of Entries

- (a) The LOC shall establish the method of entry, all applicable deadlines and entry fees.
- (b) All Competitors must have a signed waiver on file at USRowing.
- (c) All entries must include: (1) the name of the Club submitting the entries, (2) the names of all Competitors, (3) USRowing membership number of each Competitor and the date of expiration, (4) the affiliation of each Competitor, if such affiliation is not with the Club submitting the forms, and (5) the boatings of all Crews being entered.

Proposed text of the Procedure

5-201 Submission of Entries

- (a) The LOC shall establish the method of entry, all applicable deadlines and entry fees.
- (b) All Competitors must have a signed waiver on file at USRowing.
- (c) All entries must include: (1) the name of the Club submitting the entries, (2) the names of all Competitors, (3) USRowing membership number of each Competitor and the date of expiration, (4) the affiliation of each Competitor, if such affiliation is not with the Club submitting the forms, and (5) the boatings of all Crews being entered.
- (d) All Competitors representing an affiliated organization must be registered under that same affiliated organization. All entries must: (1) provide proof of affiliation with the organization, and (2) have a current and valid ID reflecting an address within 100 miles of the affiliated [brick and mortar] organization to be eligible for awards. Those found not to be in compliance will be disqualified.**
- (e) All competitors will have a 60 day waiting period after switching to a new organization affiliation before becoming eligible to compete on the new organization's roster.**
- (f) Duel affiliation will not be allowed.**
- (g) Affiliation must be renewed annually during a specific open enrollment period common to all affiliated organizations**
- (h) Competitors are only allowed one affiliation during enrollment period.**
- (i) Those requesting at other times will be assessed admin and change fees, with extenuating circumstances to be approved on a case-by-case basis. Requests and payment in writing from athletes must be submitted to USRA for approval and will take at least two weeks to process. If approved, the 60 day waiting period before being eligible for competition will apply, effective on the date of approval.**
- (j) All masters coxswain must be of masters age to compete.**

Reasoning

Currently, there are recurring issues of boat stacking and rolodex crew advantage, in which members are recruited up to the last 5 minutes prior to starting a race, giving an unfair advantage in swapping out team members based on the crew already in place with other non -team members. There is a recurring problem where a person who has no affiliation with a competing organization shows up just moments before an event and is allowed to compete, and in the process, is given the seat that was already

reserved for a person who is affiliated with the competing organization and was scheduled to compete. The result is that affiliated members are being denied the opportunity to compete at the last minute, being replaced by someone with no affiliation with the organization.

This is promoting unfair favoritism and discrimination, stifling fair competition and denying paying members from getting benefit from events in which they have already invested their time, training, and expenses. This change will ensure that the time, training and investments of affiliated members gives them fair and equal opportunity to compete in events, by preventing such boat stacking. Boat stacking is often referred to when members of a crew are replaced with the end goal of leveraging unfair advantage to win. Such stacking at the last minute could lead to even further long-term damaging consequences for both the competitors and the organization as a whole, diminishing the value of competing in US Rowing events.

Currently people are creating fake organizations and recruiting people from all over the country to join at the last minute, often the day before or the day of a particular competitive event, for the sole purpose of reaping the rewards from organizations who have registered well in advance and prepared for the competition. The current unfair practice allows someone's monetary resources alone to predetermine the odds of winning a competition. Instead, the preparedness, abilities and merits of competitors who have gone through the effort to enroll through an established affiliated organization should be the basis for providing the opportunity for everyone to have a fair competition. This proposed rule change ensures that all competitors have the same opportunity based on skill, not wealth or fraud.

Scholastic events are separate from masters category events. Due to Safe Sport, a scholastic coxswain should not be placed in competition or on the same roster as masters. Having inexperienced youth directing masters has already led to masters boats being placed in unsafe conditions, including near collisions, actual collisions, capsized boats, injuries, and damaged equipment.

USATF and USA Swimming already have rules in place similar to these proposed changes in order to prevent this cheating and unfair advantage.

[Current USATF Rules](#) "Club Affiliation All athletes entering as part of a club team must be affiliated with that club as part of their USATF membership profile prior to the close of the online event registration system on Friday, December 2, 2022, at 11:59 p.m. PDT. No club affiliation changes will be processed or considered after this deadline. Athletes must be bona fide members of a current USATF member club in order to represent a club and score team points. An athlete's current affiliation can be viewed in their membership profile and as part of the online entry process. Athletes wishing to change club affiliations can make a request through the Membership Chair of their local USATF Association or the USATF National Office at 317-261-0500 or membership@usatf.org. Note that any request to change club affiliation must be made directly by the athlete – See Regulation 4 in the USATF Governance Handbook Requests from coaches, managers, teammates, etc. will not be accepted."

[USA Swimming Rules](#) "203.9

.1 A swimmer who is a member of another Federation may compete in USA Swimming sanctioned competition with written permission of his/her Federation to do so. Except as provided in 207.9.7 and the USA Swimming Operating Policy Manual, the swimmer may swim for a USA Swimming club or team with the consent of the swimmer's Federation, in which event the swimmer shall remain a member of the swimmer's Federation, under its control and supervision. The swimmer shall register with USA Swimming, and be subject

to the Rules & Regulations of USA Swimming (including specifically Article 303 of the Rules & Regulations).

.2 A swimmer who has competed for an organization within a foreign federation must provide official documentation from that federation confirming his/her last day representing that organization in competition. Sixty (60) consecutive days must elapse after a swimmer represents any organization before he/she can represent a USA Swimming club. If documentation is not provided at the time of registration, the sixty (60) days will commence from the date of registration. Foreign swimmers who are competing for a secondary school, college or university shall be automatically released, in accordance with 203.4.”

Referee Procedures – Referee (Submitted by Meisner, H.)

Current text of the procedure

(7) Procedure – Finishing the Race

...

- After the last Crew has finished the Race
 - Observe the Crews to determine if there are any objections or if any Competitor requires Assistance
 - For Adaptive Rowing Races where a Competitor's hands are strapped, the Rower may clearly call out "Objection!" so that the Race Official hears
 - Ask Coxswains to display their weights (e.g. "Eastern College Coxswain, Show Your Weight")
 - Thank the Coxswain once the weight is displayed so they know they can put it back down
 - If there is a question about a weight (appears too small or Coxswain doesn't have the expected weight)

Proposed text of the Procedure

(7) Procedure – Finishing the Race

....

- After the last Crew has finished the Race
 - Observe the Crews to determine if there are any objections or if any Competitor requires Assistance
 - For Adaptive Rowing Races where a Competitor's hands are strapped, the Rower may clearly call out "Objection!" so that the Race Official hears
 - Ask Coxswains to display their weights (e.g. "Eastern College Coxswain, Show Your Weight")
 - ***For any weight greater than or equal to 10 pounds, the Referee shall go over the crew and inspect the weight in place. Coxswains shall not lift the weight to be displayed.***
 - Thank the Coxswain once the weight is displayed so they know they can put it back down
 - If there is a question about a weight (appears too small or Coxswain doesn't have the expected weight)

Reasoning

This proposed change addresses a safety issue when coxswains are carrying 10 pounds or more of deadweight. As the deadweight increases, there is a higher likelihood of causing injury to the coxswain or having an adverse event (such as the deadweight accidentally dropping into the hull and causing damage or into the water and being unavailable for verification). It makes the evaluation of the deadweight safer for the coxswain and doesn't significantly add time at the finish of the race for the Referee.