

# **International Canoe Federation**

## **Flatwater Racing Competition Rules**

### **Basic Guides to Officiating**

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# **The Flatwater Racing Rules – Basic Guides to Officiating**

## **1. Introduction**

Some years ago, when Sergio Orsi was Chairman of the PRC (Paddling Racing Committee but now called the Flatwater Racing Committee), he asked me to write a Guide for Umpires. It was his response to my enquiry for a copy of any information the ICF may hold on the subject. Well, some thirty years or so later, I have got round to it. With a lot of help from friends, I have produced this set of Guides to cover the main areas an International Official may be appointed to do. My thanks go to them, and also to my sister, Hilary Elfick, for her helpful suggestions with the text.

Our athletes are entitled to the very best service we can provide. As officials we must be equally professional and strive for perfection. In this sport we are not paid for our services and in most cases are not in receipt of out-of-pocket expenses. Our only reward in the sport relates to personal development and satisfaction. Good officials are fully aware of the total requirements of their responsibilities and continuously strive to improve their expertise and proficiency.

The set of Guides has been targeted for potential International Officials or those newly qualified. They are basic, and by no means comprehensive nor intended to be. What I hope is that they will help guide the reader's mind, and encourage him to give himself specific targets for constant development.

Each paper is a "stand alone" document; each may be read or studied in isolation. They have all been subtitled A Basic Guide and not The Basic Guide. I do not claim to be infallible, and the Guides are exactly what they say – basic. If they promote discussion and fierce arguments, that would be simply wonderful! Nothing will better stimulate further study, formulate thinking and promote better understanding.

Much of my thinking through the years has been formed with the help of the two publications listed below. They are quite old now and have been well thumbed. The Guides contain much from them. I hope the reader will be stimulated to go out and, Buy! Buy! Buy! Buy! not only these, but also any other publications they can lay their hands on which relate to officiating in sport.

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July 2001

Alan S Goldberger, J.D. "Sports Officiating: A Legal Guide" (1984). Published by Leisure Press.

Richard Clegg and William A Thompson "Modern Sports Officiating: A Practical Guide" Third Edition (1985).  
Published by Wm. C. Brown.

## **Preface to Version 5.**

Since I embarked on this exercise in 2001 many changes have been made to the Racing Rules to provide the athlete with much fairer competition. We have also seen a rapid increase in technology to assist officials and regatta organisation, resulting in additional changes including several job descriptions. These will continue as the Sport grows and technology advances. In turn I anticipate details contained in these Basic Guides to Officiating will expand over time.

Recently, I have seen the results from a miniature action camera with a weather resistant external clip-on lens which produced superb clarity of details in a competition. Shots were obtained hands-free with the camera stored in the operator's pocket. Although results can be previewed on the camera's LCD screen, they can be downloaded to a personal computer at high speed. So, in time, such technology may prove to be a useful tool, for example to support an umpire's report; and it is not too expensive.

I have purposely retained in these guides the text which includes all basic information, because I am well aware that many Federations or clubs have very modest facilities to organise an International Competition. I well remember an International Competition held in the early '60s on The Serpentine, a lake in Hyde Park, Central London. The distance was only 800 metres but the competitors did not mind this. The lack of facilities was not a bar to the organisation of a most successful event enjoyed by all competitors. It is a case of making the most use of what technology or facilities are available so that as many competitors as possible feel they have experienced a most enjoyable and worthwhile event.

In response to previous versions, I have received very many communications regarding the correct interpretation of the Rules. Most but not all are from officials who, in preparing for the ICF Examination, wish for either a better understanding or fuller explanation. I welcome these queries and try to answer them within two to three days of receipt. Please keep your questions coming. I should also welcome feedback from anyone who has used the Guides in preparation for the ICF Examination, particularly comments on how useful they found the documentation of assistance to them. Such information will, hopefully, help me to improve the next version.

**Rowland Jones**

March 2008

## **The Flatwater Racing Rules – 2. Jury: Understanding the role of the Jury**

For all World Championship events a Jury is appointed by the ICF Board of Directors. The Jury is the supreme authority of the event. Although the actual competition is run through a Competition Committee, it is subordinate to the Jury. A Jury may also be appointed for other competitions and the same principals would apply.

The Jury must ensure that the ICF Statutes, Competition Rules and Regulations are complied with during a competition and where necessary interpret the Statutes, Competition Rules and Regulations. In effect, the Jury represents the ICF Board of Directors as guardians/trustees of the sport.

To fulfil their responsibilities the Jury has access to all parts of the organisation of the competition and they need such access to ensure governance of the event.

As with the trustee of any organisation the values – for example ‘integrity’, ‘honesty’, ‘transparency’ are essential. Everything the Jury does must be able to stand the test of scrutiny by the ICF Board of Management, the public and the media. Members must not be provoked into taking an action that may be considered biased, in favour of an individual or group, rather than behaviour designed to translate the principles of the ICF Board into practice.

All Officials, Coaches and Competitors should be aware of the position of the Jury. They should not, through direct contact/comment, invite behaviour that could be viewed as inappropriate on the part of a member of the Jury which may give that member a conflict of interests.

Although not specifically stated in the Rules, except in regards to protests, all have access to the Jury through the Competition Committee. Enquiries or requests for answers to queries must be addressed through the Competition Committee, Competitors by their Team Leader and Officials direct. All queries must follow this route. This course of action is essential to preserve the integrity and transparency of all personnel and thereby the sport.

The same principles apply to all Officials appointed to officiate in any competition. Integrity, honesty and transparency of the sport are essential. All Officials must avoid any conflict of interests in carrying out their duties.

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### **REFERENCE**

Best Behaviour – Using Trustee Codes of Conduct to Improve Governance Practice. Author: Tesse Akpeki. Published by: The National Council for Voluntary Organisations. ISBN: 0 7199 1646 1. [www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/publications](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/publications)

## **The Flatwater Racing Rules – 3. Boat Control: A basic guide for Boat Controllers**

A Boat Controller's job is to test the craft taking part in a competition and ensure that it fulfils the ICF requirements concerning classification.<sup>2</sup> A boat presented for measuring should be either right or wrong. By that I mean the decision has to be decisive, including the decision on the boat's sectional and longitudinal lines. The rule 8.7 is resolute regarding innovations. Boat Controllers must be up-to-date in their knowledge of all new and approved innovations which are not just limited to boats but to all equipment and clothing. If a boat is rejected at any time the decision must be referred to the Competition Committee for authorisation. There will normally be a team of controllers employed together with a number of assistants.

For the Olympic Games there are additional rules concerning the display of propaganda or advertising on all equipment (boats and paddles) and on any clothing worn or used by the athlete.

The Boat Controller must:

- be fully conversant with Articles numbered 7, 8, and 9 of the ICF Flatwater Racing Competition Rules<sup>2</sup>
- have the ability to handle people tactfully and with confidence
- demonstrate courtesy and respect
- be decisive in making decisions.

There are three occasions when the Boat Controller is required:

1. two to three days prior to the start of the competition
2. prior to embarkation of crews for the start of their race
3. on completion of each race.

The Controller should be equipped with:

- a numbered list to assign a number and record each boat checked, and a set of scrutiny record forms to list details of each team's fleet of boats checked. Controllers' process checklists for each boat
- 1100 centimetre flexible steel rule
- callipers for outside measurements or other gauges set for 5 cm, 6 cm, and 7 cm
- a 30 cm steel straight edge
- large try-square
- set of self adhesive event stickers and black or contrasting waterproof marker pen

- a microscope for checking that the surface skin of the hull is entirely clean and not porous/cellular, and wet sponges to check the hull has no water soluble substance adhering to it
- at least two electronic scales which must be certified as correct.
- the organisers may supply gauges set for 520 cm, 650 cm, 900 cm, and 1100 cm to check the maximum length requirements. However, if gauges are supplied they must be checked with a steel rule.

In the days prior to the competition teams must submit their fleet of boats for scrutiny. Teams will normally be given a time slot although some flexibility must be allowed for late arrivals. The Team Manager should accompany the team. The Chief Controller should be readily available on the arrival of each team and exchange greetings with the Team Manager. He should enquire as to the number of boats to be scrutinised and their classifications in order to manage the process with the least possible delay. Boats should be processed in groups: all K1s - K2s - K4s then all C1s - C2s - and finally C4s. To avoid congestion and consequential accidents, only the Team Leader, Boat Controllers and the assistants must be allowed in the scrutiny area. Team Members must be on ready to hand over their boats for checking and be available to receive them back after scrutiny.

The layout of the measuring equipment is important. The best way is to use a walk through tent to facilitate a production-line basis, checking these points:

- first, boats are measured to confirm dimensions
- secondly, tested that the hull is convex, has no foreign bodies added to it, and carries no banned advertising material
- thirdly, weighed and weight added if required
- fourthly, paperwork completed and each boat assigned a unique number.

It is highly disrespectful for an official to smoke within the vicinity of the athletes.

**Measurers should have checklist detailing each measurement to be checked; this should accompany the process of each boat down the line:**

**Dimensions to be checked:**

- Length.
- Horizontally, the highest point of the deck is not greater than the highest point of the first cockpit. (Try-square may be needed.)
- **Kayaks** have one rudder only and it is not thicker than 10 mm if an over-stern type.
- **Canoes** -
  - Minimum length of cockpit opening
  - Maximum extension of decking along the defined opening
  - Number of strengthening bars and their maximum width
  - No rudder or guiding apparatus and that any keel is straight, extends the length of the boat and is no more than 30 mm below the hull.

Caution regarding canoes - in checking the minimum length of the cockpit opening, the measurement must be taken from the point where the extension of any decking from the gunwale is reduced to 5 cm (C1 and C2) or 6 cm (C4).

### **Construction**

- Kayaks must be the sit-in type and not sit-on type (Kayak as opposed to Surf Ski).
- All horizontal and vertical sections of the hull can be flat but must not be concave. (Check with 30-cm steel straight edge.)
- The boat must not carry any advertising of tobacco or strong spirit drinks, and any other advertising material it may display must not interfere with the competitor's identification. However, there are special conditions and very strict limitations for the Olympic Games.
- The boat must not have any foreign substance added to it that may give the competitor an advantage. The surface skin of the hull must be checked with a microscope to ensure it is not porous/cellular/honeycombed.
- The boat must not contain any electric or electronic devices.
- The boat must be equipped with a slot to carry a lane number.
- Check that the boat has no damage or rough parts that could cause an injury to the competitor, a rescuer, or anyone in boat control. (See the second caution below.)

Caution - Sections not being concave means they can be convex and even flat. Normally any doubtful section of the hull can be detected by eye but if necessary a 30-cm steel straight edge can be applied to look for daylight beneath which would indicate a concave surface. In such a circumstance the boat is not acceptable and authorisation must be sought from the Competition Committee.

However, most boats will have a defect in their surface somewhere, which could be construed as breaking the rules and the cheaper the construction the greater likelihood of a defect. The real point is, does the defect offer an advantage to the competitor? In such circumstance, the Controller must always refer to the Chief Controller for guidance. If the Chief Controller is not happy to accept a boat, he in turn must refer to the Competition Committee who will confirm in their experience that such a defect offers an advantage.

Caution - A boat may be legal according to the rules, but if someone is injured through contact with a damaged coaming for example (be it a rescuer or even the competitor himself), the Competition Committee and Organisers may be exposed to liability in a court of law, for a foreseeable consequence of inaction in allowing the use of unsafe equipment.

### **Weighing**

- Boats must be weighed without a lane number on their decks.

- Before each boat is weighed a check must be made to confirm that the scales are registering nil.
- The boat must be completely dry at the first weighing including any attachments such as buoyancy which may absorb water, and have all loose fittings removed including any items that are merely lodged in the boat.
- After the above checks, weigh the boat and make a note of the reading on the process checklist.
- Add weight if necessary to bring the boat above the minimal weight requirement and make a note on the process checklist of the amount of weight added. Teams are responsible for fixing any additional weight in their boat.

## **Records**

From the process checklist confirm that each process has been done and then complete the records.

- Fix a self-adhesive event sticker to the deck near the left side of the first cockpit for kayaks and by the coaming on the left side of the fore deck for canoes.
- From the numbered list write the assigned number on the sticker with a waterproof marker pen.
- Complete the numbered list with the Country/Team name and classification of boat.
- Complete the scrutiny form listing and recording the Team's boats with:
  1. allocated number and Classification of boat
  2. weight of boat on presentation and any additional weight added
  3. details of any damaged area of equipment, which on inspection was considered dangerous. And, what the Team did to make it safe for handling by anyone.

Both the Chief Controller and Team Manager should sign the Team's list of scrutinised boats as being an accurate record; it is good practice if a copy of the list is given to the Team Manager.

No alteration of any boat is permitted after the first scrutiny and before the competition. The Chief Controller must retain a copy of all scrutiny lists, and the originals must be handed to the Competition Committee together with the completed assigned number record.

## **Before each race**

Two or three Controllers will be assigned to check each boat and crew before embarkation for the Start. Therefore, the Controllers will be required to be on duty at the embarkation pontoon at least 45 minutes before the start of the race. They will need an up-to-date start list (in addition to drinking water, sunscreen and wet weather gear); a table and chairs under shade would provide some welcome comfort. They must check:

- the sticker applied at the first scrutiny and record the assigned boat number on the start list

- that the boat has the correct lane number attached
- that the boat does not have any foreign substance added to it, which may give competitors an unfair advantage. (If in doubt, check the surface of the hull with the use of a wet sponge.)
- the boat does not contain any electric or electronic devices such as:
  - pumps
  - speed measuring devices
  - strain gauges
- that the competitors are properly attired:
  - correct Team colours
  - correct competitor's personal number (as shown on the start list), worn on the competitor's back
  - they are not wearing any banned advertising material
- that no competitor is wearing an electric or electronic device such as a heart monitor
- for the Olympic Games each competitor's paddles must comply with the International Olympic Committee rules on advertising. (A trademark may appear only once; once on each blade is one too many.)

Ten minutes before the start-time for the race the Controller should communicate and confirm with the Competition Committee that all competitors have been checked and embarked for the race, or supply details of those boats that have failed to be checked.

### **Immediately on completion of the race**

A sheltered site should be allocated near the finish for the Boat Control where three or more boats, according to the decision of the Competition Committee, must come to have their boats checked. Ideally, the site should have a board facing the course to show competitors the lane numbers of those called to have their boats checked. Boats called must come directly to the control. Directly means just that – immediately, crews must not paddle around or indulge in any victory celebration before going to boat control. Neither must any boat re-enter the racing course after the race.

It is best if a group of at least eight assistants are employed to take the boats to be weighed from competitors as they disembark (but only if the competitor would like such assistance).

On completion of a race the Controller must:

- listen for the announcement of numbers of the boats and make a note of them
- mark the information board to show the boats required
- on receipt of the boats, ensure they are dried as much as possible inside and out, and all loose gear is removed together with the lane number
- check and make a record of the number on the sticker applied at the first scrutiny
- weigh the boat to confirm it complies with the minimum weight requirements, and make a record of the boat's actual weight.

A boat failing the Controllers' scrutiny must be held while communication is made with the Competition Committee as they may wish to satisfy themselves and make inquiries. They may wish to refer to the original scrutiny record to try to ascertain the reason for the failure, and will certainly call for the Team Manager. Communication must also be made to the Competition Committee if all is in order.

### **After the competition**

- Keep a log, writing down any significant fact including rule interpretations you may have learned.
- Discuss any incidents with experienced officials and ask questions.
- Analyse and evaluate the way you conducted your duties.

It is very important that the official acts in a professional, competent, respectful manner. There is no substitute for individual study of the Racing Rules, supplemented by discussion and experience (including lots of practise in measuring various makes of boat at home to build decisiveness), with a view to gaining competence and the trust of competitors, coaches and fellow officials.

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Compiled with the helpful assistance of:

**David Green**, The British Canoe Union, I.C.F. Marathon Race Official,  
And Professional Boat Builder

### **REFERENCE**

2. "International Canoe Federation Flatwater Racing Competition Rules 2007". Publisher: I.C.F.

## **The Flatwater Racing Rules – 4. Starting: A basic guide for Starters and Aligners**

Of all the tasks to be performed among racing officials, that of the Starter is probably the most onerous. It is he (or she) who has a duty to ensure that all boats have a fair start. He decides all questions concerning the start of the races, and is alone responsible for decisions as to false starts. His (or her) decision is final.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the Starter must have quick reactions, a good command, clear speaking voice, self-confidence, determination and patience, and be able to exercise impartial judgments.<sup>4</sup> A calm and methodical approach can greatly assist clean and fair starts that are on time.

It is desirable, although not essential, for Starters to have some competitive experience in the Sport as they would have first-hand experience of problems the competitor encounters with the start. It would be beneficial if more ex-paddlers would officiate as Starters, provided they have the other qualities outlined above.<sup>4</sup>

When more than one Starter is employed, the start of the heats, semi-finals and final of the same event should be undertaken by the same Starter.<sup>4</sup> It is also an advantage to competitors if the one Starter starts all events for the same group of athletes over the same distance, for example: the 1000 metre events for Men K1, K2 and K4.

No Starter wants to disqualify an athlete. By careful application of the starting procedure, the number of false starts and disqualifications can be minimal. Fundamental to good starting is that the start is part of the competition between the athletes and must never become a competition between athletes and the Starter. Few athletes wish to gain an advantage by jumping the start, they simply do not wish to be disadvantaged. A quiet, confident manner helps to relax the competitors so that they will not try to second-guess the Starter.

### **Records and Reports**

A written record must be made of each event showing the lane numbers of any:

1. absentees
2. boat which caused a false start
3. boat eliminated by causing a second false start, and
4. boat starting without coming under the directions of the Starter.

A verbal report should be communicated to the Competition Committee at the same time. The written records must be handed to the Competition Committee after each sequence of events with a copy being retained by the Starter until the end of the competition.

## **Starting Equipment**

To ensure that the starting equipment is in good working order, these utilities must be tested before each sequence of events:

1. communication with the Finish / Competition Committee
2. loudspeakers across the Course
3. the Automatic Start System if such is being used
4. the reception by each assistant who is to hold the stern of the boat (if individual headphones are used)
5. the reception of loud speakers at each start position
6. the VCR System
7. a large clock showing the correct time which is visible to the starter and all the athletes, and
8. ensure there is lane number indication (overhead or installed on each start position).

## **Aligner's Duties and Aligning**

As competitors paddle around the start, the Aligner checks the competitors' attire and completes the check as they come onto the start-line. He (or she) must check:

1. the correct personal number on the back of the competitor
2. the correct Lane number on the boat, and
3. that he has the correct number of boats.

Before a sequence of events, the Aligner must brief his assistants to explain the instructions they will receive and what is expected of them. The Aligner should adjust the line starting with Lane 1, then 2 and so on. However, if the Start Platform/Hut is on the right of the course and low to the water, he should start with Lane 9, then 8 and so on in order for the alignment to be viewed and corrected more easily. To attract the attention of his correct assistant he should say the Lane number first, then Back, Forward, or Stop, as required. The Aligner should always recheck the starting line to confirm all is in order and only when satisfied, give his signal to the Starter.

All boats are required to be at the starting area in good time to allow satisfactory preparation for the start. (The starting area is defined as the area of water within 100 metres before the start-line). A boat is late for the start if it arrives in the starting area less than two minutes before the start time. It is also late if it arrives on the actual start-line after completion of the Aligner's initial alignment. Any boat failing to come under directions of the start must be eliminated from the race. (Please note, competitors must not be allowed to use gamesmanship in delaying coming to the start line by purposely holding back.)<sup>4</sup>

When aligning with an Automatic Start System, it is most important that the bow of each boat is correctly housed in the starting boot (or gate). It is very difficult to view this from the side. Therefore, it is good practice for two Aligners to be stationed in boats behind lanes 3 and 7. They should display a red flag as boats come to the start. When satisfied

each boat is correctly housed, they should lower the red flag and raise a white flag. The Starter should then give the start signal without undue delay.

### **The Start**

Provided the Starter is satisfied he must commence the start immediately he receives the Aligner's signal. It is critical that the preliminary words "**Start within ten seconds**" are spoken in a calm and relaxed voice. The words must not be hurried and thereby invite a false start. Ideally, the time delay between saying the word "**seconds**" and the starting signal should be around two seconds. This is to allow time for:

1. the athlete to signal if he has a problem
2. for the Starter to ensure that boats are stationary
3. for the Starter to observe that all competitors are clearly ready to start and they are motionless - not paddling (Please note, competitors must not be permitted to use gamesmanship in slowly taking up their start position.)<sup>4</sup>
4. for the elimination of any oscillation or sway of the starting docks.

Once in the start position, athletes should not be made uncomfortable by too long a delay. They need sufficient pause for concentration but too long a hold will allow peak concentration to pass and excessive tension to develop, resulting in lack of confidence in the Starter and far too many false starts. Peak concentration takes about one-and-a-half seconds to develop.<sup>4</sup> A very short or no delay will encourage competitors to anticipate the start, resulting in many false starts and/or malfunction of an automatic start system (see Care with Automatic Starts below). A short delay should only be necessary in adverse wind conditions.

If the Starter is not satisfied with the starting positions of the boats, he must call "**Stop**" and the start procedure should be recommenced with the Aligner repositioning.<sup>2</sup> In such circumstances, a false start should not be assessed.

If the starting signal is the word "**Go**" it must be loud and sharp.

### **False Starts**

The same rules apply with or without an Automatic Start System. If a competitor starts paddling after the words "**Start within ten seconds**" and before or at the same time the start signal is given, he has made a false start.<sup>2</sup> (It is no longer permitted to anticipate the start signal.) The Starter must immediately fire **two shots** or call "**Stop**". The Starter is advised to check the VCR System to confirm his analysis before he gives the offending crew/s a warning. The Starter must be positive as to which crew/s actually caused (triggered) the false start, not which crew/s false-started. This process may take a little time. I know athletes wish to be informed as quickly as possible but it is a tragedy for a boat to get a warning incorrectly, so the Starter has to be sure his analysis is correct each and every time without fail. A warning may be given to more than one crew if the

Starter considers that more than one boat caused the false start. If two false starts are made by the same crew/s the Starter must exclude them from the race. A warning and subsequent disqualification applies only to the crew/s which caused the false start.<sup>2</sup> To penalise others, who may have false-started through being triggered by the offender, would be most unfair.

To protect the interests of all participants, the Starter must allow ample time for all competitors to prepare for the next start without undue hurrying. A strong and authoritative voice is often necessary but a bullying manner must be avoided at all costs.<sup>4</sup>

The Starter must resist the temptation to shorten the holding time for subsequent starts otherwise he will lose control and cause confusion among the athletes. They will be encouraged to anticipate the Start Signal or become nervous, perhaps feeling they may get left at the start. Other Starters at the competition will also come under unnecessary pressure.<sup>4</sup>

Whatever rules have been adopted throughout the years, the problem has always been that competitors try to anticipate the start signal partly because the absolute minimum reaction time to the start signal is a tenth of a second and probably closer to two tenths of a second. Anticipation of the start signal is no longer permitted. The competitor must not start paddling until the start signal is heard, they are not permitted to anticipate it. This means a competitor who starts to paddle at exactly the same moment the start signal is given has made a false start and in such an incident a recall is necessary.

### **Care with Automatic Starts**

With an Automatic Start System, if the System fails **two shots** must be fired immediately to recall the competitors. Before any re-testing or re-pressing the control for the Automatic Start System, all boats must be well clear as very serious damage may be caused to a competitor's boat.

The whole idea of the Automatic Start System is to ensure all competitors have a fair and equal start. A fair and equal start has not been given unless all start boots (or gates) drop at exactly the same time and also the exact moment the start signal is given. There are times when there is a malfunction of the system, when one or more start boots do not drop. A starting boot will fail to drop at the exact time of the start signal if pressure is applied to it, either against or on top of the boot. This pressure is generally caused by:

- a) the competitor paddling prior to the start signal, or
- b) by them starting to paddle at the exact time the start signal is given.

In both cases a fair and equal start has not been given to all competitors. It must be treated as a false start and a recall must be made. In either case a) or b) the competitor caused the false start and should be given a warning. If neither applies then no penalty should be given. If requested to do so, officials around the start can help the Starter by signalling to him with the use of their red flag if they see a boot malfunction.

### **This is an example of the Start process**

Instructions / announcements must be given in English.<sup>2</sup> They may be repeated in French and German (*as indicated below*) but only if considered necessary. English only should normally be sufficient.

The Starter must be totally systematic with his instructions / announcements and use the same wording with the same phrasing at the same times for each and every start.

Five minutes before the advertised time of the start, the Starter should announce the event as per this example:

**“Race Number 37”**

**“Men, K2, 500 metres, Heat 1”**

**“Five minutes to Start”**

**“Lane 1, Algeria”**

**“Lane 2, Bolivia”**

and so on.

*This announcement may be repeated  
in French and German*

*Must be spoken in a calm, relaxed  
voice*

Four minutes before the start:

**“Four minutes to Start”**

*This announcement may be repeated  
in French and German*

Three minutes before the start:

**“Race Number 37”**

**“Men, K2, 500 metres, Heat 1”**

**“Three minutes to Start”**

*(ditto)*

At this time the Starter must confirm with the Competition Committee / Finish that they are ready to accept the race and only if so:

Two minutes before the start:

**All boats must be in the Starting  
Area by this time**

**“Two minutes to Start”**

**“Please approach the Start-line”**

**“Lane 1, Algeria”**

**“Lane 2, Bolivia”**

and so on.

*(May be repeated in French and  
German)*

*Must be spoken in a calm, relaxed  
voice*

One minute before the start by which time all the boats should be taking position on their starting docks ready for alignment, or be close to the starting boats:

**“One minute to Start”**

**“Come to the Start please”**

*Must be spoken in a calm, relaxed  
voice (may be repeated in French  
and German)*

Start the VCR System.

Provided the Starter is satisfied he must not delay when he has the Aligner’s signal.

**“Start within ten seconds”**

**Must be spoken in a calm, relaxed, unhurried voice**

If a competitor starts paddling now - before the start signal - **fire two shots** or call **“Stop”** to recall.

But, after around two seconds:

***Do not rush the Start***

1. if satisfied boats are stationary
2. crews are motionless
3. there is no sway of the starting docks, and
4. no one makes a false start.

**Give the Start signal**

***If “Go” it must be loud and sharp. Watch for any malfunction with an Automatic Start System and any anticipation of the Start signal***

But if not satisfied or too long a delay say **“Stop”**, and allow the Aligner to reposition.

***No false start assessment***

**In the event of a False start**, the Starter must warn the offending crew/s:

***Always check the VCR System to confirm your analysis of offender***

**“Lane 6, England, False Start”  
“You Have a Warning”**

***The warning given should sound like a warning***

The Starter must advise the Competition Committee/Finish of the false start and hand over to the Aligner for repositioning.

***Do not hurry the competitors  
Do not bully them  
In this second start the Starter must resist the temptation to shorten the holding time***

On the occasion of a second false start by the same crew/s, the Starter must call:

**“Lane 6, England, Second False Start”  
“You are disqualified”  
“Please leave the Start-line”**

***They must leave the start before any new alignment***

**Following the Start**

After the race has started the Starter should:

1. confirm with the Competition Committee / Finish
2. clear and rewind the VCR System
3. reposition the Starting Docks for the next race if necessary, and
4. reset the Automatic Start.

### **If questioned by the Media**

On no account must you discuss any incident with the media. Any incident is solely a matter between you and the Chief Official. Politely and courteously, you must make it clear that you will not discuss the incident. However, you can paraphrase or preferably quote any rule/s that may relate to the incident.

### **After the competition**

- Keep a log, writing down any significant fact that you have learned.
- Analyse and evaluate your performance with a view to improving.
- Have specific goals for improving. No matter how experienced you are, there is always room for improvement.

I repeat that few athletes wish to gain an advantage by jumping the start; their only wish is not to be disadvantaged. The Starter must not become “Part of the Event” through poor practice and in allowing anticipation of his start command. It is very important that the official acts in a professional, competent, respectful manner to give the athlete the very best opportunity to realise their aspirations. They are entitled to receive the very best service the official can provide.

### **Rowland Jones**

The British Canoe Union  
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Compiled with the helpful assistance of:

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### **REFERENCES**

2. “International Canoe Federation Flatwater Racing Competition Rules 2007”. Publisher: I.C.F.
4. Richard Float “Starting and Marksmanship” (1987). Publisher: The Crowood Press for UK Athletics.

## **The Flatwater Racing Rules – 5. Umpiring: A basic guide for Umpires**

An umpire's responsibilities are often misunderstood, but the rules are quite clear:

**The Umpire shall see to it that during a race the rules are complied with. If the rules are broken, the Umpire shall report the infraction to the Chief Official, who, in turn, shall refer it to the Competition Committee. The Competition Committee shall decide whether any of the competitors concerned shall be disqualified or not.<sup>2</sup>**

So, the umpire does not disqualify any competitor, only reports in writing any infraction of the rules.

Before the race, it is for you as umpire to explain to your motorboat driver, where you wish to be during the race and the hand signal instructions you will give. Communications between you should be by hand signal only as any shouting over the noise of the motorboat engine may be disturbing or of concern to a competitor. You should explain to your motorboat driver:

1. the lane in which you wish to follow the race
2. the hand signal you will give to follow in an adjoining lane
3. the distance you wish to follow behind the race
4. the hand signal you will give to stop
5. the position you wish to stop at the end of the race and await acknowledgement of your flag signal to the Chief Official
6. the landing place should you wish to file a report.

Very rarely is an umpire requested by the Starter to assist in stopping boats in the event of a false start. However, if requested to do so, you must be very careful not to cause undue distress to any crew through careless use of the wash from your motorboat.

The umpire should follow the race in a central position so as to have a clear view of all the competitors. Where two umpires are employed they follow the race in positions where all competitors may be seen more easily, i.e. in a 9 boat race will follow in lanes 3 and 7. Both umpires must cover lane 5. During a race the umpire may need to change lanes:

- a) to obtain a clearer view of an infraction, or
- b) if following a very slow competitor.

Often ex-paddlers, new to umpiring, may be seen darting all over the course, looking at one group of competitors and then another. This is bad practice. If alone, the umpire should not change by more than two lanes either side of the central lane or, by more than one lane when two umpires follow. Only in exceptional circumstances should there be a need to change lanes. Remember that you are there to watch the whole race. The

umpire's boat can go alongside the last crew, if they are particularly slow, but should not go ahead of any boat (unless they are many lanes distance) and certainly not allow the motorboat's wash to hamper a crew, no matter how long it takes for them to finish.

There is sometimes a danger in anticipating the flow of action during a race or of concentrating on one or two crews to the exclusion of all other competitors. A common error is for the umpire to be fixed watching one crew's infraction and not see developments that may be occurring elsewhere. It is vital that the umpire views each boat every three to four seconds at the very least, to ensure that every crew is complying with the rules. Often it requires considerable or total concentration.

Your motorboat should stop between 50 and 100 metres before the finish line and must never cross it. A competitor who has truly raced will feel that they are going to die. They do not need the wash from your motorboat to add to their distress.

Where there are two umpires, they are severally required to umpire the whole race and report any infraction they may see, although they will each naturally have best view of those boats in the lanes to the front of them (1 to 5 or 5 to 9). The umpire must not overlook infractions which might be rationalised as "it really didn't affect the result" or which "the other umpire was in a better position to call".<sup>9</sup> All competitors depend on officials for fair outcome of the race and therefore, officials must enforce the rules.

Again, umpires must act and report independently. An umpire should not show a red flag merely in support of the other umpire's "call". Neither should they show one if they are not positive an infraction has been made.

In championship competitions, where there has been an infraction and a red flag is shown, umpires must also display the lane number/s of the offending crew/s to the view of the Competition Committee.

Sometimes there is more than one infraction by more than one competitor or boat. The umpire must prioritise these in the report. The key is the ability and judgement to distinguish between those infractions that place an opponent at a disadvantage and those technical infractions that have no bearing on the competition. This is called the Tower philosophy after Oswald Tower.<sup>9</sup> However, the philosophy does not apply to all the rules. A crew did or did not leave their lane; they were coached or were not coached from the bank, and so forth.

In reporting an infraction to the five metre rule, where two boats come within five metres of each other, the Chief Official and Competition Committee will need to see clearly from the report:

1. where in the race the infraction started, and
2. where the infraction finished,
3. the lane numbers of the crews involved,
4. the distance between boats during the infraction,
5. how close to the lane buoys the crews paddled
6. the leading crew, and

7. the travel of boats on both sides of the offending crew.

The report must be clear, unambiguous and delivered without emotion. Notes should be written during the race as an aid to preparing the report, which must be submitted before the start of the next race. So, an official new to umpiring should practice writing reports and taking notes in all races they follow to build up the expertise required.

No matter how hard you work, or even how competently you perform, complaints will come as they do to all officials. Your reactions to them are part of your development and even when you know your “call” was correct, react to the complaint calmly and firmly. Some rules require judgement; others require interpretation. A good Chief Official will guide you through an incorrect rule judgement or interpretation. He/she will be watching the race and will question you if they feel your “call” was incorrect. They are obliged to ensure fair play and if felt necessary, will reverse your decision, acting in the interests of all competitors.

You must not be dismayed or angered if your “call” has not been acted upon. It is the Chief Official and Competition Committee who carry the responsibility, not you. By all means discuss the incident with other officials with a hope of gaining a better understanding, but it is most important that you accept the decision and move on, continuing to conduct yourself with the utmost integrity.

If questioned by the media, on no account discuss the incident that gave rise to your report or the contents of your report. This is solely a matter between you and the Chief Official. Politely and courteously, you must make it clear that you are not prepared to state what was in your report. However, you can paraphrase or preferably quote the rule itself. Athletes in all sports sell newspapers. Officials do not – they’re not supposed to.

**Interpretation of Rule 23 – Races up to 1000 metres (including the 5 metre rule)**

The new 2007 rule makes the requirements of competitors very much clearer than before. It defines the position expected of all boats travelling down the course, all competitors being required to keep the whole of their boat within the four-metre wide central area of their lane from the start to the finish, and no boat coming nearer than five metres in any direction to another boat.

It means that Competitors are not permitted to race down the side of their lane following the line of buoys that mark the lane. The whole boat of the competitor must progress along the course in the four-metre wide central area of the lane and in the case of any deviation out of the central area the boat must return immediately to this central area. This is very fair. It provides for 2.5 metres of water between each boat and the buoys marking the lane, giving at least five metres of clear water between each boat, boats not being allowed to come within five metres of each other – that is, gunwale to gunwale or bow to stern. If a competitor should race within 2.5 metres of their buoy line for 50 metres or more, not returning immediately to the central area of their lane, that is an infraction. The 50 metres can easily be assessed by noting the distance between the lane buoys (normally 12.5 or 25 metres) and the number of buoys passed during the deviation. Rule 18.5 requires the lanes along the length of the course to be marked by buoys not exceeding 25 metres apart. Each boat must pass between all the buoys that mark their

lane along the length of the course. For a boat to momentarily deviate out of the line marked by the buoys but still pass between all the buoys, is not an infraction provided that the boat does not come within five metres of another boat and the boat returns immediately to the four-metre central area of the lane. However, it is reportable and a red flag must be shown at the end of the race with a written report in the normal way.

### **Preparation**

- Revisit the Racing Rules.
- Be well rested and sharp.
- Don't drink alcoholic beverages before or between sessions of duty.
- Report for duty at least 30 minutes before your first event.
- Ensure you know where the Chief Official will be and the quickest way to him/her from the nearest landing position at the finish.
- Note any special instructions from the Chief Official and/or from the Chief Umpire.
- Check you have a programme and list of events you are to umpire.
- Check you have two pens in working order.
- Obtain a small supply of report forms.
- Be sure your sports bag contains sunscreen, a spare woollen top and good rainwear.
- Check that your motorboat is equipped with red and white flags, a set of numbers from 1 to 9, and a paddle.

### **Before the race**

- Be at the start at least 5 minutes before the time of the race.
- Ensure you have given your motorboat driver all details – lane to follow in; hand signals; where to stop at the end of the race; etc.
- Keep your motorboat, and its wash, well away from competitors warming up or lining up for the start.
- Don't talk to competitors; leave them to their own thoughts.

### **During the race**

- Be sharp out there.
- Follow the race in the most central lane, and
- Change your position only if absolutely necessary.
- Watch all the competitors during the whole race.
- Don't talk or shout to competitors.
- Only communicate with your driver by hand signals as agreed.
- Look and listen for outside assistance (coaching).
- Make notes of infractions as they occur, taking note of where they happen on the course.
- Prioritise infractions.
- Take care and act with consideration to any capsized crew – preservation of life has to be your primary concern.
- Stop 100 metres before the Finish Line.

### **After the race**

- Give your report by flag signal, only after all competitors have passed the Finish Line.
- If there are two umpires remember that you are acting severally.
- Watch out for distressed or capsized crews, ensuring that they are receiving assistance if required.
- Prepare your infraction report if needed and aim to have it completed before you reach the landing dock.
- Be fit enough to run up three flights of stairs and deliver your concise and unambiguous report to the Chief Official without appearing breathless. The report must be factual and delivered without emotion. Remember that you are not disqualifying anyone.

### **After the competition**

- Keep a log, writing down any significant fact including rule interpretations that you have learned.
- Discuss any incidents with experienced officials and ask questions.
- Analyse and evaluate your performance with a view to improving.
- Have specific goals for improving. No matter how experienced you may be, there is always room for improvement.

Competitors spend so much of their time in training to achieve their aspirations, at whatever level that may be. It is very important that the official acts in a professional, competent, respectful manner to ensure fair play. The official serves the athlete by ensuring that those competitors to go through to the next round or their position in a final are entitled to be there.

There is no substitute for individual study of the Racing Rules, supplemented by experience and discussion. It takes many years to gain the trust of competitors, coaches and officials. Such officiating integrity is the product of personal honesty and reliability.

**Rowland Jones**  
The British Canoe Union  
I.C.F. International Regatta Official

**ATTACHED:** A Report Form now used by the ICF as from 2007

### **REFERENCES**

2. "International Canoe Federation Flatwater Racing Competition Rules" 2007. Publisher: I.C.F.
9. Richard Clegg and William A. Thompson "Modern Sports Officiating, A Practical Guide" Third Edition (1985). (Chapters 1 and 2). Publisher: Wm. C. Brown.

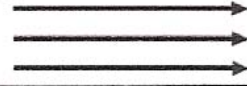
# course umpire's report

START NO	DATE	TIME	EVENT	NO	HEAT	SEMI-FINAL	FINAL

INDICATE THE RACE DISTANCE 200m 500m 1000m CIRCLE

INDICATE THE DIRECTION OF TRAVEL OF KAYAKS OR CANOES

show travel of boats on both sides of offending lane



0										0
100/250										500
↑ 200/500										↑ 1000
X OUT NON STARTERS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	

## REPORT

1 out of centre of lane for	50m	75m	100m	150m	more	CIRCLE
2 any advantage	yes	no	did they come with in 5m	yes	no	CIRCLE
3 out of lane aprox distance	metres					TICK
4 capsize						TICK
5 left course	retired	did not finish race			TICK	

ANY OTHER FWR RULES INFRINGED STATE CLAUES NO

course umpire

SIGNATURE

## **The Flatwater Racing Rules – 6. Judging and Timekeeping: A basic guide for Finishing Line Judges**

The ideal finish line judge (judge) must exercise considerable concentration and be able to work quickly, accurately and calmly without getting flustered, particularly when confronted by a blanket finish. It requires considerable skill and practice to develop the ability to record in the mind the visual picture of a close finish and place boats in the correct order.<sup>5</sup>

Timekeeping is now normally through a photo finish system. However, in very rare circumstances the judge may also be called upon to act as timekeeper. For good timekeeping the same skills of accuracy and calmness are required together with being well practised in operating a stopwatch to a consistently high level. This can only be achieved if the judge acts without muscle tension, does not anticipate either the start or a boat crossing the line, and eliminates any waste movement by just squeezing the watch between thumb/hand and bony part of the forefinger to operate the button.<sup>6</sup>

Judges need very good vision. They should visit an Optometrist for an eyesight test every two years, whether or not they wear lenses.

Each judge needs a clear and uninterrupted view of the finish line. This is best achieved by locating a tiered stand on the bank in direct line of the finish. Sometimes this stand may be uncovered and therefore judges will need to equip themselves for protection against the rain. In addition to good rainwear and spare warm clothing it is essential to carry a supply of large, transparent plastic bags big and loose enough to carry a clipboard and movement of the hand using a pencil.<sup>5</sup> Ballpoint pens should always be avoided; they run out of ink, don't write on damp paper and tend to rip damp paper. It is preferable to use a thick, very soft pencil, sharpened at both ends.

The Chief Photo-finish Operator and his assistants should be checking their equipment at least two hours before the competition to make sure all the systems are operating correctly. Judges should report for duty at least 30 minutes before the first event.

### **Judging**

The rules require that the position of competitors in their boats is recorded by video camera at the time of arriving to the finish line. This recording is used to decide whether or not the competitor was in his/her boat at the time of arrival at the finish, and as a last resort can be useful to assist officials to make accurate decisions.

Judges record the boat numbers in order of finish. As the boats approach the finish, the judge must focus his head and eyes firmly on the finish line for the whole time boats cross the line. It is a mistake for a judge to allow his sight to follow boats through the line in attempting to identify the finish order. The numbers should be written vertically

down the paper. If in any doubt, it is important to leave a clearly shown gap - (?) - in the result. It is no discredit on a judge not to have been able to place all the boats; however, to present an inaccurate or copied result very definitely is. For this reason, as soon as the race is over it is vital that the result is not discussed until the Chief Finish Line Judge has viewed each judge's written decision and made up his record.<sup>5</sup> Where judges differ in the placing of the boats, the decision is made by simple majority with the Chief Finish Line Judge having the casting vote if necessary.<sup>2</sup> When photo-finish is used the judges' decision is compared with it, with the photo-finish being decisive in the placing of boats.<sup>2</sup>

There are various systems to ensure accuracy of placing, but I only intend to record two here. Both systems have six judges including the Chief Finish Line Judge and he will make his own record of the order of finish, comparing it with the records of his judging team.

**System 1.** The Chief Finish Line Judge divides his team to note the order of finish:  
 Judge 1, records the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> boats;      Judge 2, records the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> boats;  
 Judge 3, records the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> boats;      Judge 4, records the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> boats;  
 Judge 5, records the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> boats.

**System 2.** The Chief Finish Line Judge asks three of his judges to record the finish order and the fourth and fifth judges to record the finish order of the last 4 or 5 boats only. Having one or two judges concentrating on the last boats to finish is very useful because in a close finish, a focussed record of the last boats eliminates those boats from the record of the first half of the race. However, it can be difficult because these judges have to allow the first boats to cross the line and then decide when to start their record.<sup>5</sup>

## Timekeeping

Digital read-out quartz electronic timers are now normally used in place of mechanical watches but the same principles apply whichever bank of timers is used. There is a problem however with electronic timers in that they are susceptible to damp and will require special care in inclement weather. Some electronic timers have a 'split' function and memory so that more than one placing and finish time may be recorded on the same timer. However, use of this facility should be avoided as it leads to inaccurate records particularly in a close finish. Therefore, nine timekeepers are required to cover a lane/boat each. Immediately after the race each watch must be shown to the Chief Finish Line Judge who will make up the official record. No watch may be reset until the Chief Finish Line Judge is satisfied he has a complete and accurate record.<sup>6</sup>

In the absence of automatic electronic starting of all watches each judge is required to start their own timer independently. The Starter's signal to start is normally relayed by amplified radio or telephone. The judge must never anticipate this signal. The watch button must be operated (squeezed) only when the judge actually hears the start signal. Likewise, the finish of a boat must not be anticipated. The watch must not be stopped until the judge sees the bow of the boat breaking the finish line. The reaction times for both start and finish must be the same and always the same. To anticipate either will result in inconsistencies with the operator's results as compared with other judges. It requires considerable skill and practice to achieve accurate results consistently. Should a

watch fail to start correctly, the judge must inform the Chief Finish Line Judge without delay so the he can make sure the placing is covered.<sup>6</sup>

The rules require two systems of timing. In the absence of photo-finish each judge will need to time his assigned boat/lane with a timer in each hand and operate them together. When the times do not agree the longest or worst time is taken as the official time. The bony part of the index finger should always be used in operating timer/watch buttons.

### **Photo-Finish**

There are a variety of photo-finish systems used but they all follow the same basic principles. The camera takes a series of incredibly thin line pictures at a rate of 2000 times a second. The picture is of the finish line and nothing else so, in effect, the pictures are the opposite of a panoramic view. Placed next to each other the thin individual images record onto a computer the activity on the finish line at each split second. Through the computer monitor, times can be read with the use of the mouse to move a line marker to the bow of each boat and clicking the mouse. This tells the computer software to identify what time corresponds with this slice of image. Therefore, incredibly precise times are obtained of each boat as it crosses the finish line.

The rules do not permit the use of an ordinary video camera as a substitute for photo-finish because pictures are only recorded every 50<sup>th</sup> of a second and therefore are not sufficiently accurate in deciding a close finish. However, in a last resort the video finish is a most useful tool in assisting officials to make accurate decisions.

To minimise boats/competitors masking one another the camera must be sited in an elevated position to cover all nine lanes, but either a mirror system, or two cameras on opposite sides of the course, can be used to obviate masking.<sup>6</sup> However for World Championships or Olympic Games two photo-finish cameras are required to be sited on the tower side of the course. Ideally, the photo-finish should include all finishers no matter how long it takes them to finish. At the very least the record must show all boats that qualify for the next round from a heat or semi-final, and all boats in a final.

It is good practice for the Chief Finish Line Judge to be included in the Photo-finish team to assist with reading the photograph, and to decide the placings and times. The Chief Official or Chief Judge must certify that the placings, and times, are correct before their official publication. In World Championship competitions the Chairman of the Jury may also be invited to view the photograph as it may avoid problems later. The rules require a copy of the photo-finish to be placed on the official notice-board in the event of a close finish between two or more boats.

The Competition Committee may decide that the times on the photo-finish are inaccurate. It requires co-operation, mutual respect and trust between all officials to solve such problems.<sup>6</sup> The times on the photo-finish may not be accurate because the system was started manually instead of electronically through the Starter's signal. In such a case the winner's hand time becomes the official time for the winner but, if at all possible, the time intervals for all other places must be calculated from the photo-finish. Should such

a malfunction occur in one of a group of heats or semi-finals of the same event, the same system must be applied to all that group of heats or semi-finals. In some events the fastest loser(s) go forward to the next round which is on time, not on placing. It is therefore vital that the same timing system is used for all the event heats or semi-finals in order to maintain consistency and fairness to competitors. If a copy of such a photo-finish is to be placed on the official notice-board the amended official timings must be clearly shown together with a note that the photo-finish was not started by the Starter's gun.

### **Tied Finishes**

If the photo-finish confirms the simultaneous arrival of two boats at the finish, both boats are placed in the best position as per this example:

1. Germany
2. France
2. Spain
4. Greece

### **Taking personal notes**

It is always a good idea to keep a notebook in which to record one's own experiences and observations gained during and after a competition. It serves to reinforce knowledge and experiences obtained, and will help the official improve his abilities.

**Rowland Jones**  
The British Canoe Union  
I.C.F. International Regatta Official

### **REFERENCES**

2. "International Canoe Federation Flatwater Racing Competition Rules 2007". Publisher: I.C.F.
5. David Littlewood "How to Judge Track Events" (1995). Publisher: UK Athletics.
6. Alan Tomkins "Timekeeping" (1987). Publisher: The Crowood Press for UK Athletics.

## **The Flatwater Racing Rules – 7. Announcing: A basic guide for Announcers and Interviewers**

The Rules describe the duties of the announcer very simply. They are, on instructions from the Competition Manager, to announce the start of each race, the order of starting and the position of the competitors during the race. After the race is finished, to announce the results.<sup>2</sup> However, the responsibilities of the announcer are much deeper and wider than this.

### **Responsibilities**

The main responsibility of the announcer is to be an anchor for the competition. He (or she) is there to enhance the entertainment value of the competition. He must project the image of the Sport, possessing the ability to “sell” it. Therefore, he must be a communicator who entertains, informs, or persuades the audience, and satisfies their needs as spectators.<sup>7</sup> In doing this he should project his personality in the delivery of the information.

He must know his audience. Probably the first thing the announcer should think about is how he would describe them. He must fully understand the meaning of his announcements and combine that with what will interest them, many of whom may be near experts in their knowledge of the Sport. Others will have no knowledge whatsoever.

### **Preparation**

The former ICF Instruction Manual on Organisation and Technical Utilities for World Championships included an Announcement Script. Although a very good guide as to the timing of announcements, this script was not appropriate in most International Competitions. Also the wording used either may not be quite appropriate for the occasion or may even feel stilted, not reflecting the natural speaking delivery and personality of the announcer. So, the Announcement Script shown in the document should only be used as a guide, the Announcer preparing his own script.

However, the new 2007 ICF Instruction Manual (pages 64 to 70) includes a script for the various ceremonies – Medal Awarding and Best National Federation. The script shown here must always be used.

Depending on the audience, the announcer may wish to include information about the competitors. Done well, this can provide “colour” and interest, helping to “sell” the competition.<sup>7</sup> Information can include the age of a competitor, their profession, most recent best result, lifestyle information, or the like. However, the announcer must be aware of legal and ethical concerns. The key words of the script should be copy-marked to assist delivery.

It will be obvious that it takes considerable preparation time to gather all the information needed, which will often include extensive research that may well need to be checked for accuracy. As the competition progresses additional information will be supplied, so it is vital that the announcer be very careful and methodical in handling all his papers.

### **Delivery**

The announcer should have a pleasant, energetic voice, which is easy to listen to. He should use a conversational style and be able to use the English language correctly (or whichever broadcasting language is used). It is essential to practise volume, rate, tone, pitch, articulation and pronunciation<sup>7</sup> to deliver clarity of speech. This all requires skill and the understanding of techniques. The announcer must be able to work for long hours and handle stress. Sometimes emergency information will need to be broadcast, so any instructions given must be unambiguous and clearly understood.

### **Equipment**

The announcer must be fully conversant with the equipment he has to use, including the properties of various microphones. He may be responsible for maintenance of the equipment, even providing it and setting it up.<sup>7</sup> Music may be needed, including anthems for medal ceremonies. This music may be supplied in any form of recording medium and the appropriate equipment will be needed to transmit the sound at an even volume between the different sources. All this equipment must be tested thoroughly, well before the start of the competition. The test should also be done before each day's competition, as there is nothing more embarrassing than to find that overnight the wind has turned a speaker causing howl-round. It is invariably the case that the offending speaker has been mounted in a difficult place, so that the announcer will be found in his best blazer, performing a monkey act.

### **Interviewing**

Sometimes it is possible to interview athletes, either immediately after the final when they land to have their boat weighed or in front of the stands immediately after the medal ceremony. A radio microphone is best here but whatever system is used great care must be taken in the location so as to avoid feedback from speakers. The interviewer should possess the same delivery skills as described for the announcer, and there needs to be good co-ordination and communication between the announcer and the interviewer.

An interview can provide "colour" to the entertainment value of the competition. It is a forum for the audience to have a greater appreciation of the Sport and the demands that the competition makes on the athlete. However, the interviewer needs to be well prepared, use the skills of asking questions and listening to pick up on answers that may require more explanation. An interviewer who is ill prepared will ask inappropriate questions, will be regarded as a moron or buffoon by the interviewee who will quickly provide shallow or poor answers if any, and the interview will be pointless and potentially damaging to the Sport. A good interviewer would be an ex-athlete or ex-

coach<sup>7</sup> who has very sound knowledge of racing and training, and who knows the competitor's previous performances.

Interviewers must be flexible and not simply run down a list of questions, otherwise the interview will be extremely dull. Questions need to be well planned. If the interviewee has heard the same questions before he may be weary of repeating the same answers. So, interviewers need to be creative, really enthusiastic, having a strong interest and depth of knowledge about the Sport. They must remember that many of their audiences will be near experts, that their responsibility is to entertain, to project a level of excitement, so injecting their own excitement and personality to draw out appealing interviews with the competitors. If, in turn, they manage to draw out the personalities of the athletes, that would be a real bonus. Interviewing is a technique that requires good practice with listening skills.

### **Further development**

In this paper I have barely scratched the surface of the subject but I hope that I have given an insight into the overall requirements of the job and to the way forward to personal development. Announcing and interviewing are part of the Entertainment Industry, complete with its university and college courses.

A book entitled Broadcast Announcing Worktext, by Reese, Beadle and Stephenson, and published by Focal Press,<sup>7</sup> provides a good guide to personal development and performance skills in a very practical way. The text includes a series of self-studies and projects. A CD-ROM is included which runs through a web browser interface. Icons throughout the book correspond to specific tracks on the CD, which contain audio and video clips to provide examples of performance techniques.

**Rowland Jones**  
The British Canoe Union  
I.C.F. International Regatta Official

Compiled with the helpful assistance of my son and my sister:

**Tim Jones**, Broadcast Engineer (Visual) - BBC

**Hilary Elfick**, Writer, and an ex-BBC Radio 4 Producer

### **REFERENCES**

2. "International Canoe Federation Flatwater Racing Competition Rules 2007". Publisher: I.C.F.
7. David E. Reese, Mary E. Beadle and Alan R. Stephenson "Broadcast Announcing Worktext" (2000). (Chapters 1, 4, and 7). Publisher: Focal Press. (Includes a CD-ROM)

## **The Flatwater Racing Rules – 8. Technical Organisation: A basic guide for Technical Organisers**

Full details of the technical facilities required are contained in the ICF Instruction Manual Canoe-Kayak Championships – Organisation and Technical Utilities (ICF Instruction Manual).<sup>3</sup> I do not intend to repeat them in this paper but to give practical information on what is expected of a Technical Organiser. Some of the facilities mentioned under the section “Competition Manager” are not absolute requirements for a non-championship event; please refer to the rules.

The Technical Organiser is responsible to the Competition Manager for all the technical facilities required for the Regatta and for their uninterrupted smooth running during the competition. For obvious reasons he (or she) is normally a key member of the Organising Federation. Many regatta complexes are managed by separate companies or organisations with their own staff and contract out the facility to the Regatta Organising Federation. Nevertheless, the actual Manager who may be appointed by the facility management and who is also to be the Technical Organiser for these competitions should have a valid International Official Card as it greatly assists in having a full understanding of the needs of the Competition.

Not less than two days before the first day of racing the Technical Organiser must accompany the Competition Manager and Competition Committee on their inspection of the installations and equipment.<sup>3</sup> The inspection will be a full trial of the working of the facilities, a “Dress Rehearsal”, and a few canoeists plus a motor boat and driver should be on hand to assist in this process. All Technical Officials are normally required to participate in the testing process to familiarise themselves with the venue’s layout, facilities and equipment. The inspection should be as follows:

1. **The Regatta Course.** That the course is correctly marked with buoys, flags, start and finish lines as required under the rules.

### **At the Start**

2. **Start Installations.** That the automatic start system has been accurately installed and is in full working order. The arrangements for maintenance in the case of any failure. (Sometimes the manufacturers of the equipment will install it and provide one of their employees with full sets of spare parts to maintain the equipment during a competition.)
3. **Start Communications.** Speakers to the competitors’ warming-up area. Starter to speakers on each start pontoon and to check that the actual Start Command can be heard through each speaker. (For technical reasons this can sometimes be a problem.) Aligner to assistants (normally via earphones). (Several teams of assistants/boat holders will be required during each day’s competition, as they tend to

get sunburnt, dehydrated, or even weary of their duties. They need to be well trained and disciplined to perform their duties well. They should be supplied with good quality wet weather gear and should wear buoyancy aids. Provision for their welfare, on and off the water must be well organised.)

4. **Video Camera.** With instant replay for false starts.
5. **Communications with Finish.** Telephone connection with the Competition Committee. Start sound connection with the finish-line judges. Connection with the electronic time-keeping system and photo finish wired into the starting gun or button.
6. **Large Clock.** In view of competitors and the Starter to show regatta time.
7. **Toilet facility.** This is essential and must provide for all personnel at the start including teams of Aligners' assistants/boat holders. If of the portable type, arrangements must be made for it to be emptied and cleaned on a regular basis, at least twice a day.

### **At the Finish**

8. **Rooms.** The various rooms equipped as required.
9. **Arrival Video Camera.** Connected to the Start Command with instant replay.
10. **Telephone Connections.** Between the Competition Committee and the Start, Finish-line Judges, Announcer, Boat Control area, Jury Room.
11. **Speaker Connection.** From the Start to the Finish-line Judges and the Competition Committee.
12. **Timing and Photo Finish.** Connected to the Start Command. The Competition Committee will want to see the system in full operation.
13. **Isolated Speaker System.** Competition Committee to competitors' warm-down area after the Finish-line, to call-up boats to be weighed.
14. **Wind speed and direction equipment.**
15. **The Scoreboard.** Including any electronic connections such as Finish-line Judges.

### **Other Areas**

16. **Boat Control.** Facilities for the weighing of boats and the three control areas.
17. **Seven Umpires' Launches and at least four Rescue Boats.** The engines should be in good serviceable order and the Competition Committee will wish to see all these boats in working order. The ICF Instruction Manual contains briefing notes for Umpire Boat Drivers. The drivers must be competent in handling their craft in all situations including rescue. *(As an example: the British Canoe Union boat drivers are all trained by and hold boat handling and rescue certificates issued under a Royal Yachting Association training scheme).*

18. **Boathouse.** The facilities for the storage of boats.
19. **Boat repair facilities.**
20. **Athletes' areas.** The facilities for Competitors, Trainers/Coaches, Masseurs.

#### **I.C.F. Medical Committee**

21. **Medical.** Members of the Medical Committee will wish to be satisfied on the provision for medical services, Doping Control, First Aid, ambulances and physiotherapy.

#### **I.C.F. Public Relations Committee**

22. **Public relations and Mass Media.** Members of the Competition Committee and Jury will wish to be satisfied on the Commentary and Press Centre facilities.

### **Reporting**

Before the start of each racing day, all the systems listed above must be fully checked. Not less than one hour before the start of the day's programme, the Technical Organiser must confirm to the Competition Manager on the working of all systems. The report should be in the form of a checklist and any deficiencies should include an estimated time-scale for their correction. The Technical Organiser must keep the Competition Manager informed of any breakdown or deficiencies of any of the systems, as and when they may occur.

**It is most important that the Technical Organiser is in contact with the Competition Manager at all times through walkie-talkie or mobile phone.**

**Rowland Jones**  
The British Canoe Union  
I.C.F. International Regatta Official

#### **REFERENCES**

- 2 "International Canoe Federation Flatwater Racing Competition Rules 2007". Publisher: The International Canoe Federation.
- 3 "ICF Instruction Manual Canoe-Kayak Racing World Championships". Publisher: The International Canoe Federation

## **The Flatwater Racing Rules – 9. Competition Manager: A basic guide for Competition Managers**

This paper is intended to give practical information on what is expected of a Competition Manager. Because of the nature of the job and the need to be in constant contact with the Organisers of the competition to solve any problems that may arise, he is normally selected from the Organising Federation. A very close working relationship with The Deputy Chief Judge is necessary because many of the administrative tasks required are integrated, as can be observed from the rules 10.4.3 and 10.4.4.

The Competition Manager supervises the smooth running of the Regatta Programme. He (or she) plans the organisation of the Competition before and during the event. Although all officials report to the Chief Official and are responsible to him for all their actions, the Competition Manager must ensure that they are in place before the start of each race so that all events are held on time in accordance with the advertised programme. He is also responsible for all the competition administration:

1. up to date programme
2. drawing of Lots
3. production and publication of results
4. provision of all technical documents (examples of which can be found in the ICF Instruction Manual)
5. keeping all completed documents
6. boat control administration
7. administration of protests, and notification of disqualifications as decided by the Committee
8. providing the Announcer and Press with all information concerning:
  - a) start order
  - b) competitors failing to start
  - c) resultsand ensuring the Announcer broadcasts all such information to the audience/spectators.

This job is the key to all good communication of the event and so the Competition Manager needs to be an excellent administrator and communicator, and be able to manage effectively a team of administrative personnel appointed to assist with the tasks required to produce a smooth flow of all the documents required before, during and after the event.

The Competition Manager is also responsible to the Competition Committee for all the technical facilities required for the Regatta and for their uninterrupted smooth running during the competition.<sup>2</sup> In view of the enormity of this task a Technical Organiser is normally appointed by the Organising Federation (see the section “Technical Organisation”).

Not less than two days before the first day of racing the Competition Manager (with the Technical Organiser) must accompany the Competition Committee on their inspection of the installations and equipment.<sup>3</sup> The inspection will be a full trial of the working of the facilities, a “Dress Rehearsal”, and a few canoeists plus a motor boat and driver should be on hand to assist in this process. All Technical Officials are normally required to participate in the testing process to familiarise themselves with the venue’s layout, facilities and equipment. The inspection is detailed under the section for “Technical Organisation”.

### **Reporting**

Before the start of each racing day, all the systems listed above must be fully checked. Not less than one hour before the start of the day’s programme, the Competition Manager must deliver a written report to the Competition Committee on the working of all systems. The report should be in the form of a checklist and any deficiencies should include an estimated time-scale for their correction. The Competition Manager must keep the Competition Committee informed of any breakdown or deficiencies of any of the systems, as and when they may occur.

**It is most important that the Competition Manager is in contact with the Competition Committee at all times through walkie-talkie or mobile phone.**

### **Rowland Jones**

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### **REFERENCES**

- 2 “International Canoe Federation Flatwater Racing Competition Rules 2007”. Publisher: The International Canoe Federation.
- 3 “ICF Instruction Manual Canoe-Kayak Racing World Championships”. Publisher: The International Canoe Federation

## **The Flatwater Racing Rules – 10. Deputy Chief Judge: A basic guide for Deputy Chief Judges**

The Deputy Chief Judge is a member of the Competition Committee but his (or her) duties are extensive and specific so I have outlined them in this separate section.

The Deputy Chief Judge needs to closely cooperate with the Chief Official, the Competition Manager, and the IT personnel to satisfactorily undertake the tasks assigned. These are all the administrative tasks of the competition.

### **Before the competition:**

1. Prior to the start of the Team Leaders' Meeting, collect details from the Team Leaders of any changes to the preliminary list of competitors and sort such changes into race number order. Team Leaders are required to submit such changes in writing not less than 30 minutes prior to the meeting.
2. At the Team Leader's Meeting to record all amendments made to the preliminary programme as announced by the Chief Official.
3. To check and be satisfied on the accuracy of the final programme before its publication through the Competition Manager.
4. In age related competitions, to check and record the ages of competitors from their personal documents (passports), reporting any deficiencies to the Chief Official.
5. To check with the Chief Official on the Plans and Division Systems to be used for each event.
6. To ensure the supply of all forms/documents necessary for the administration of the races, distributing as required to the various officials. The Competition Manager is responsible for the production of these technical documents.

### **During the competition:**

1. If computer data processing is used to keep in close contact with the personnel responsible.
2. To check the results, race by race, and prepare the list of the boats qualified in the next round. If prepared automatically through a computer data process, it is essential for every detail to be checked manually –
  - boats qualified including any best time qualifications,
  - the correct plan is being used – the qualified boats are selected into the correct semi-final or final, and
  - lanes for competitors are assigned in accordance with the seeding taken from their result times.(The data produced will only be as good as the accuracy of its input and program. That is why such checks are vital.)
3. Prepare minutes of all meetings of the Competition Committee, including all decisions as a result of any protest.

Personal passports of competitors are valuable documents and must be treated with the same security as cash. At the time of delivery they must be listed and signed for with a receipt provided. On return they should also be signed for with the receipt kept for the competition organisers' records. In the checking of the personal documentation of competitors, it is necessary that this is done in small batches in a secure place and all such documents are stored in a locked safe.

Assistants and office staff may be employed as necessary to complete the tasks of the Deputy Chief Judge.

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#### **REFERENCES**

- 2 "International Canoe Federation Flatwater Racing Competition Rules 2007". Publisher: The International Canoe Federation.

## **The Flatwater Racing Rules – 11. Competition Committee: A basic guide to Duties of the Competition Committee**

For all Olympic and World Championship events a Jury is appointed by the ICF Board of Directors. The Jury is the supreme authority of the event.<sup>2</sup> Although the actual competition is run through the Competition Committee, it is subordinate to the Jury. To fulfil their responsibilities the Jury has access to all parts of the organisation of the competition and they need such access to ensure governance of the event. The Jury ensures that the ICF Statutes, Competition Rules and Regulations are complied with during a competition and where necessary interpret the Statutes, Competition Rules and Regulations. A Jury may also be appointed for other competitions and the same principals apply.

The International Canoe Federation (ICF) has published a very good and comprehensive instruction document entitled: ICF Instruction Manual Canoe-Kayak Racing World Championships (ICF Instruction Manual).<sup>3</sup> Although international regattas do not need all the requirements set out in the manual, it serves as an excellent *aide-mémoire*.

This paper is not intended to duplicate any matters covered in the ICF Instruction Manual or the Racing Rules,<sup>2</sup> but is directed towards giving advice and guidance for the members of a Competition Committee (the Committee) to provide good and fair competition for the athletes. The aim is to give some explanation regarding the key responsibilities contained in Rules 10.3.1, 10.3.2, 10.4.1 and 10.4.3, and give some depth and advice on their application for good management of the Competition. However, there is no substitute for personal experience in the application of the Rules. Such experience cannot be found in any rulebook or manual.

The rules state, “*The aim of a canoe race competition is for people to race each other in kayaks and canoes over a clearly defined unobstructed course in the shortest possible time according to the rules.*” I would take this a little further by saying: the objective is to discover each athlete’s rightful place in an event pursuant to observance of the rules. The Committee has to work as a team to meet this objective.

The Committee’s responsibility is to manage the Competition. It comprises three persons:

1. Chief Official
2. Chief Judge
3. Deputy Chief Judge.

For international competitions at least two members of the Committee must be current ICF International Regatta Officials but for World Championships all members must be ICF International Regatta Officials. They will also need all the appropriate skills of good management and to be effective in using them in a sporting environment. The Committee

should make a point of meeting all officials, particularly those in key areas, well before the start of the Competition.

The **Chief Official** is the Chairman of the Committee. He (or she) is also responsible for making decisions on all matters which may arise during the Competition and which are not covered in the Rules.<sup>2</sup> To do this successfully he must be tactful, and apply discretion with justice.

The Chief Official has to interpret and apply all the rules appropriately. He needs to appreciate problems of the various Team Managers and their athletes, exercising courtesy while at the same time maintaining his authority. He also needs to appreciate the problems of the officials in their various assigned roles and act with sensitivity to create mutual confidence, so that the Competition successfully meets all its objectives. All officials report to the Chief Official and are responsible to him for their actions/decisions. If an official fails to comply with the rules the Chief Official must replace them.

Sometimes he will need to meet the Press, acting as spokesman for the Competition Committee, to explain any matters or decisions made. To do this well he needs to be courteous, affirming that decisions and rules have been justly applied. In facing the Press, his role is vital in “selling” the Sport to the Media; his enthusiasm for the Sport has to “rub off” on members of the Press.

The **Chief Judge** assists the Chief Official in his responsibilities. He (or she) is responsible for the continued smooth conduct of the Competition when the Chief Official has been called upon to deal with problems or to meet various people. On such occasions, he acts with the same authority as the Chief Official. From time to time he will assist the Deputy Chief Judge in the completion and checking of documents prior to publication. Either the Chief Official or the Chief Judge must sign off all such documents as correct – all results and draws, before they are released for publication, and also sign all notifiable decisions of the Committee.

The **Deputy Chief Judge** handles the administrative tasks of the competition. These are outlined in Section 10.

### **Delegation and Control**

The members of the Committee must not try to do too much or the competition will suffer greatly. Except when watching races, the Chief Official must make himself available to anyone and everyone at all times. With each and every task the Committee may come across they must consider delegation, some of it total, while at the same time retaining control of the key elements. Delegation provides an opportunity for others to learn and gain experience. For example: the only papers the Chief Official should possess are the up to date programme and a pocket notebook. Even a copy of the Racing Rules can be held for him. Only in this way can the Chief Official and Committee be alive and alert to respond calmly to any eventuality.

## **Prior Experience**

Preferably, all members of the Committee will have first shadowed at least two other Competition Committees at no less than two different international regattas. There are many International Regatta Organisers who would be delighted to help in this way, for they have a total commitment to the sport, constantly striving for excellence and perfection for the benefit of the athletes.

## **Prior to the Competition**

At least 48 hours before the start of the competition the Chief Official with the Committee should meet the Competition Manager to check the installations are correct.<sup>3</sup> They must ensure the Regatta Course has been correctly buoyed and marked with flags. A full test of all equipment should be done at the same time. There will always be unexpected problems, some of them difficult to resolve or even insurmountable. At least one hour before the start of each day's competition, the Competition Manager should confirm in writing to the Committee that all systems are working. If there are any deficiencies he should give the Committee an estimate on the time-scale for their correction.

The Chief Official normally conducts the meeting of Team Leaders to finalise teams' competitors in each event. The meeting is normally held in the late afternoon prior to the first day of competition. It is necessary to attend a number of Team Leaders' Meetings and take notes to become familiar with the process. All Team Leaders' Meetings will be slightly different but they will follow the same procedural format. After the meeting, the Chief Official should conduct a roll call of officials to ensure that every job is covered. Any special instructions for Officials on duty times, transport, organisation or running of each area of responsibility can be given at this meeting.

## **International Events other than Championships**

Except for Championship and World Cup events, all international regattas may be described as "friendly" competitions and can be likened to friendly football matches. Therefore there are some things the Chief Official or Committee may permit which would not be acceptable in a championship. Teams use such competitions to provide their competitors with experience and sometimes evidence required for financial support at home. Where possible, and with agreement of all team leaders, the Committee should try to accommodate reasonable requests. However, the Committee has an overriding duty to all the athletes and the Sport itself to act with total integrity and fairness.

## **Umpires' Reports**

It is most important that the Chief Official or Chief Judge watches each race as it proceeds down the course and takes notes as necessary. At the end of the race, if not entirely satisfied with an umpire's call he must call him to account. Sometimes umpires may be reluctant to make a report, particularly if English is not their first language, and

they may hold the opinion that an infraction did not affect the result of the race. Umpires must report all infractions as matters of fact. They should use their opinion solely in prioritising infractions when there has been more than one. Considerable difficulties occur when an umpire has failed to make a report and a protest is subsequently received.

Although the rules demand all reports be written in English, personally I do not mind in what language a report is delivered. It is nice to have it in English, but it is vital that a report is delivered in whatever language if any infraction has occurred. Translation is a management problem and must never be made an umpire's problem. After consideration of a report, the decision of the Committee should always be conveyed to the umpire together with an explanation if necessary.

### **Complaints and Protests**

All members of the Committee must react to complaints and protests calmly but with firmness. The complainant should be sat down in a quiet area and encouraged to talk. Members must be sure they have grasped all the basics and true reasons for the complaint. Initially, the protester may be so frustrated, infuriated, or emotionally wound-up as to be totally incoherent. Members must be patient, deal with their own emotions in a mature fashion and not "add fuel to the fire". They must allow time for the protester to get all the complaint off their chest, question in such a way that they properly understand and above all listen, listen, listen. Only with proper understanding of all the facts can the Committee go forward with the decision-making process (as outlined below). If the decision-making process has been properly conducted the Committee can have total confidence in informing the complainant of the decision in a calm and firm manner.

### **Consideration of Reported Infractions or Protests**

The Tower philosophy (after Oswald Tower) states that the purpose of competition rules is to penalise a competitor who, by reason of an illegal act, places an opponent at a disadvantage.<sup>9</sup> This is generally acceptable because it permits a degree of judgment in the strict enforcement of the rules and ensures that the objectives of the competition are realised. For example: a boat submitted for scrutiny has a rippled hull. Therefore, it is concave in some parts. The cause of rippled effects is due to the method of manufacture / materials used, and the cheaper the materials the more likely or greater the distortion. Such a craft may simply be described as a badly-made boat. Clearly the competitor would not be at an advantage paddling the boat and therefore, the craft should pass scrutiny.

However, the philosophy cannot apply to all the rules. For example: a competitor did or did not keep to their lane, or they were or were not coached from the bank, and so on.

No official must say or do anything before an appeal to indicate to the complainant or anyone else that an appeal may be successful. A complainant may express matters of opinion and be selective in the matters of fact to support that opinion, i.e. they have already reached their own conclusion and are selective of the facts to support it, even

distorting them.<sup>13</sup> Any decision is a judgment, a choice between two courses of action and rarely a choice between right and wrong. Most often there is a clash of conflicting points of view.

In consideration of an infraction or protest the Competition Committee must:

- make sure they have all the facts (all evidence being in writing)
- consider the facts against the rules. (All decisions must be based on the rules.)<sup>2</sup>
- determine what is relevant and what is irrelevant
- consider the objectives of the competition and if the infraction may have been enough to deprive another of their rightful position
- give the offender the benefit of any doubt
- be consistent if they choose to be flexible
- consider possible courses of action (disqualification, warning, notification, or no action) and compare the pros and cons of each
- consider the risks of creating dangerous precedents. People will see the result of what has happened in terms of their own position
- consider the impact of the decision on others
- decide the preferred course of action, implement and
- where necessary, inform the team leader of the decision of the Committee. The rules must be strictly observed in the notification of a disqualification.

The Chief Official should ensure that all members of the Committee participate in the evaluation and decision-making process. The Deputy Chief Judge must keep minutes of the proceedings. Except with notification to Team Leader of the actual decision of the Committee, the minutes are confidential to the Committee but must be readily available to the Jury whether or not there is a subsequent appeal.

### **Video Evidence**

The official video used at the start is strictly for the Starter only, no one else being permitted to view it.<sup>2</sup> Video evidence, other than the official finish film (and that is no substitute for photo finish), does not form part of the rules. Any video evidence supplied to the organisation to support an appeal is totally unacceptable. The problem with such is that it is two-dimensional only and therefore distorts perspective. A successful appeal based on such evidence would be grossly unfair to other competitors, by most likely depriving them of their rightful position. How often has it been shown in a recording of a football game a tackle shown from one angle looks very innocent but when seen from another it is a serious offence? Video evidence requires views from more than one angle so when viewed together they build a three dimensional picture.

### **Judgments**

Development of good judgment is a continuous process. It requires study of the rules, practice and experience in their interpretation, lots of reading, and discussion and argument between officials in other sports as well as our own. This continuous process builds a sound structure in the mind. It also adds to your enjoyment and performance in

the job. Having been an athlete or coach provides a good initial framework but is not enough.

There will be times in the Finish and Committee's areas when there are pressures that may cause tensions. It is vital that members maintain personal control and lead by acting calmly.

One of the worst effects on competitors can be the feeling of inconsistency in decisions made by officials. If each and every incident is judged accurately according to correct interpretation of the rules, decisions will be consistent.<sup>9</sup>

It is most important that members of the Committee are well rested prior to each day's competition. They need to be sharp and alert to make good judgments. If they are tired they will fail in meeting the requirements of the job.

### **Officials Don't Cheat!**

No, officials don't cheat but I admit they will make mistakes for they are human. You may have the impression that only athletes are allowed to make mistakes, for that is their view together with their coaches and team management. I have never known a race to be rerun and know of no precedent for it to be done. Therefore, it is vital that we as officials get it right. We must be careful out there. If we are all well prepared, alert and totally dedicated, there is a chance we will get it right. Perhaps this is a good reminder for the Officials' Meeting.

Where there has been a mistake it is vital to be honest and not try to cover it up. As a simple example: through an error a time has not been recorded against an athlete. What must never be done is to record the same time as another competitor or to estimate the correct time. In the record it must show "NO TIME", for that is accurate and true.

Good and well-qualified officials are hard to find in this age which demands the very best from a growing professional sport. Results should depend entirely on the athlete's preparation, ability, and sometimes a little luck. Rules must be applied consistently and with good judgment.<sup>9</sup> Often the key to this is the selection made in assigning the various tasks/duties to Officials available or allocated to a Competition. Where selection and allocation is to be made, as in a major competition, the Chief Official and the Competition Manager should be allowed a fair degree of input into the process. The success or otherwise of the competition could well depend on it.

### **Inquiries from the Media**

If questioned by the media, on no account must members of the Committee discuss an actual incident or the contents of a report that relates to an incident. Neither must they pass any comment on anything surrounding a decision of the Committee. These are solely matters between the Officials. Politely and courteously, it must be made clear that as a member of the Committee you are not prepared to state the contents of any report.

The Chief Official should be the only spokesman for the Committee (as listed in his responsibilities above).

Please remember that the Media is not in the news business. It is in the entertainment business. Athletes in all sports make good newspaper copy. Officials are not supposed to.<sup>13</sup>

### **Disciplinary Matters and Integrity**

It is vital for the honourable nature of the Sport that officials are not subjected to any act that may compromise their position. Officials must not be persuaded to take an action which is contrary to the honourable nature of the Racing Regulations.<sup>13</sup> Although such occasions are very rare in our Sport, the official must be aware of the action they should take in such an incident.

Officials, like all human beings, can be influenced by pressure, pressure that may compromise their position or may be considered by others to have done so. Where pressures of harassment, intimidation or abuse are applied to an official with a view to persuading them to take an action which is dishonest or contrary to the official's code of ethics, the Sport itself is in danger of disrepute.<sup>13</sup> When I worked in the legal profession, there was a saying that we had always to work with "Clean Hands". Therefore, I strongly believe it is incumbent on each official to report all such acts.

Because of the close friendships or affiliation in our Sport, great courage and personal confidence are required for an official to act with absolute integrity. The Sport must come first. Regardless of the circumstances, the official must be completely honest in all phases of the job, especially in applying the rules, and also in relationships with fellow officials, competitors and team management. If a report is not made, ask yourself what about the next time, and the next? There will be a next time, and the problem can only get worse. Officiating integrity is a product of personal honesty and reliability.

In preparation of the written report the official must not submit a digest of his or her own experience or achievements. A properly completed report submitted to the Committee should:

- ensure the unsportsmanlike acts complained of are set out unemotionally and without any exaggeration or commentary
- not indicate the official takes a defensive position
- show that the official has taken the proper officiating mechanics
- indicate the official has enforced the letter and spirit of the rules.<sup>13</sup>

Above all, the report must stick to the facts.

On receipt of a report the Committee must give it due consideration. If disciplinary action is deemed to be necessary, they must act in accordance with the procedures set out in Rule 28.7 and the Organising Federation must follow this by abiding with Articles 42 and 43 of the ICF Statutes.<sup>1</sup> A warning must be in writing and is a reportable disciplinary action. Any complaint against an official follows exactly the same procedure.

All the above precludes statements which may be considered “fair comment”. Criticism and opinion may be described as commentary upon a competition or event. Officials must endure such criticism and comment, not necessarily educated, accurate or justified, upon their work.<sup>13</sup>

### **The Law and Responsibilities for the Wellbeing of Athletes / Coaches / Officials / Spectators**

In addition to acting reasonably in enforcement of the rules, the Chief Official with the Committee is also responsible for the physical safety of participants by ensuring the competition is held in a safe environment.<sup>13</sup> For example: to continue a competition in a thunderstorm or high winds as a result of which a contestant is injured, may be viewed as negligence. It could invite a legal action. Rule 10.2.2 b) allows the Committee to stop or postpone a competition in any unforeseen circumstance.

Another example is a case where boats are stored on the tops of cars and as a consequence such boats overhang a cycle track, particularly where the track is alongside a Regatta Course. The scenario can only be described as an accident waiting to happen. A third example is given in the paper for Boat Measurers and covers safety of equipment.

Such incidents can expose the Organisation and the Committee to liability in a court of law for a foreseeable consequence of inaction, no matter what Chapter V of the ICF Statutes may state. It is therefore, most important that the Committee acts with all due care and consideration for the safety of all participants, and that the competition is covered by Officials’ Liability Insurance.

### **After the Competition**

**All paperwork**, including reports, protests, and decisions or minutes of the Committee, should be filed and retained for at least 60 days. This is to allow time for the Organisers to be informed of any protest or complaint received by the ICF and for the Organising Federation to respond. If the Organising Federation does respond to the ICF notification, the paperwork must be retained until after conclusion of all Hearings or Arbitration.

*(Rule 30 and Articles 42 to 47 of the I.C.F. Statutes refer.)*<sup>2 & 1</sup>

In the event of a Hearing, both sides to the dispute must have copies of any evidence intended to be produced at the Hearing. However, actual minutes of the Committee which give any information as to how a decision was made is privileged information and must not be produced unless intended for evidence. Either side is entitled to possess copies of any written information passed between the parties.

**Keep a log** for personal improvement. All members of the Committee should evaluate their own performance and other officials as well. Records should also be made of:

- any rule interpretations learned
- new techniques etc. observed in other officials

- any problems or weaknesses found in one's own knowledge, judgments or relationships
- questions required to be answered for the future
- the goals set for oneself for the future.

Naturally the values in keeping a log will be greater for an inexperienced Chief Official, Chief Judge or Deputy Chief Judge but even the most experienced will find room for improvement.

### **Finally**

Competitors spend so much of their time in training to achieve their aspirations, at whatever level that may be. It is very important that all officials act in a professional, competent, respectful manner to ensure fair play. The official serves the athlete by ensuring that those competitors to go through to the next round or their position in a final are entitled to be there. It is the job of the Competition Committee to ensure all this is realised. That is what they have been appointed to do.

A good reputation as a Chief Official, Chief Judge or Deputy Chief Judge has to be gained or earned over a number of years when athletes, coaches, team management and fellow officials have total confidence in them. In an instant, this can be completely lost through just one thoughtless, rash or senseless act or decision. Don't let it happen to you!

**Rowland Jones**  
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I.C.F. International Regatta Official

### **REFERENCES**

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## **The Flatwater Racing Rules – 12. Specimen Examination Questions and Answers for qualification as an ICF Flatwater Race Official**

The examination is based on knowledge of the ICF Statutes, the ICF Flatwater Racing Rules and practical regatta experience gained over at least 5 years as a National Regatta Official. The examination will be conducted in English and part may be by written paper. Candidates must be extremely well prepared. A successful candidate is eligible for immediate selection as an Official for a World Championship or Olympic Games. Therefore, the examination is necessarily extremely demanding, candidates being required to be near perfect in their answers and the completeness of those answers. A wrong answer will probably invite four further questions of a related nature to ensure the candidate has a complete and correct understanding. If the Examiners are not entirely confident that the candidate has the necessary attributes to work in any officiating role allocated to him, the candidate will fail. The examination will take about 45 minutes.

### **Questions**

#### **The Statutes**

1. Where is the headquarters of the ICF?
  - a. the country of the President
  - b. the country of the Secretary General
  - c. the country of the Treasurer
  - d. the country decided by the Board of Directors
2.
  - a. What is the supreme authority of the ICF?
  - b. How often does it meet?
  - c. What is the maximum number of persons permitted in a delegation?
  - d. How many votes does a delegation have?
3. What is the period of office members of the Board of Directors serve between elections?
4. Who has the authority to appoint or dismiss the Secretary General?
5. How many Officers of the ICF are there? Name their Offices.
6. How is the ICF managed on a day-to-day basis?
7. What are the languages of the ICF?
8.
  - a. List the Standing Committees of the ICF.
  - b. How many members does the Flatwater Racing Committee (FRC) have?
  - c. When or how are FRC members elected or appointed?
  - d. For what period?
  - e. If any Standing Committee has any co-opted members, who co-ops them and for what period?
9. Can you list the 12 duties of the Flatwater Racing Committee?

## **The Flatwater Racing Competition Rules**

### **Course layout and marking signs**

10. Describe the minimum required layout of the Finish Line for an International Regatta and how this differs from the requirements for a World Championship.
11. What is the minimum number of flags required on a turn for a long distance event and what colour must they be?

### **Boat measuring and control**

12. A competitor about to embark for the start has a watch strapped to his boat.
  - a. Is this permitted?
  - b. Can he wear a watch on his wrist?
13. A competitor refuses to wear an individual race number because it also contains a symbol or advertising that he objects to. What should be the ruling?
14. At boat control after a race, the knee-block of a C1 falls out of the boat, and the boat is therefore underweight. It is stated that the block was fixed at the first weighing but must have come loose since that time. What is the ruling?

### **Starting**

15. You are the Starter at a non-championship competition. A competitor arrives at the start with a boat carrying the wrong lane number. What should you do?
16. What does the Starter say after “Start within ten seconds” and before giving the start signal?
17. Demonstrate how you would start a race from the time you have the Aligner’s signal.
18. Before the start signal, a competitor:
  - a. may be paddling but not moving forward, or
  - b. must be motionless?
19. Who is permitted to call a false start?
  - a. Aligner
  - b. Starter
  - c. Chief Official
20. A competitor breaks his paddle in the first few strokes at the start. Do you:
  - a. recall the start
  - b. allow the race to continue and why?

### **Umpiring**

21. What is the most difficult infraction for an umpire to call?
22. In a World Championship Final, two umpires follow the race in Lanes 3 and 7. Explain the main responsibilities of the umpire following in Lane 7.

23. In a World Championship competition what aid is available to you in judging the five-metre rule?
24. You are the umpire following in Lane 7. Feeling there is an infraction by the boat in Lane 4 on the boat in Lane 5, you move into Lane 6 to confirm the infraction. What must you be most careful to avoid in your responsibility?
25. At the end of this same race (question 24), what should you do:
  - a. when the race has finished?
  - b. if the umpire following in Lane 3 shows:
    1. a red flag?
    2. a white flag?
26. In what language must the umpire's report be written?

### **Long distance races**

27. Three competitors land to empty their boats of water. What is the ruling in each case?
  - a. Number 1. empties his boat and then assists
  - b. Number 2. to empty his
  - c. Number 3. is assisted by a young member of the public.
28. Two boats are negotiating a turn with the bow of the outer boat 2 metres behind the bow of the inner boat. The inner boat goes off at a tangent, forcing the outer boat out beyond the line marked by the turning buoys, and allowing a pack of boats to catch up. What is the ruling?

### **At the Finish**

29. In the absence of a photo finish (or should it fail), how is the order of finish decided?
30. Can a film recorded through an ordinary video camera be used for a photo finish?
31. Which finger should be used for starting and stopping a stopwatch and why?
  - a. thumb
  - b. forefinger
  - c. middle finger
32. What is the official time when three timing systems are used?
  - a. the average of the three times
  - b. the middle time if all are different
  - c. any two identical times
  - d. the longest or worst time

### **After the Finish**

33. When can a protest be made?
34. Can a protest be lodged immediately on completion of a race?
35. The K4 World Champions break a rudder wire during this World Championship Final. The crew finishes the race with difficulty. The team appeals claiming their boat has been sabotaged and demand the race be rerun. What is the ruling?

## The Answers

1. d.
2.
  - a. Congress
  - b. Every even year
  - c. Three
  - d. One
3. 4 years
4. The Board of Directors
5. Six. – President; First Vice President; Second Vice President; Third Vice President; Treasurer; Secretary General (appointed not elected)
6. The Executive Committee formed from the Officers mentioned above but the Secretary General being a non-voting member
7. English, French, and German
8.
  - a. Flatwater Racing; Slalom Racing; Wildwater Racing; Marathon Racing (including Ocean Racing); Canoe Sailing; Canoe Polo; Dragonboat Racing; Medical & Anti-Doping; Athletes' Commission; Freestyle; Sport for All
  - b. Five
  - c. Chairman elected by Congress and four other members appointed by the Board of Directors
  - d. Four years
  - e. The Board of Directors and for two years
9. For this answer refer to Article 33 Byelaw of the Statutes, paragraph numbered 3.
10. For an International Regatta the start and finish line must be at right angles to the course which must have a clear width of at least 5 metres for each boat with an overall width of at least 45 metres. The start and finish lines must each be marked by red flags mounted on buoys to show the extremities of these lines.  
  
For World Championships lanes must be marked by buoys along the length of the course with the width of the lanes being 9 metres. The last buoys must be between 1 and 2 metres beyond the finish line. These last buoys must be marked 1 to 9, the number clearly visible from the finish and on the competitor's right hand side. The actual finish line must be marked on its extremities by red flags as above.
11. Six. Diagonally divided, one half red and the other yellow – international signal flag letter "O"
12.
  - a. Yes       *(Provided it is a simple timepiece. Care must be taken to ensure a*
  - b. Yes       *watch with a multifunctional facility does not infringe Rule 8.4.)*
13. If the organising national federation provides personal numbers, they must be worn. Offending advertising may be covered over with tape, except when the advertiser's name forms part of the title of the competition, i.e. J.V. Motors International Canoe Regatta, or should the advertisers be the main sponsor for the event. In such a case, all invitation documents should contain the full title of the competition or the name of the main sponsor.

14. The boat fails scrutiny. Reason:
- everything making up the weight of the boat must be fixed in it by the team;
  - anything loose or lodged in a boat must be removed;
  - if when turned over something falls out of the boat it must stay out;
  - competitors are responsible for their own equipment.
15. Have the wrong lane number removed and carried in the competitor's boat. Inform the finish of the position.
16. Nothing
17. **“Start within ten seconds”** *Must be spoken in a calm, relaxed, unhurried voice*  
*After between two to three seconds say: Do not rush*  
**“Go”** *It must be loud and sharp*
18. b.
19. b.
20. b. There is no provision in the rules for this and competitors are responsible for their own equipment
21. The five metre rule
22. Notwithstanding that both umpires are separately required to umpire the whole race, reporting any infraction they may witness, an umpire following in Lane 7 is mainly responsible for covering competitors in Lanes 5 to 9 inclusive, with the other umpire mainly responsible for covering Lanes 1 to 5 inclusive.
23. Lanes are 9 metres apart. Therefore, if a competitor is half a lane's width from another competitor, that is an infraction. The measurement of the 5 metres is gunwale to gunwale.
24. That you do not neglect your main responsibility to cover Lanes 5 to 9. You must view your competitors every two to three seconds and if you are the least concerned of an infraction developing in your main area of Lanes 5 to 9, you must quickly move back into Lane 7, leaving responsibility for Lane 4's infraction to the other umpire.
25. a. If satisfied there has been an infraction by the competitor in Lane 4 show a red flag and make your own written report.  
b.1. Show a red flag and make your own written report  
b.2. Show a red flag and make your own written report
- You must remember that umpires, although working together, are severally required to umpire the whole race and report any infraction they may see. Competitors depend on both officials for fair outcome of the race. You cannot be sure what the other umpire may put in his report and it may be that by not filing a report on what you have seen simply deprives other competitors from their rightful positions.
26. English. However if this is not your first language you must not be put off in filing a report. There is plenty of help, which the Chief Official will find, to assist with translation into English.

27.
  - a. No infraction
  - b. No infraction – not in receipt of assistance outside the race.
  - c. This is an infraction – outside assistance.
28. It is an infraction. If the competitor claims he did paddle as close to the buoys as his equipment would allow, that is no excuse. Competitors are responsible for their own equipment.
29. The Finishing Line Judges must decide by simple majority. In the case of equal voting, the Chief Finishing Line Judge has the casting vote.
30. No. Video films must not be used as a substitute for photo finish.
31.
  - b. It is considered that much quicker and consistent reaction is achieved by use of the forefinger.
32.
  - d.
33. Within 20 minutes of publication of the result.
34. No. Only after the result has been published.
35. The result stands. No matter what evidence may be produced, teams are still responsible for their own equipment.

Well, how did you get on? In an examination based on these questions, you will be expected to get over 30 of the 35 questions correct (85% of the sub-questions), with questions - 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 24 and 25 totally correct in every detail.

This is just a sample of the type of questions you may be asked. You will have noticed that many of the answers cannot be found in any rulebook, but are based solely on your practical regatta experience; and the examination is intended as a real test of your experience. The Examiners will need to be left with total confidence that you are able to act correctly in any eventuality.

Far too many candidates take the examination totally ill prepared, not appreciating exactly what is at stake or having any concept in the responsibilities of an International Official. Not surprisingly there are very many failures, far too many. As I explained at the beginning of this paper, candidates must be extremely well prepared. I hope this set of *Basic Guides to Officiating* helps. But, please remember this is only the start. I have only been able to set out the essential information in the Guides and there is vastly more to learn. Officiating is a never-ending learning process in the service of the athlete.

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