

Fairness Committee Protocol

May 2023

Purpose

The Duty of the Committee is to work with the organising committee and World Rowing to determine how best to provide the fairness racing conditions for the rowers over the duration of the event.

Context

Weather can have a major influence on the conditions for the athletes at rowing regattas. This applies to any rowing course in the world, whether on a natural lake or on a custom-built regatta course.

Rule 37 1b) makes provision for a Fairness Committee to be appointed for World Rowing Championships, Olympic and Paralympic, Youth Olympic and relevant qualification regattas and World Cup Regattas. The responsibilities for appointing a Fairness Committee are set out in the Bye-law to rule 37 in Appendix R5. Rule 63 and Bye-Laws to Rule 63 make provision for adverse weather conditions and the decision-making process including appointing a Fairness Committee for the events shown above. This Committee consists of three people with appropriate experience and ability to take the appropriate measures if the weather creates unfair or unrowable racing conditions. The committee is to determine if the weather has created, or is about to create, unfair or unrowable conditions and then to take action according to the options included in the Bye-Laws to Rule 63.

The President of the Jury shall implement the decisions of the Fairness Committee.

Principles

The Fairness Committee consists of three persons with “appropriate experience and ability” (Rule 63). The Fairness Committee studies carefully information provided to them through World Rowing including data on previous World Rowing events held on the racing Course and historical weather data and forecasts for the course. The Committee need to understand the likely effects of wind on and over water for different course configurations.

Duties - In principle:

The committee use a range of tools and sources of information to carry out their role effectively. Preparing possible scenarios for different conditions is key to ensure swift action rather than a slow reaction to unfolding weather conditions.

- One member will be appointed as the spokesperson of the Committee and will represent the Committee in responding to questions or giving explanations. This member should communicate decisions and is responsible for discussing with other affected parties (World Rowing Executive Director, World Rowing Technical Delegates, etc.).

- The committee members will divide their tasks as appropriate. These tasks include:
 - Prepare likely scenarios based on weather forecasts and local knowledge of the course for the following days racing.
 - Observe racing from the most appropriate positions on the course which may include following racing. Transport suited to the course such as a car, bicycle or motor boat.
 - Monitor the race results for any trends which might be caused by weather conditions;
 - Monitor the weather conditions through forecasts and actual measurement of wind on site and its effect on the course.

At all events committee members will, in principle, be free from other duties and any other responsibilities during racing.

Principles of Decision-making:

- Any decision/proposals of the Fairness Committee as provided under the Rules of Racing shall be made by the Fairness Committee alone, using all the information at their disposal as they see fit. This might include consultation with outside individuals at their discretion, but this does not change the responsibility of the members for the decision.
- A decision, once made, shall be the decision of the Committee and not of any individual member or members.
- Discussions within the Fairness Committee shall remain confidential between its Members;
- Members' deliberations should take place in a secured space where they will not be disturbed or influenced by non-members except when they specifically invite comments from others;
- In the event of sudden and unpredicted weather arising that suddenly creates very unfair conditions the chair of the committee will speak directly with the President of the Jury to suspend racing and thereafter communicate to all stakeholders for next steps.

Fairness Committee Operating Procedures

Requirements prior to the event (between bid stage and 3 days before):

- Weather monitoring information as agreed with World Rowing following the successful bid.
- Forecasts for the course made available to the Fairness Committee. These might include wind roses showing the historical weather patterns on the course for the time of year;
- A detailed map of the regatta course including a compass to show course orientation;
- A World Rowing template for collating the race results;
- If practical access to a person with significant local expertise and experience in the likely effects of different wind conditions on the course;

- Previous Fairness Committee reports, where they exist, from other World Rowing events at the same course;
- Information on local weather conditions and how they affect the course.

Requirements during the event

Equipment needed during the event:

- Wind meters (anemometers) or a suitable alternative for local measurements;
- Walkie-talkies for general information communication;
- Mobile telephones for private communications on fairness;
- Transport to move around the course for inspections and to follow racing as appropriate e.g. bicycles, car, boat. (two bicycles should also be reserved for Fairness Committee on courses where cycling is possible);
- Immediate access to results as races finish.
- Access to other data such as a wave model or water movement if available or relevant.

World Rowing Weather Protocol

- The committee will be provided with detailed weather forecasts by the organising committee in the form of:
 - five day, general area forecasts (each morning at 07:00hrs or 2 hours before racing whichever is earlier)
 - three day, three hourly forecasts (each morning at 07:00hrs or 2 hours before racing whichever is earlier)
 - one day, hourly forecasts (each morning at 07:00hrs or 2 hours before racing whichever is earlier, at 13:00 and at 18:00)

The above forecasts shall be available beginning at least 3 days before a World Championship regatta and 2 days before a World Rowing Cup regatta. The data to be provided in each forecast will be specified by World Rowing.

- Where a meteorologist is present ask for information on the local interpretation of the weather forecasts and agree on how best to get regular updates.

Timeline of Operations at the Event

• Day before racing starts:

1. **First meeting** - The Fairness Committee shall have its first meeting not less than two hours before the Draw and first Team Managers meeting in order to allocate roles, agree on working practices for that event and to ensure all information and equipment is available. They will introduce themselves to the Executive Committee, Technical Delegates, President of the Jury and organising committee persons responsible for providing weather forecasts and confirm venue transport arrangements. They will prepare the template which lists the times of meetings and key times for decisions. This will be available to the team managers and coaches so that they are aware of the actions of the Committee.

2. **Brief the Executive Director or his nominee and Technical Delegates** before the Draw and Team Managers meeting. The purpose of this briefing is to consider the forecast for all days of the event and any likely scenarios that may occur as well as any external constraints that could affect the implementation of Fairness Committee decisions (host broadcast, venue licenses, windows of time available for racing due to sunset or team departures, etc.). This includes ensuring that the forecasting service and the timing of updates and the equipment and facilities provided meet the requirements stipulated by World Rowing;
 3. **Make a physical inspection** of the regatta venue either by car or launch and view the places where wind is being measured;
 4. **Prepare possible scenarios** in advance so as to minimise the reaction time and speed up communication (see attached an example of Lane Allocation Scenarios);
 5. **Attend the Team Managers Meeting** to be introduced as the Fairness Committee.
- **Racing Days**
 1. **Between 120 to 90 minutes** (depending on event) before the start of each racing session, meet to consider the latest weather report and discuss with other stakeholders possible actions (considering OC scheduling, television, logistics issues, etc.);
 2. **No later than 75 minutes before the racing session, make a physical inspection** of the course either by car, bicycle or catamaran as appropriate;
 3. **At 60 minutes before the racing session and based on the assessment of conditions, announce the decision of the Committee to the Technical Delegate, the President of Jury and Executive Director to continue as scheduled, or to delay or postpone the relevant session.** There should be an announcement of the decision of the Committee whether action will be taken or not. The decision will be transmitted via the established communications process to Team Managers.
 4. **At 30 minutes before the racing session and based on the assessment before the racing session, decide which lanes offer the most equal conditions for racing (shifting lanes) and inform the Technical Delegate, the President of the Jury and Executive Director and OC Competition Manager which lanes shall be used.** The decision will be transmitted via the established communications process to Team Managers.
 5. During the course of racing the Committee should **communicate directly with the Technical Delegate, the President of the Jury and OC Competition Manager** if racing lanes need to be shifted as per Bye- law to Rule 63 (1.a). Any such change should be notified to the Technical Delegate and President of the Jury at least one race before the change is made, to avoid crews already in their lanes at the Start having to change lanes.

6. If determined necessary, make all efforts to **shift lanes before the start of a group of races** for one event so that conditions are the same for all races in a round of an event and, consequently, avoid shifting lanes during a group of races of one event;
7. **Constantly monitor the racing conditions** and be ready to act at any point during the racing session. Members should be in the best position to make decisions but, in principle, should be following the racing, following the trends of the results and maintaining an overview of the weather conditions and impact on racing.
8. If the available racing lanes do not offer fair conditions then **recommend to the Executive Committee to change the time table** of the regatta to avoid adverse weather conditions;
9. An alternative to changing the timetable is to **suspend racing when weather conditions are, or are about to become, unfair or unrowable** and recommend alternative times for racing; be sure to include the key stakeholders in planning so that all relevant issues are prepared in advance.
10. When the three options - using existing lanes, changing the timetable or suspending racing - are not appropriate then make the decision to **change to “prioritised” lanes (B/L to Rule 63, 1.d) before a racing session** or if conditions change during racing, before the start of a group of races, except with a sudden unfavourable change in conditions described in Principles of Decision making
11. If all of the above options fail to create the best opportunity for fair racing then the **Executive Committee after consultation with the Fairness committee have a range of further options detailed in Byelaw 63 3.a-f**. These include progressing or regressing race times, to omit a round of racing or running each race as a time trial or in exceptional cases shortening the course.
12. While monitoring weather conditions for the following racing days, be ready to **make decisions before 5:00 pm or the daily Team Manager’s Meeting** if racing will need to be advanced on the following racing day. The consultation process will need to include many stakeholders, so careful consideration needs to take place.
13. **Meet at the end of the day’s session** to review the day’s racing and consider any contingencies likely for the following day. At the World Rowing Championships or Olympic and Paralympic Games this should be before the Team Managers Meeting.

General considerations

1. **If determined necessary, change lanes before the start of a group of races** of a particular boat class, where possible, except in extreme cases (if there is any doubt that all races in that round for a particular boat class might not be able to be rowed, then consideration should be given to stop racing before the first race of that boat class starts);

2. **Be** fully prepared and **ready to act by having** anticipated possible weather conditions;
3. **Consider the time required to communicate** decisions to the teams, if racing is to be advanced, or it is possible that racing needs to be advanced. Except in extraordinary circumstances teams must be informed the day before the new schedule. Any such scheduling changes will be decided by the World Rowing Executive Committee at World Championships or the Technical Delegate at World Rowing Cup regattas as per Bye–Law to Rule 63 (2 & 3);
4. If the Fairness Committee observes **any issues on the course** before, during or after the regatta that might affect racing in any way they should inform the World Rowing Technical Delegate.

Principles for Selection of Members

Personal Qualifications (See also Appendix R5)

Each member must have the following:

1. Be knowledgeable on the rules and options open to the Fairness Committee in the event of unfair or unrowable conditions.
2. Experience in events
3. Credible background as a coach, rower or official;
4. Ability to interpret the likely effects of the weather on the regatta course;
5. Ability to operate independently without personal or team bias;
6. Ability to exercise authority and take decisions under pressure based on evidence when needed;
7. Ability to represent the majority view of the group, even if not their own;
8. Commitment to help World Rowing improve its knowledge and understanding of the influence of weather on water conditions in order to provide the best possible racing opportunity for all competitors.

Committee members should be selected so that between them they have the following:

1. Ability and credibility to communicate with and explain decisions taken to rowers, coaches, team managers and officials;
2. Ability to interpret data and prepare scenarios that may arise;
3. Ability to collect, collate and interpret data from varying sources including anemometers, weather stations, weather forecasts, wave models, etc.;
4. Ability to write reports that document the decision-making process to enable a transfer of knowledge to the next “fairness committee” operating on that course;
5. Ability to liaise with weather professionals, if present.

The following are “desirable elements” in a member:

1. Availability for multiple events during the year to help provide consistency of approach.
2. Commitment to a working group focussed on building and maintaining an archive of weather data and the effects on the rowing courses used by World Rowing.
3. Access to professionals able to assist World Rowing in building the necessary knowledge for collation, interpretation and management of weather information

and its impact on courses.

This document has been approved by the World Rowing Executive Committee and published in May 2023

