



International Rafting Federation

Changes to Race Rules made in May 2014

Addition of an Introduction to the Race Rules:

The Race Rules document is missing an introduction which describes the purpose and authority behind these rules, as well as a written description detailing how rule exceptions are dealt with. It is especially important that all competitors and officials have a common understanding about the 1. Purpose of Rules(b.), because this clause shall be used to make the final interpretation of a rules' intent should any rule or rules appear to be conflicting or unclear in their meaning.

"Introduction:

1. Purpose of Rules

- a. This document provides the rules and regulations that govern the sport of Rafting. Rules are decided by the Sport and Competition Committee (S&C Com) under the authority of Chapter V of the Bylaws of the International Rafting Federation.
- b. Rules are created to insure fair play, a universally understood concept which underpins all of sport. Without fairness, sport is devoid of any meaning or purpose. Rules are also created to encourage good sportsmanship concepts such as respect, equality, integrity, tolerance and excellence.
- c. Should any rule in this document appear to conflict with another rule, or appear to be unclear in its' meaning, clause 1.b. shall be used to determine the rules' basic intent.

2. Authority

- a. The Race Rules represent the ultimate authority in regulating how IRF raft races shall be conducted.
- b. No IRF official, race organizer, or other official can unilaterally supersede this authority.
- c. Rules may be altered only by the S&C Com or in rare cases by a special session of the IRF Board of Directors.

3. Rule Exceptions

- a. All rules must be followed unless an exception is granted by authority of the S&C Com or a race Jury as detailed below, or through a special session of the Board of Directors.
- b. An exception may be granted by the S&C Com if it is clearly demonstrated that the exception is necessary for the good of the sport of rafting. A Jury may add, change or adjust a rule temporarily for a specific race for the same reason.
- c. If a rule exception is granted all persons affected by the exception must be made aware of it in a timely manner.
- d. The granting of an exception does not imply that the exception will be allowed in the future."

B. Teams and Competitors

Add:

"Mixed Teams must compete under the Men's category unless a Mixed Team category exists"

B. Teams and Competitors

U19 = Youth

U23 = Junior

Reason for addition: "Youth' and 'Junior' are general terms that do not readily signify the ages of these Divisions. The terms U19 (under 19) and U23 (under 23) provide clear age definitions.

B. Teams and Competitors

The rules do not prohibit competitors from racing in several divisions during the same event if they meet the age and gender requirements.

Add for clarification:

"Competitors are permitted to race in more than one division during a single event if they qualify. In every instance, the competitor must follow all race requirements. No races will be delayed or rescheduled to accommodate the competitor."

B. Teams and Competitors(4.)

The rule says:

"...in the calendar year they turn 16..."

change to:

"...in the calendar year they turn 15..."

B. Teams and Competitors (1.c and 1.d.)

Issues have arisen in how the rules define a competitor's country of residency. It has been decided that residency should be defined by the number of years a competitor has resided in a country rather than to use a nation's official definition of residency. In general, if a competitor can provide proof that they have lived in a nation on a permanent basis for more than 2 years, they will be permitted to compete for that nation.

The rule says:

"c. In the case of residents holding the passport of a different nation, the current National Rafting Federation must prove official permanent residency to the satisfaction of the S & C Committee. Such cases should be brought to the attention of the race organisers as early as possible so that approval may be given by the S & C Committee prior to the deadline for entries."

Change to:

"c. Competitors who wish to compete for a nation at A or B level events where they do not hold a passport or official permanent residency, must provide proof that they are permanently domiciled in that nation to the satisfaction of the S&C Com. Such cases must be brought to the attention of the IRF before the announced deadline date for team entries."

The rule says:

"d. Proof of residency or citizenship must be given on demand to the organizing committee and the IRF Sports & Competition Committee."

Change to:

"d. If demanded, proof of S&C Com approval of permanent domicile, or proof of citizenship, or proof of permanent domicile must be given to the organizing committee, S&C Com, Jury, or their designees."

Add to definitions:

'Permanent Domicile' = the place where a person has his/her permanent principal home for 2 years or more, and to which he/she returns or intends to return.

B.Teams and Competitors (1.3)

To bring it up to date to what we have been doing anyway:

The rule says:

"There is only one reserve per team allowed. Only the nominated reserve can be substituted into a team. Multiple substitutions can be made in the ongoing event in any single discipline but must be announced each time to the Race Director or Head Judge in advance. Substitutions may not be made during a single discipline."

Change to:

"Each team is permitted one reserve competitor, who must be registered prior to the start of the event. ONLY this reserve is allowed as a team substitute. Multiple substitutions are allowed during the event; however substitutions are not permitted during a single discipline. Infractions of this rule will result in a disqualification from the event."

E. Race Format (5. Down river race)

Because a team that is slowed down by being illegally blocked in the Downriver, this could affect their time, so we have added in the following:

"If a team is penalized for illegally blocking another team (Rule F.3), the team that was illegally blocked shall have 10 seconds subtracted from their total time for each blocking infraction."

E. Race Format 3. Head-to-Head (H2H) (i. Starting positions and lanes)

This rule has been changed to have a clearer definition of 'start lanes' and how the H2H start should be conducted.

The rule says:

"i. It is the duty of the Jury to ensure the two starting positions and lanes are as fair as humanly possible particularly if there are no overtaking opportunities further down."

Change to:

"i. The Start Lane is defined as the unobstructed section of the course leading from the starting position to the first constricting course feature (such as a rapid, rock, bend or other common obstacle) where H2H opponents are most likely to have first physical contact. It is the duty of the Jury to ensure that the two starting positions and the Start Lanes are as equal as humanly possible."

The rule says:

"ii. At A-level events various methods will be used to test the above. Where possible teams will be timed from the start to a set position a certain distance from the start. Teams must be timed in each lane for comparison. If timing is not possible then two teams who are fairly even are to race each other over the same distance - twice, testing out each lane for comparison. This will need to be done until the Jury is satisfied the lanes are as equal as humanly possible and will have to be done close to the start of the first H2H run if conditions vary."

Change to:

"ii. At A-level events, 'test teams' must be used to test the Start Lanes. When possible, the test teams will be timed in each Start Lane for comparison. If timing is not possible, then two teams who are evenly matched shall race each other twice, with the matched teams testing each Start Lane for comparison. Testing will need to be repeated until the Jury is satisfied that the Start Lanes are as equal as humanly possible. On venues where the water levels fluctuate, testing will need to be conducted as near to the race time as possible."

The rule says:

"iii. It is up to the Race Director to decide how to choose the teams needed in ii) above but no team should be forced to do these test runs if they prefer not to, and consideration is to be given to various influencing factors affecting the teams. Options for doing this are suggested below but are not limited to this only:

- a. Chosen from local teams not competing if they are suitable,
- b. Chosen from the racing teams for their equivalent abilities and therefore for their suitability to compare the race lanes.
- c. Out of a hat
- d. Availability at the time of testing."

Change to:

"iii. The Race Director shall decide on the method for selecting the teams needed for testing, however no team will be forced to participate against their will. The selection methods may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Selected from suitable local teams that are not competing
 - b. Selected from evenly matched competing teams
 - c. Selected from random teams drawn out of a hat
 - d. Selected from teams that are available at the time of testing"
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The rule says:

"iv. Teams chosen for these test runs are to cooperate with the Jury and to race to the best of their ability in ensuring the best test results are achieved."

Change to:

"iv. Teams chosen for these test runs are to cooperate with the Jury and race to the best of their ability so that the best test results are achieved. "

The rule says:

"v. The route for each team is to be clearly marked to the top of the first rapid. Crossing the marked line after the race start by any part of boat, body or equipment is penalized by 10 secs."

Change to:

"v. The Race Director or Jury may choose to divide the Start Lanes with a clearly marked line of buoys. Crossing the marked line after the race start by any part of boat, body or equipment will result in a 10 second penalty. When no dividing line exists, teams may engage in legal contact at any time after the start signal is given."

F. General Competition Rules (10.)

The rule Says:

"Electronic timing is mandatory for A and B level events."

Add to it:

"Timing and scoring systems must be integrated, so that minimum manual entry is required."

F. General Competition Rules (18.)

New sections have been added to this rule and some sections have been revised for clarity:

"Should any team or team member at an IRF sanctioned event be found guilty of bringing the sport of rafting into disrepute, that team or team member or their national federation can be sanctioned. Such behaviour could include, but is not limited to:

- a) indisputable bad sportsmanship or behaviour
- b) flagrant disregard of IRF race rules or event rules
- c) flagrant disregard of requests made by race officials or event staff
- d) disrespect of Judges, Jury, event staff, or other official personal
- e) behaviour that is disrespectful to the IRF, the sport of rafting, the event organisers, event spectators and, or participants.

The Race Jury at the event can be advised of the occurrence by anyone in writing within 24 hours of the occurrence believed to have brought the sport into disrepute, and should meet as soon as possible thereafter to hear, separately or jointly, evidence in mitigation and aggravation. The sanction should be appropriate to and dependent upon the severity of the offence and can be through any means available, including but not limited to:

- a) time penalties
- b) no points for the discipline
- c) no points for the entire competition
- d) expulsion of a team or competitor from a discipline or the event without refund of any entry fees paid
- e) prohibition from racing a defined number of years at IRF sanctioned events"

H. Rafts and Equipment (points 3,4,5)

This rule is being brought in line with the way we have been doing things over the years, so it's no change really.

The rule says:

- "3. All rafts must provide a safety line around the outside and a bow line in front, fixed by a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 10 D-rings. Carrying handles are allowed.
4. Any other ropes and rigging are, for safety reasons, strictly prohibited.
5. Every raft must have a minimum of one foot cone (no foot loops or ropes) per person at the seating position. Ideally, cones are fixed by the manufacturer in advance."

Change to:

- "3. All rafts must provide a safety line fixed around the outside of the inflated outer tubes. Bow and stern lines are permitted however any other ropes and rigging are, for safety reasons, strictly prohibited.
4. All rafts must be equipped with foot cones or other acceptable devices for allowing each paddler to stabilize their paddling position. Fixed inflatable thwarts may be used for this purpose unless expressly forbidden by the Safety Director. Ideally, if foot cones are to be fitted it should be fixed by the manufacturer in advance. Open foot loops, straps or ropes are NOT acceptable.
5. In A- and B-level events, rafts used for each discipline must be identical in length, width, weight, tube diameter, material construction, and overall design unless an exception is permitted by the S&C Com."

J. Safety at/on the river(1.)

The rule says:

"...with 6kg of weight..."

change to:

"...with 6.12kg weight..."

Reason for change: This is the correct counterweight to use when checking for 60N of buoyancy.

K. Officials and Duties of Officials

Note at bottom says:

"Officials 2,4-8,10-11 must be approved IRF judges."

Change to:

"Officials 2,4-8,10-11 must be approved IRF judges for WRC and Euro Champs. For all other IRF events this requirement is not mandatory but is strongly encouraged whenever possible."

Reason: realistic and prevents exceptions always being asked for.

K. Officials and Duties of Officials - safety

Reason: is in Safety & Rescue Plan but needs to be made clearer in rules.

Add:

"IRF Safety Representative for A and B level events – the IRF Safety Representative is an IRF GT&E Assessor responsible for ensuring that a Safety & Rescue Plan (SRP) is approved and followed (see Addendum 2). The IRF Safety Representative works closely with the event Safety Director and may halt the race or the event if the SRP is flagrantly disregarded and/or unacceptable safety risk(s) are evident. If the event Safety Director is a certified IRF GT&E Assessor, he/she may assume this responsibility."

O. Prize Giving and Awards

Add:

"Teams are to note Rule F.18 with regard to behaviour at the Prize Giving."

O. Prize Giving and Awards

Add:

"Only the medal winners and a maximum of one manager/ coach are permitted on the podium."

O. Prize giving and Awards (5. Medals) –

Reason for change:

The reality is that for all our WRCs we've only been handing out 6 medals for disciplines and 7 for overall for R6 (and 4 and 5 for R4) as the reserve did not race in that discipline and so does not deserve the medal and therefore it's an unnecessary, expensive extra cost for organisers. Medals are a BIG cost for organisers now that we have 4 divisions and 2 categories!

The rule says:

"Must include a medal for reserve – therefore 5 medals for R4 and 7 for R6".

Change to:

"In each discipline, medals must be awarded to each competitor - 4 medals for R4 and 6 medals for R6. For the Overall, medals must be awarded to all team members – 5 medals for R4 and 7 medals for R6."

O. Prize giving and Awards

Add in:

The sentence "Only Overall medals need to be given if there are less than 6 teams in any category." should also be included under this section and not only under A. Race Classification section.

Reason for change:

This is just a clarification to ensure the right rules are in the right places, it's not actually a rule change.
