**RCA Rules of Racing** (January 2022) APPENDIX 4 – (starting on page 114)

**BEACH SPRINT RULES**

**Introduction**

The RCA Rules of Racing shall apply in full, except as noted below.

**1. Rowing, Boats, Regattas**

A Beach Rowing Sprints regatta is a regatta in which all rowers use Coastal Rowing boats as defined in the RCA Rules of Racing and where the competition course includes a transition between beach and water and is in accordance with these Rules.

**2. Age Categories**

The following age categories for rowers are recognized:

• Seniors

• Under 19

**3. Boat Classes**

The following boat classes are recognized:

• Solo (C1x)  
• Double Sculls (C2x)  
• Coxed Quadruple Sculls (C4x+)

**4. Boats and Equipment**

All boats used in Beach Sprint Rowing must meet the requirements for construction, flotation and safety for Coastal Boats specified by the RCA Rules of Racing with the exception of the following:

**a.** During Beach Sprint Rowing competition, boats are not required to carry a personal flotation device (PFD) for each competitor in the boat, however, the organizing committee shall make PFDs available for use if requested by rowers.

**b.** Boats are not required to have a 15m buoyant line.

**5. Beach Sprints Boats**

All boats used in Beach Sprint Rowing should be coastal boats that meet World Rowing standards. If boats do not meet these requirements, all boats within each event still must have similar structural components (e.g. weight, rudders, etc.) to ensure safe and fair play.

**6. Race Course Characteristics**

The race course shall provide, as far as possible, fair and equal racing conditions for all crews.

**7. Racing Distance**

**Beach Sprints** – In principle, the course should include a run on the beach of between approximately 10 and 50 metres to start and to finish the race with an on-water distance of 250 metres from the beach to the farthest turning buoy. The race will then comprise a 10 – 50 metre run from the start line to the water, a 250 metre (buoys at approximately 85m + 85m + 80m) row out, a similar 250 metre row back and a 10 – 50 metre beach run to the finish. See Rule 8 herein for the layout of the course. The distances stated here shall be a general guide but will depend on local conditions.

**8. Number of Lanes**

There shall be a minimum of two lanes up to, in principle, a maximum of four lanes. The number of lanes shall depend on the available space at the beach and on the water and on the number of crews entered in each event. In all cases, the beach running distance and the water conditions should be equal for all crews. Additional lanes can be provided if a competition format so requires. The number of lanes shall be notified in the Regatta Package.

**9. Composition of the Jury  
a.** The Jury shall consist of umpires carrying out the following duties:

1. **Chief Umpire**
2. **Starter/Finish Judge**
3. **Judge at the Start**
4. **Lane Umpires (1 per lane)**
5. **Turning Mark Umpire**
6. **Members of the Control Commission, one of whom shall be the senior member**

**b.** Several members of the Jury may have dual roles. The organizing committee, in consultation with the Chief Umpire, may also appoint volunteers to support the Jury in its work.

**c.** There shall be at least one Turning Mark Umpire positioned within clear sight of the end turning buoys.

Additional Turning Mark Umpires may be required if racing is conducted on more than two lanes.

**d.** If a Beach Sprints regatta has large entries requiring more than two lanes, then the number of Jury members may be increased accordingly.

**10. Progression System  
a.** Beach Sprint Rowing Regattas: The progression system for Beach Sprint rowing may be in the format of:

1. **Multiple pools of crews; or**
2. **Time trials; or**
3. **Elimination heats which may or may not include repêchages; or**
4. **A combination of these;**

in order to bring the number of crews in each event down to the number of available places for the final round of racing (which is generally assumed to be eight (8) for the final.

**b. The Final Crews**

After the preliminary rounds are completed and the final remaining crews in an event are determined, then racing shall in all cases be conducted on two lanes with quarter-finals, semi-finals and then finals (as applicable) following a consistent time schedule without additional rest breaks between races. The race for 3rd and 4th positions shall take place before the race for 1st and 2nd positions. Additional semi-finals and finals for ranking all final crews may also be rowed within this format.

**c.** The organizing committee may place a limit on the number of crews from which entries will be accepted and the method of limiting numbers (i.e. qualification, order of entry or random draw of crews or any other method) shall be included in the Regatta Package and in all information given to crews before the regatta.

**11. The Draw and Determining the Lanes**

The Organizing Committee will be responsible for conducting the draw. If the first round is in the form of time trials, the results of the time trials will be adopted to determine the “Final Eight” lane allocations, based on the faster times seeded in the quarter final races.

**12. Adverse Weather Conditions**

The Chief Umpire, in consultation with the Regatta Chair and the organizing committee, shall take all decisions on any delay, postponement or cancellation of races, or of changes to the course, resulting from adverse weather conditions or other matters relating to the safety of rowers and equipment and officials on the water or the fairness of the course.

**13. The Start**

**a. The Start**

During the start procedure, the boats shall be lined up in the water in the allotted start position and shall be held by crew members (except solo (C1x)) and up to two boat handlers per boat.

**b. Boat Handlers**

There shall be up to two boat handlers per boat. The boat handlers shall, in principle, be provided by the teams and are recognized as official support crew members. The role of the boat handler is to support the departure and arrival of the crew from and to the beach. The boat handlers for each crew should wear matched uniforms or a bib that comply with the Rules in respect of Identifications, and are clearly distinguishable from the crew. In rougher conditions and at the discretion of the Chief Umpire, the number of boat handlers may be increased. Boat handlers must ensure that they, and the equipment they are handling, do not impede other competitors.

Boat handlers will not board the boat at any time but may assist the crew in any other way, including rudder fixing, etc. When the boat returns to the beach, the boat handlers may “catch” the boat to slow its progress when it reaches the beach and a crew member disembarks to run to the finish line.

**i.** The boat handlers shall at all times remain in shallow water not above their shoulder height. The boat handlers shall comply with any instructions of the race officials and shall at all times be subject to the Rules of Racing.

Where a crew does not supply its own boat handlers, the organizing committee may provide them (if boat handlers will not be provided, this shall be outlined in

the regatta package). The boats should be held reasonably in line and shall be positioned so that the centres of boats are in a line with the buoys in their lane. All rowers (except the runner of each crew) must be standing in the water next to their boat and shall not start boarding their boat until the start signal is given. If the slope of the beach is such that there is not enough room for all rowers and boat handers to stand in the water, the Organizing Committee may allow a defined number of rowers to be in the boat before the start. This shall apply to all boats in the same event and shall be published in the Regatta Package.

The Judge at the Start, with the advice of the Lane Umpires, shall determine whether the boats are reasonably in line with the buoys in their lane and shall take such action as necessary to ensure this.

One nominated crew member from each crew shall be a runner. (The runner at the start may be different from the runner at the finish but in both cases must be a member of the crew.) The runners shall stand behind the start line which shall be clearly marked on the beach.

The remaining crew members (except for solo (C1x)) shall be standing in the water holding their boats. No crew members shall start to board their boats before the start signal has been given. When the start signal is given the runners shall run to their boats to join the other crew members. The other crew members may start to board their boats as soon as the start signal is given.

**ii.** The boat handlers will support the crews in holding the best pointing for the boat for the crew members to board and depart.

**c. The Start Procedure**

The Starter may be assisted by other umpires under the authority of the Starter. The position of the Starter shall be elevated and in a position so that the rowers can see them, such that they have a clear view of the start line and all boats. The starting signals should be clearly audible to all rowers.

The Starter shall inform the crews when there are three minutes remaining before the start time either directly or through the race Announcer, by saying “THREE MINUTES!”.

There shall be a Judge at the Start who shall be positioned in such location as to be able to properly carry out their responsibilities. Where the Starter is positioned on the start line, the Starter may also serve as the Judge at Start. Where they consider it necessary, the Chief Umpire may instruct another Umpire to assist the Judge at the Start in their duties. The Judge at the Start shall be responsible to decide if any crew has caused a false start.

The starting procedure for beach sprints shall be as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **-3m:00s** | All crew members should be in the start zone and under the control of the starter. The Starter may sanction a crew which is late to the start and may start the race without reference to absentees. |
| **-2m:45s-1m:45s** | Crews are introduced to the spectators by the Announcers. Once the introductions are complete the crews shall immediately return to their start positions. |
| **-1m:00s-0m:45s** | When there is one minute to the start, the Starter shall say “ONE MINUTE” After this the runners will position themselves behind the start line and the Starter shall instruct the other members of the crew and/or the boat handlers to “put the boats in the water.” The Starter may allocate these commands to the race Announcer. |
| **-0:30-0:20** | When there are between 20 and 30 seconds to the start, the Starter shall alert the crews by saying “Get ready!”, after which alert the Starter may start the race at any time, having taken into account the wave conditions and any other factors. |
| **at any time between approx. -0m.20s and 0m.0s** | The start music stops.  To give the start signal, the Starter shall first say “Attention!”;  After a clear pause, the Starter shall then EITHER raise the start flag, OR where the start is given using traffic lights, shall press a button (or switch) to change the traffic lights from the neutral position to red;  After a clear and variable pause, the Starter will then start the race by EITHER  • dropping the start flag quickly to one side and simultaneously sounding a horn in one long blast;  • OR by pressing a button that shall, at the same instant:  **a.** Change the red light to green; **b.** Make an audible signal through the loudspeakers;  **c.** Start the timing system for the race. |

The official start signal will be the moment the start flag starts to move downwards or the red light changes to green.

**14. False or Faulty Start**

A crew commits a false start if the crew’s nominated runner crosses the start line before the start signal is given or if any crew member starts to board their boat before the start signal is given. The Judge at the Start shall be the sole judge of a false start.

**a. Consequences of a False Start**

**i.** Where a false start is committed, whether by a runner or other crew member, the Judge at the Start shall immediately raise a red flag and the Starter shall stop the race by waving a red flag and sounding repeated blasts on the horn until all crews have stopped. Where the Starter is serving as the Judge at Start, when a false start is committed, the Starter will immediately stop the race by waving a red flag and sounding repeated blasts on the horn until all crews have stopped. The Judge at the Start shall inform the Starter which crew has caused a false start and the Starter shall award the crew a Yellow Card.

**ii.** A crew causing two false starts or receiving two Yellow Cards applying to the same race shall be awarded a Red Card and excluded from the event by the Starter.

**b. Faulty Start**

In the case of a faulty start, the Judge at the Start shall stop the race, but no yellow card is awarded.

**15. Responsibility of the Rowers**

**a.** When turning around the buoys, crews are permitted to touch the turning buoys with their boat or oars, but the keel of the boat must pass around the designated side of the buoy.

**b.** In order to finish the race a crew must correctly round all designated turning markers and must complete the full course as designated by the organizing committee.

**c.** A crew not correctly rounding any buoy on the course shall be awarded a time penalty as follows:

**i.** Not correctly rounding the first or second buoy from the beach – 30 seconds each instance;

**ii.** Not correctly rounding the third buoy from the beach – 60 seconds

**d.** For coxed boats, the coxswain is required to be in the boat for the whole time the crew is rowing; otherwise, the crew shall not be ranked in the race and shall be shown on the results as DNF.

**e.** Crews returning to the beach must make every effort to keep their boat under control in an upright position with the crew members in contact with the boat until reaching the beach. In the event the boat capsizes while returning to the beach, the crew is responsible to ensure that all crew members and equipment are safe, and such responsibility shall have priority over finishing their race.

**f.** Upon their boat reaching the beach, one crew member shall disembark and run in the designated route to the finish point of the race.

**g.** Crews shall at all times be aware of the weather and water conditions and the safety of themselves and others. Crews rowing in a dangerous manner or in a way which is considered out of control may be excluded or otherwise penalized by the umpire.

**16. Interference**

A crew causes interference to its opponents if its oars, sculls or boat encroach into the opponent’s water and cause a disadvantage to its opponents by contact or by causing the

other crew to change course to avoid such contact. The Umpire alone shall decide if a crew is interfering with another crew and causing them a disadvantage. If a crew has caused interference to another crew and has, in the Umpire’s opinion, affected the result of that crew, then the Umpire may exclude the crew or alternatively may award a time penalty of 10 seconds or such other time as they deem appropriate against the crew causing the interference or take other appropriate measures under the rules. It is each crew’s responsibility to remain in their proper course and their water and to not cause interference to other crews.

**17. Finish of the Race**

After exiting the boat, each runner must pass on the outside (relative to the finish line) of the flag placed on the water’s edge in line with the lane buoys for their lane when running to the finish line. A runner not passing on the correct side of the flag shall receive a penalty of 10 seconds.

The finish of the race for each crew shall be the moment their crew member (the runner) reaches the finish point and completes the action required to mark the finish of the race.

Timing – Finish times shall be recorded to 1/10th of a second.

**18. Dead Heats**

If there is a dead heat in any round other than a final, there must be a re-row over the same course between the crews involved. The re-row should take place not later than 10 minutes after the finish of the race in which the dead-heat occurred. If the re-row results in a dead heat the crews shall be required to re-row the race again not later than 15 minutes after the finish of the previous re-row. This process will continue until a decision is reached. If a dead heat occurs in a final the crews concerned shall be given equal ranking and the next ranking shall be left vacant.

**19. Control Commission**

In addition to its other duties, the Control Commission at Beach Rowing regattas shall check the correct display of the boat registration numbers and that crews race in the boats which are allocated to them.

**20. The Starter and the Judge at the Start**

The Starter and the Judge at the Start shall ensure that the correct starting procedure is followed. The Starter shall be in an elevated position (on a podium or stand) from where they have a clear view of the start/finish line and the racing course, and can be clearly seen by all crews. The Judge at the Start shall determine if any crew causes a false start and if so shall follow the procedure outlined in Rule 14 herein.

Where the Starter is positioned on the start line such that the Starter can determine if a false start has occurred, the Starter may also serve as the Judge at Start.

**21. The Umpire**

The Chief Umpire, in consultation with the Regatta Chair, shall decide the number of Umpires to supervise each race. Where there is more than one Umpire, the Umpires shall have equal status in their areas of responsibility.

**a. Race Umpire**

**i.** The Judge at the Start shall act also as the Race Umpire and will be positioned on land, elevated as necessary, so as to have a clear view of all crews during the race. The Race Umpire shall have precedence over the Lane Umpires and the Turning Mark Umpire. They shall in general not communicate with crews during the race but will make decisions based on their observations and on the advice of the Lane Umpires and the Turning Mark Umpire.

**ii.** TheRaceUmpireshallensuretheproperconductof the race and the safety of the rowers. In particular, they shall observe whether any crew gains any advantage or suffers any disadvantage from its opponents or from external factors and shall impose appropriate penalties on crews at fault. The Race Umpire shall not give any steering indications to crews.

If necessary, the Race Umpire may stop the race, impose any necessary penalties and order the race to be re-started immediately from the start. If for any reason, such as equipment damage, the re-start must be delayed, they shall decide on a new starting time in consultation with the Chief Umpire and shall inform the crews concerned.

Where a crew suffers interference or other impediment and the Race Umpire considers the impediment did not affect the result of the race, or considers the effect of the impediment was not significant, they may decline to take any action or they may take such action as they see fit in the circumstances.

**iii.** When all crews have finished the race, the Race Umpire shall indicate if the race was in order by raising a white flag. If the race was not in order, the Race Umpire shall raise a red flag. The Judge at the Finish shall not release any results of the race until the Race Umpire makes a determination on the infringement indicated by the red flag.

**b. Lane Umpires**

The Lane Umpires shall be positioned on the beach to give them a clear view of their lane, each in line with their lane. They shall ensure the boats are held in line with their lane while waiting for the start signal and shall notify the Judge at the Start if they consider the boats are not correctly in line when the start signal is given (a faulty start) or if any crew member starts to board the boat before the start signal is given (a false start). In either case, they shall give such notification by raising a red flag, upon which the Judge at the Start shall follow the procedure outlined in Rule 15 herein.

The Lane Umpire should also observe the race to support the Race Umpire in determining whether all crews go around all buoys and land-based markers correctly as required. They shall indicate to the Race Umpire by raising a flag after the crew in their lane has rounded all markers including land-based markers. The flag shall be raised as follows:

**i.** A white flag if the crew has rounded all markers correctly;

**ii.** A red flag if the crew has not rounded the markers correctly.

**c. Turning Mark Umpire**

The Turning Mark Umpire shall be stationed in a boat at the farthest point of the course and shall observe the race and shall determine whether all crews go around all buoys correctly as required. They shall indicate to the Race Umpire by raising a flag after the crew in their lane has rounded the farthest buoy from the beach. The flag shall be raised as follows:

**i.** A white flag if the crew has rounded all buoys correctly;

**ii.** A red flag if the crew has not rounded the buoys correctly.

The Turning Mark Umpire shall also show a red flag if they consider there has been any other infringement of the Rules, including interference. They shall as soon as possible after the finish of the race inform the Race Umpire of the detailed reasons for showing the red flag.

**22. Judges at the Finish**

The Judge at the Finish shall determine the order in which the runners of each crew finish the race. They shall ascertain that the race was in order. They shall be responsible for validating the results.

**Additional Guidelines for Beach Sprints Regattas**

The Race Course shall require sufficient width of the start area to allow all the crews in each race to start without interference from other crews. The race area should be located on an evenly-sloped sandy beach free of rocks or other obstructions which might damage boats in the beach start and beach finish. The start line, finish line, turning flags and buoys shall be set to provide the same distance across all lanes for both the running and rowing sections of the course.

The length of course shall be as provided in Rule 7 of this Appendix.

The course shall comprise (1) a land section – (2) a water section – (3) a land section.

The first section of the course shall be a straight line from a point on the beach (the start/finish line) to the water edge, a distance of between approximately 10 and 50 metres.

The second section of the course shall comprise, for each lane, a series of three lane buoys in each racing lane, the first buoy positioned approximately 85 metres from the water edge, the second buoy a further 85 metres out and the third buoy a further 80 metres out, all in a straight line. The number of lanes so provided shall depend on the nature of the event, but in general shall be a minimum of two lanes and up to four lanes. (See Rule 9 of this Appendix)

The third section of the course shall be approximately between 10 and 50 metres distance on land from the water edge back to the start/finish line.

The distances stated here shall be a general guide but will depend on local conditions. In particular, the first buoy should be positioned slightly beyond, and clear of, any wave break. Any substantial change from these dimensions is only permitted with the prior approval of RCA.

**a. Course Markers**

**i.** A plan of the course(s) showing the location of all course markers shall be included in the Regatta Package. The plan shall also be displayed at the Control Commission.

**ii.** For safety and visibility purposes, the buoys used to mark the turning points should be inflatable or other soft-surface type which will not cause damage to boats and equipment and shall each be approximately 150cm high. The first two buoys from the beach in each lane shall be approximately 50 to 100cm diameter and the farthest turning buoy shall be between 75cm and 125cm diameter. The 3 buoys in one lane shall each be the same colour.

**iii.** The organizing committee shall take all necessary precautions in setting out the course markers and the course to avoid any risks of boats grounding in shallow waters.

**iv.** The organizing committee shall ensure that, to the best of their ability, the distances between buoys in each lane are equal and in particular that the distance of the farthest buoy from the beach in each lane is equal.

**v.** If the course is located in waters that are affected by significant tidal movements the organizing committee shall make arrangements for regular checking and, if necessary, repositioning of the course as necessary. This may include additional gates and markers to assure safety and fairness to the crews.

**vi.** I For safety purposes the layout of the course shall not allow boats to be travelling in opposite directions in the same water and the distance between the centres of adjoining lanes shall be at least 25 metres (see diagrams in the Annex at the end of this Appendix).

**b. Start and Finish Lines**

1. The start line shall be visually marked on the beach in a clear, fixed manner which will keep its position under all race situations. The width of the start line shall be a minimum of 2 metres. The distance from the start line to each boat shall be equal for all rowers. Where a starting light system will be used to start the races, a starting light will be placed 5 meters in front of the start line and evenly between the starting position of the runners so that the lights will be visible to the runners. Starting lights should also be visible to crew members who may be at the boat during the start procedure. The Starting lights shall operate as specified in RCA’s Rule of Racing 10.5.
2. ThewidthoftheFinishLineshallbeaminimumof2 metres. Where only two racing lanes are in use, the Finish Line may be a narrow “funnel” design to bring the runners of each crew close together at the finish. However, where 3 or more racing lanes are in use, the Finish line should be of such length to ensure that the runner from every crew has an equal distance from the designated finishing point of their boat to reach the Finish Line. The designated arrival point of each boat at the beach shall be marked by a flag in line with the lane buoys and runners shall be required to pass on the outside of this flag in their run to the Finish Line after leaving the boat, to ensure equal distance to the finish line.

**iii.** The method of marking the Finish Line and therefore the finish of the race, may be any one of the following, or a similar arrangement:

**1.** A clear line on the beach which the runner from each crew must cross;

**2.** A tape which the runner from each crew must run through;

**3.** One flag or similar device for each crew, standing upright in the sand, and which must be picked up by the runner from each crew;

**4.** One button or similar device for each crew, which must be pressed by the runner from each crew and which, upon being pressed, shall emit a sound or visual display, at the same time recording the elapsed race time for that crew.

The finish line for runners shall be an equal distance from the water where their boats would reach the shore in their designated course.

**iv.** The organizing committee shall decide the method of marking the finish and this shall be included in the Regatta Package.

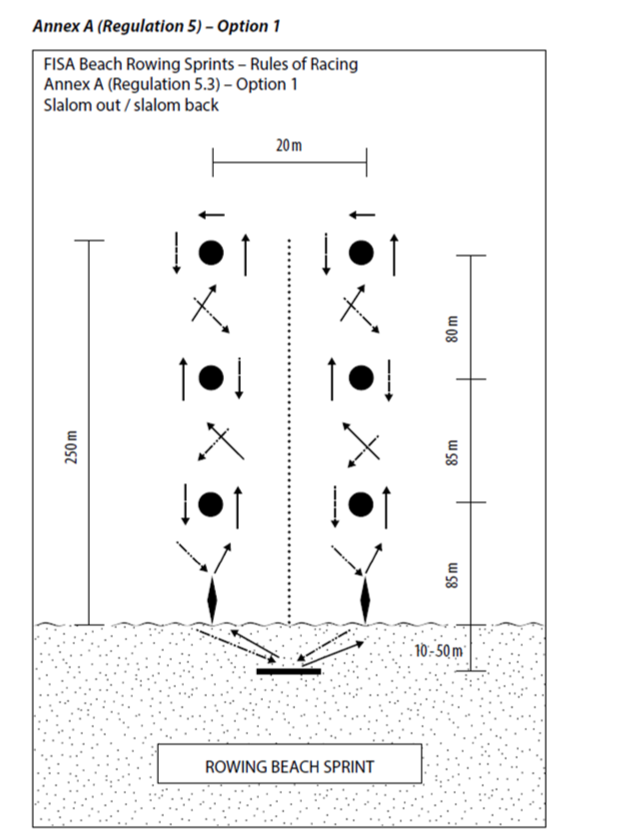
**v.** The orientation of the start and finish line shall in principle be perpendicular to the rowing course.

**vi.** The diagrams at the end of this Appendix show the general layout of the course.

**c. Race Format**

**i.** There are two options for the format of the rowing section of Beach Sprints. The organizing committee shall decide which format shall be used and this shall be notified in the Regatta Package. The same format should be used for all events at a regatta.

**Option 1 – “Slalom out / slalom back”** – When all crews are in their boats they shall race from the beach in a slalom fashion around each of the three buoys in turn in their respective racing lanes, turning around the last buoy and again racing slalom fashion around each buoy back to the beach, ensuring that they go around each buoy in turn in the correct direction. Diagram 1 at the end of this Appendix refers to this option.



**Option 2 – “Slalom out / straight back”** - When all crews are in their boats they shall race from the beach in a slalom fashion around each of the three buoy in turn in their respective racing lanes, turning around the last buoy. After rounding the last buoy they shall then race directly in a straight line back to the designated point on the beach. (Note: Crews not taking a straight line course back to the beach or arriving at the beach at other than the designated point shall not be penalized as long as they do not interfere with another crew and they otherwise comply with the requirements of these rules.) Crews must ensure that they go around each of the three buoys in turn in the correct direction on the outward sector. Diagram 2 at the end of this Appendix refers to this option.

