



# INTERNATIONAL RAFTING FEDERATION RACE RULES

From March 2020

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1. Purpose of Rules**

- a. This document provides the rules and regulations that govern the sport of Raft Racing. 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 (IRF).
- b. Race Rules ensure fair play - a universally understood concept which underpins all sports. Without fairness, sport is devoid of any meaning or purpose. Race Rules are also created to encourage good sportsmanship concepts such as respect, equality, integrity, tolerance and excellence.  
Should any Rule in this document appear to conflict with another Rule, or appear to be unclear in its meaning, clause 1.b. (above) shall be used to determine the Rule's basic intent.

### **2. Authority**

- a. These Race Rules represent the ultimate authority in regulating how IRF Competitions shall be conducted.
- b. No IRF Official, Event Organiser, or other Event Official can unilaterally supersede this authority.  
Race 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. Race Rule Exceptions**

- a. All Race Rules must be followed unless an exception is granted by authority of the S&C Com or a race Jury (as detailed below in 3.b), or by 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 Raft Racing. A Jury may add, change or adjust a Race Rule temporarily for a specific race or Event for the same reason.
- c. If a Race 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 is permanent or will continue to be allowed in future Events.

**All IRF Member Nations in good standing are eligible to compete in any IRF Event provided that they meet the specific requirements of the Event, and the requirements that are detailed in these Race Rules. A, B and C Level Events are restricted to R4 and R6. This applies to all disciplines.**

**The IRF will support any type of raft Competition worldwide if a timely request is made, and if the Competition is run according to the Bylaws of the IRF and these Race Rules.**

**Member Nations are encouraged to contact the IRF Administration if they have questions about eligibility.**

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## DEFINITIONS

- BOD = IRF Board of Directors
- Category = Used to sub-divide a Division by Gender. Current Categories are: Men, Women, and Mixed
- Competition = Any IRF recognized competitive race organized between two or more Competitors
- Competitor = A person who has legally entered, and has been duly registered and accepted, as a race participant in an IRF recognized Competition
- Development Phase = Phase during which an Event, Division or Category is in development. To encourage growth during the Development Phase, Race Rules that govern participation are allowed additional flexibility
- Division = Used to divide an Event by age or ability. Current Divisions are: Youth, Junior, Open, and Masters
- ERC = IRF European Rafting Championships
- Event = Any IRF recognised Competition
- Host = The Organiser, National Federation, Member Nation or Region that is hosting or sponsoring an IRF Event
- Inside the raft (in the raft) = A paddler is considered to be 'inside the raft' when their weight is fully supported by the raft (either sitting, kneeling, standing, or laying) and both feet are outside of the water and not touching any other supporting surface.
- Outside the raft = A paddler is considered to be 'outside the raft' during any instance when they do not meet the definition of 'inside the raft'.
- Intentional contact = Physical contact with an opposing team or their equipment with the clear intent to interfere with their race results
- IRF = International Rafting Federation
- Level = Used to distinguish Events by level of importance. Current Levels are; A, B, C, and D
- Member Nation = A nation whose National Federation is a full or provisional member of the IRF in good standing
- National Federation = An IRF recognised national governing body for the sport of Rafting
- National Selection = Event used by a Member Nation to select the Team(s) that shall represent them at an IRF World or Continental Rafting Championship
- Organiser = Organising body to whom the IRF has awarded the right and responsibility for running an IRF Event
- Permanent Domicile = Place where a person has their permanent principal home, and to which they return or intend to return
- R6/R4 = Raft normally raced with a 6 person Team / Raft normally raced with a 4 person Team
- Ramming = A tactic where a team forcefully paddles their raft into the raft of an opposing a team with the intent of slowing their progress
- Region/Continent = A geographical area used by the IRF to broadly divide and manage National Federations by continent. Regions are currently divided as Europe, Pan-America, Asia/Oceania and Africa
- S&C Com = IRF Sport & Competition Committee
- Sportsmanship = Ethical, appropriate, polite and fair behaviour while participating in an IRF event. Participants shall endeavour to follow the rules of competition, to play fair and clean, and to handle both victory and defeat with grace, style, and dignity.
- Team = A rafting team that has legally entered, and has been duly registered and accepted, in an IRF Event
- Team Member = A Competitor who is a registered member of a Team
- WRC = IRF World Rafting Championships

## **A. Race Levels**

### **1. A-Level Competition (World Rafting Championships):**

- a. Open Division:
  - i. In R4 and R6. Organiser may choose which one at the time of bidding.
  - ii. Must have at least 3 Regions represented.
- b. Must have a minimum of 8 nations competing in the Men's Category, and 4 in the Women's Category. Youth, Junior and Masters Division
  - i. In R4 and R6. Ideally held in alternating years, but organiser may nominate which one.
  - ii. Events may be held separately or concurrently with the Open Division.
  - iii. Should have at least two Regions represented.
  - iv. Should have a minimum of 6 Member Nations competing in the Men's Category, and 3 Member Nations competing in the Women's Category. All Youth and Junior Division Events should be limited to venues under Class IV in difficulty.
  - v. All other Race Rules should be applied accordingly for the Youth, Junior and Masters Divisions.
- c. All Divisions:
  - i. Each Member Nation may enter only one Team in each Category.
  - ii. Teams must be fairly selected and nominated by their National Federation by winning fair and credible National Selections as set out in Race Rule A.5.
  - iii. Event Organisers may allow Member Nations to enter more than one Team in each Category of each Division if approved by the S&C Com. Approval will be decided on an Event-by-Event basis, to be announced ideally no later than one year prior to the Event.
  - iv. If there is only one Team entered at an A level Competition, or 2 teams at a B or C level Competition in a Category, the Event Organiser may at their discretion, choose to move the single Team into another Category.
  - v. If any Categories are combined or cancelled, the following guidelines shall apply:
    1. If there is only one Team entered in either a Youth or Junior Category, these Categories shall be combined into the Junior Category e.g. if there is only one women's team entered in the Youth Category this team will race in the Women's Junior Category
    2. If there is only one Team entered in a Masters Category, then this Team shall race in the corresponding Open Category. (e.g. if there is only one team entered in the Women's Masters team, they will race in the Women's Open Category)
    3. If a Member Nation's Team must be moved into a Category where they have already entered a Team, it is then accepted that the Member Nation shall have 2 Teams in that Category.
    4. If any Categories are combined or cancelled, the Event Organiser shall inform Competitors and the S&C Com no later than the closing date for entries for that Event.
    5. When categories are combined their bibs/names must still show their originally designated Category.
  - vi. Only overall medals need to be given if there are less than 6 Teams in any Category of a Division.

### **2. B-Level Competition (Regional Championships):**

- a. Euro Championships:
  - i. Held at least biennially.
  - ii. Europe Region Member Nations may enter two Teams in each Category of each Division. These Teams must be fairly selected and nominated by their National Federation by winning fair and credible National Selections.

- b. There must be a minimum of 3 nations competing in a Category. Pan-American, African and Asia/Oceanian Championships: (In Development Phase)
  - i. Ideally to be held at least biennially.
  - ii. Organisers may allow any number of Teams from a Member Nation in each Category of each Division.
  - iii. Ideally there should be a minimum of 3 Member Nations competing in a Category.
- c. All Regions:
  - i. Only Teams from the Region where the Event is taking place will be scored for regional awards or be awarded regional medals.
  - ii. In the H2H discipline, Teams from other Regions should not race against Teams from the Region where the Event is taking place unless all Member Nations of the Region where the Event is taking place agree, as this will alter the points for the overall results.

### **3. C-Level Competition (International Rafting Festivals, WRC Pre-Events, Regional Cups and similar):**

- a. Includes any international Competition run in accordance to the IRF Race Rules.
- b. Competitors may be of any nationality, country of residence, or gender.
- c. Competitors and Teams are not required to be members of a National Federation, but it is highly recommended.
- d. A Team carries the nationality of the majority of its Team Members. In the case of no majority, the Team Captain shall decide on the nationality.
- d. World Cup (In Development Phase):
  - i. In R4 and R6. Ideally consisting of a series of 3-5 races held each year, in a minimum of two Regions.
  - ii. Organisers may allow any number of Teams from Member Nations in each Division.
  - iii. World Cup Events may be combined with other IRF Events. In the case of combined Events, separate medals should be awarded.
- e. WRC Pre-Events:
  - i. Teams must be members of their National Federation, and their National Federation must be a Member Nation of the IRF.
  - ii. If the Organiser sets any specific conditions or limits on participation (e.g. Limits on number of Teams per nation), the conditions or limits must be published at least 3 months in advance of the Event.
  - iii. WRC Pre-Events are always World Cup Events.

### **4. D-level Competition:**

- a. Includes any national Competition run in accordance with IRF Race Rules.
- b. Competitors and Teams should be members of their National Federation.
- c. If the Event is a National Selection, all Teams must be given a fair chance to enter and win, and the Event must be run in a fair and credible manner.
- d. IRF National Selections must follow IRF Race Rules UNLESS prior approval has been obtained from the IRF Executive Committee. It is highly recommended (but not mandatory) that other national Competitions follow IRF Race Rules in order to ensure a high standard of racing.

### **5. National Selections Events:**

- a. National Rafting Teams are the teams selected by a National Federation to represent their nation in an IRF A or B Level Event.

- b. A Level National Selections may be conducted during an IRF sanctioned D, C, or B Level Event (or any combination thereof).
- c. B Level National Selections may be conducted during an IRF sanctioned D, or C Level Event (or any combination thereof).
- d. National Federations must be able to prove, upon demand and to the satisfaction of the IRF Executive Committee, that their National Selection was fair and credible.
- e. If there are insufficient teams to run a National Selection, the National Federation must prove this to the satisfaction of the IRF Executive Committee. If there is only 1 team in a Category, the IRF will accept this team if they comply with all other requirements.
- f. A fair and credible National Selection MUST include the following elements:
  - i. A notice of the National Selection and dates must be published by the National Federation on its website(s), social media, and/or through any other forms of communication normally used to contact its members or the public. Publication must occur at least 2 months before the selection takes place.
  - ii. The IRF Administration must be notified of the National Selection dates at least 2 months before the selection takes place, and receive a copy of the publication and internet links to the information. Exceptions to this timeline, or changes made in the selection dates after they have been published, must be approved by the IRF Executive Committee.
  - iii. C and D Level National Selection Events must be accessible to all competitors who are members of their National Federation, and options to become members must be easy to obtain for all as required in the IRF Bylaws. Teams or individual paddlers turned away from any IRF sanctioned Event for reasons that do not comply with IRF Bylaws or Race Rules will jeopardise the status of the Event being certified “fair and credible”.
  - iv. Final race results of the National Selection must be presented to the IRF Administration, either sent by email or through a link. When requested, a list of the names of the team members for each team must be provided.
  - v. The National Selection must include at least one or more of the IRF disciplines (ideally Slalom or Downriver) and the discipline races must be run according to the current IRF Race Rules for that discipline.
  - vi. Judges and race officials must subscribe to, and fully endorse the “Purpose of Rules”, “Authority”, and “Race Rules Exceptions” clauses that are detailed in the Introduction of this document; ensuring that all competitors are fairly judged, and that the appropriate Race Rules are equally applied to all.
- g. Rafting clubs within a nation may, at their option, choose to organise a National Selection independent of their National Federation under the following circumstances:
  - i. The National Selection is held in cooperation with the IRF, AND
  - ii. their National Federation has chosen not to organise a fair and credible National Selection, OR
  - iii. the IRF Executive Committee cannot reasonably certify that a National Selection organised by the National Federation was fair and credible.

## **B. Teams and Competitors**

1. For A and B Level Events:
  - a. Only a Competitor who is a member of their National Federation, who in turn is a Member Nation of the IRF, is eligible to compete in an IRF A or B Level Event.
  - b. A Competitor may not compete for more than one National Federation in any one calendar year. This rule does not apply in the case of changing residency or citizenship by marriage. In all cases of a change in residency or citizenship, once confirmed, the former National Federation has no right to prevent a Competitor from racing in an Event.
  - c. If a Competitor wishes to compete for a Member Nation at an A or B Level Event and they do not hold a passport or official permanent residency in that nation, they must:
    - i. Provide proof that they are permanently domiciled in that foreign nation to the satisfaction of the Residency Approval Com appointed by S&C Com Chair.
    - ii. Provide authorisation from their Federation of origin unless they have domiciled for 2 years or more in this foreign nation or has married a citizen from that foreign nation.
    - iii. Have competed in the national selections of the foreign nation.
    - iv. Bring such cases to the attention of the IRF before the announced deadline date for Team entries.
  - d. If demanded by the Organiser, Jury, S&C Com Chair or Judges Chair, or their designees, Competitors must provide proof of one of the following:
    - i. they are a legal citizen of the nation that they represent
    - ii. they are a legal permanent resident of the nation they represent
    - iii. the S&C Com Chair has recognised that they have established a permanent domicile in the nation they represent to the Organiser, Jury, S&C Com Chair, or their designees.
2. Competitors are allowed to race in both the R4 and the R6 in a single Event if both are offered.
3. Competitors are permitted to race in more than one Division during a single Event if they qualify. In every instance, the Competitor must comply with all race requirements. No races will be delayed or rescheduled to accommodate the Competitor.
4. Team Members and Reserves:
  - a. Each R6 Team or R4 Team is permitted one Reserve, who must be registered as a Team Member prior to the start of the Event.
  - b. The final 7 (R6) or 5 (R4) Team Members cannot be changed after they are officially registered at the Event.
  - c. ONLY the registered Team Members are allowed to compete for a Team. Multiple substitutions are allowed during the Event; however, substitutions are not permitted during a single discipline.
  - d. Infractions of any part of this rule will result in a disqualification from the Event.
5. Mixed Teams must compete under the Men's Category unless a Mixed Team Category exists. If an Organiser chooses to include a specific Mixed Team Category then the team cannot race with more than 50% male Competitors at any time, but if the team chooses, then they can race with more than 50% female.
6. Competitors may participate in an IRF Event in the calendar year in which they turn 15 years old, but not earlier. For C or D Level events, underage Competitors may compete if approved by the National Federation of the host nation. In such cases, the venue must be age appropriate with all safety precautions taken, and all potential Competitors must be informed at least 2 months before the event.
7. A Competitor who is legally defined as a Minor (usually defined as a person under the age of 18), must comply with all domestic laws and regulations applicable to Minors at the Event. Similarly, the Event's Organiser shall comply with all laws and regulations for Minors (e.g. the Organiser shall arrange that all required waivers etc. are signed in advance), and National Federations shall oversee that their Competitors comply with the laws and regulations that govern Minors in their home nation.



8. Youth (U19) Division: A Competitor is eligible to compete in the Youth Division beginning the calendar year when they turn 15 (in accordance with rule B.6) until the calendar year when they turn 19. All Competitors shall be of the prescribed age in order to compete in the Youth Division.
9. Junior (U23) Division: A Competitor is eligible to compete in the Junior Division beginning the calendar year when they turn 15 (in accordance with rule B.6) until the calendar year when they turn 23. All Competitors shall be of the prescribed age in order to compete in the Junior Division.
10. Masters Division: A Competitor is eligible to compete in the Masters Division beginning the calendar year when they turn 40. All Competitors shall be of the prescribed age in order to compete in the Masters Division. For National Selection Events, event organisers/ national federations may allow younger Competitors if they will be of the prescribed age for the A or B Level Event for which the National Selection is held. In such cases, all potential Competitors must be informed at least 2 months before the event.
11. Open Division: A Competitor is eligible to compete in the Open Division beginning the calendar year when they turn 15 (in accordance with rule B.6). No other age restrictions apply; however younger Competitors may be asked to demonstrate their skills proficiency to the Safety Director before being allowed to compete in the Open Division.
12. WRC & ERC Team selections and eligibility:
  - a. National Selections (which are not necessarily their National Championships) must be used to determine which Teams are eligible to be invited by the IRF to compete in the WRC (World Rafting Championship) or ERC (European Rafting Championship) as noted in Rules A.1 and A.2a. Invitations to Teams will be based on their National Federation's compliance with the IRF Bylaws and Race Rules, with particular focus on their selection being deemed "fair and credible".
  - b. To remain eligible, invited Teams must have a minimum of 4 for R6 or 2 for R4 of the original Team that participated in their National Selections (unless selections are more than 1 Event).
  - c. Where possible, Open and Masters National Selections should be run on venues with white water no less than Class IV in difficulty and Youth and Junior National Selections on Class III. The IRF must be confident that WRC and ERC National Teams are capable of safely and competently paddling the Class of white water found at the WRC and ERC venues. The IRF Executive Committee, the Event Organiser, or the Safety Director may refuse a Team's entry if their paddling capabilities are in doubt.
  - d. If the 1st place Team in any category of a National Selection is unable to attend the WRC, then the 2nd place Team in that category shall become eligible for an invitation to the WRC, and so on down the order.
  - e. In the European Region, if either the 1st or 2nd place Teams of a National Selection is unable to attend the ERC, the 3rd place Team shall become eligible for an invitation to the ERC, and so on down the order.
  - f. With regards to point d. and e. above, the decision as to whether or not an invited Team will attend the WRC or ERC must be made timeously (at least 2 weeks ahead of the event registration) so that alternate Teams may be invited with sufficient time and warning to prepare.
  - g. If no selection has been held yet then the teams from last year are eligible.
  - h. Any deviations from point a, b, c, d and e above by a National Federation should be in the interest of the Competitors, and if queried, deviations must be explained to, and accepted by, the IRF Executive Committee.
13. In the case of proven injury or illness during Competition, or for exceptionally compelling compassionate reasons, a Team may be allowed to start a race with five (5) Team Members in an R6 Competition, or three (3) Team Members in an R4 Competition if they obtain prior approval from the Head Judge and Safety Director. They will receive a 50 second penalty at the start, and must finish with the same number of Team Members or they shall receive an additional 50 second penalty.
14. The IRF recognises transgender athletes in accordance with the IOC Consensus Meeting on Sex Reassignment and Hyperandrogenism (Nov 2015):  
[https://stillmed.olympic.org/Documents/Commissions\\_PDFfiles/Medical\\_commission/2015-11\\_ioc\\_consensus\\_meeting\\_on\\_sex\\_reassignment\\_and\\_hyperandrogenism-en.pdf](https://stillmed.olympic.org/Documents/Commissions_PDFfiles/Medical_commission/2015-11_ioc_consensus_meeting_on_sex_reassignment_and_hyperandrogenism-en.pdf)

## **C. IRF Competition Calendar**

### **1. General**

- a. The IRF will maintain a Competition calendar to the best of its ability on the IRF website ([www.internationalrafting.com](http://www.internationalrafting.com)).
- b. Events must be scheduled on the IRF Competition calendar in order to be recognised by the IRF.
- c. Event Organisers or National Federations must ensure that the details for their Event are submitted to the IRF Administration well in advance. These details should include contact information, dates, venue location, disciplines, class of white water for each discipline, type of race (R4, R6), accommodation options, transport options, entry fees, training possibilities and other relevant information.

### **2. A and B Level Events**

- a. A and B Level Events require that an Organiser submit a competitive bid.
- b. WRC Bids must be received 2 years in advance of the first day of the calendar year of the Event. (e.g. WRC 2025 bids must be received by 01-01-2023).
- c. Bidding requirements are published on the IRF website or can be requested from the IRF Administration.

## **D. Minimum Entries**

1. If the number of Teams or Member Nations entered in an Event are less than the required minimum number, an Organiser may apply for an exception to the S&C Com to have the Event recognised.
2. It is not necessary that the required minimum number of Teams or Member Nations finish in all of the disciplines of the Event for the results to be valid.

## **E. Race Format**

### **1. General:**

- a. Rafting Competitions consist of four (4) disciplines: - Sprint, Head to Head (H2H), Slalom and Downriver.
- b. The Start and Finish Lines in all disciplines must be clearly marked, preferably at least Twenty-four (24) hours before the race. Acceptable methods include:
  - i. A highly visible overhead line across the water. The line should be flagged, or marked with "Start" or "Finish" banners for maximum visibility.
  - ii. Highly visible buoys, poles or flags placed on both sides of the race course which clearly indicate the Start or Finish Line.
  - iii. Any other method approved by the Judges Com or Jury.
- c. The Race Director has a right to change the Start or Finish Lines due to unusual circumstances (e.g. changes in water level).
- d. In A and B Level Events:
  - i. All disciplines must be raced.
  - ii. The order of the disciplines should be: Sprint-H2H-Slalom-Downriver.
  - iii. The Downriver race for Open and Masters Divisions must include at least one Class IV or Class V rapid. Open and Masters Teams that are selected to compete in A and B Levels must be competent in Class IV or higher white water.
  - iv. The Downriver race for Youth and Junior Divisions should not include rapids higher than Class III.
- e. In C and D Level Events:
  - i. There is no obligation to race every discipline.
  - ii. It is preferred, but not obligatory, for the Open and Masters Downriver race to include a Class IV or V rapid.
  - iii. The Downriver race for Youth and Junior Divisions must not include rapids higher than Class III.

### **2. Sprint**

- a. Every Competition should start with the Sprint.
- b. The starting order of the Sprint must be selected at random (e.g. drawn out of a hat).
- c. The start interval between Teams may not exceed 3 minutes (except, if necessary, at D level events) and the duration of a single run should be from one (1) minute to three (3) minutes.
- d. Training runs in the Sprint are not mandatory.

### **3. Head-to-Head (H2H)**

- a. H2H Format
  - i. Teams race in pairs, (head to head) in a "knock-out" elimination format over a course marked with navigation markers.
  - ii. The venue should be sited in a location where scouting and spectator access is viable.
  - iii. The H2H course design and overall length should allow a test raft to navigate the entire course in three (3) minutes or less when correctly negotiating any combination of navigation markers as required by Rule E.3.c.iii.
  - iv. It is strongly recommended that the H2H course be sited and designed so that onsite spectators are provided with one or more vantage points for viewing the entire course. In particular, the total course length and the placement of navigation markers should be designed to allow for optimum spectator viewing.

- v. H2H pairing is determined by Sprint results; therefore, the H2H should immediately follow the Sprint.
  - vi. Depending on the total number of Teams competing, the H2H shall have one or two Stages. If two Stages are necessary, the Sprint results will determine which Teams will proceed directly to Stage 2, and which Teams must first compete in Stage 1.
  - vii. The Team with the faster time in the Sprint is awarded the choice of Start Lane. The [H2H Race Order Forms](#) shall define the pairing, race order, number of rounds, and other relevant information.
  - viii. Intervals between pairs in a single round should not exceed three (3) minutes.
  - ix. Teams late for their start may forfeit their run.
  - x. Practice runs in the H2H are mandatory; however, no practice laps or negotiation of markers is allowed after final placement.
- b. H2H Ranking
- i. The winners of the semi-finals rounds shall race in the “A Final” to determine first and second positions.
  - ii. The losers of the semi-finals shall race in the “B Final” to determine third and fourth positions.
  - iii. All other Teams shall be ranked according to their final time when compared to the final times of the Teams which were eliminated in the same round.
- c. H2H Course Design
- i. Starting positions and lanes:**
    - 1. Rafts can be optionally faced upstream or downstream at the start.
      - a. For A Level Events, the organiser must announce within a month after Pre-Worlds which option will be used.
      - b. For B Level Events the organiser must announce at least 3 months before the event which option will be used.
    - 2. 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.
    - 3. The Jury and the Course Designers shall ensure that the two starting positions and the Start Lanes are as equal as humanly possible. .
    - 4. The Race Director or Jury may choose to divide the Start Lanes with a clearly marked line.
    - 5. 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.
    - 6. 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

7. 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.

**ii. Navigation Markers and Positioning**

1. The H2H shall include two (2) navigation markers positioned near the left shoreline, and two (2) navigation markers positioned near the right shoreline.
2. All markers must be either a buoy marker or a hanging marker.
3. Markers must be positioned in or near eddy currents to allow for the reasonable upstream navigation of a raft between the marker and the near shoreline.
4. Navigation markers must be of a highly visible colour and easily identified.
5. Navigation markers may contain sponsorship logos or similar in accordance with IRF sponsorship policies, if the logos do not interfere with the marker's visibility or confuse its purpose.
6. All navigation markers must be easy to judge.

**iii. Marker Negotiation**

1. Markers may be touched by any part of the raft, paddle or team, however hanging markers may not be intentionally displaced.
2. A navigation marker is negotiated correctly when:
  - a. The entire raft and all heads pass upstream between the marker and the near shoreline.
  - b. Once a raft has left the buoy - its ultimate track describes a closed loop around the buoy. Note: The rafts ultimate track, if it was a piece of string and was pulled tight it would loop around the buoy.
3. A navigation marker is negotiated incorrectly when:
  - a. A buoy marker is submerged by the raft during the negotiation.
  - b. A hanging marker is intentionally displaced using any part of the body or paddle while attempting a successful negotiation.
4. A Team must negotiate a minimum of one (1) marker positioned on the right hand side and one (1) marker positioned on the left hand side of the river.
5. A Team may choose which markers they wish to negotiate, and may make multiple attempts to negotiate a marker correctly.
6. Ramming is allowed at any time during the race unless otherwise instructed by race officials.

**iv. Marker Design**

1. A Level events shall use IRF regulation buoy markers which have the following design characteristics:
  - a. Inflatable, constructed of a durable, puncture resistant material, and fitted with a sturdy inflation valve.
  - b. Conical in shape, with a height of 150 cm and a base of 100 cm.
2. Have a sturdy attachment placed in the centre of the base for secure and safe tethering to an anchor point.
3. B, C and D Level events may substitute a non-regulation buoy marker if regulation buoy markers are unavailable. However, a non-regulation buoy marker must be large and buoyant enough so that a raft cannot easily submerge it, and it must present no safety or security concern.

**v. Hanging Marker Design**

1. If IRF regulation buoy markers are unavailable, A Level events may use IRF regulation hanging markers which have the following design characteristics:

- a. Inflatable, constructed of a durable, puncture resistant material, and fitted with a sturdy inflation valve.
  - b. Cylindrical in shape, with a height of 150 cm and a diameter of 30 cm.
  - c. Have a sturdy attachment system so that it may be safely and securely attached to an overhead line that is positioned high enough above the course to allow for safe and easy passage.
  - d. Braced and weighted so that it may not be easily displaced.
  - e. Positioned so that the base of the marker is only slightly above the water surface.
2. B, C and D Level events may substitute a non-regulation hanging marker if regulation hanging markers are unavailable. However, a non-regulation hanging marker must be large enough so that it may be easily judged, and present no safety or security concern.

**d. H2H Safety**

- i. Paddles must have no sharp edges capable of injuring or damaging a person, raft or marker.
- ii. Competitors are not permitted to engage in reckless behaviour, whether intentional or unintentional, that results in physical injury or serious damage to the opposing team.
- iii. With the exception of ramming, competitors are not permitted to deliberately strike, hold, or push the opposing team or their equipment in an attempt to gain advantage.
- iv. Competitors are not allowed to intentionally exit their rafts at any time during the H2H race except under the following situations:
  1. Their raft is firmly grounded on a rock or other obstacle and cannot be ungrounded by other means.
  2. Exiting their raft is necessary because of a clear and obvious safety hazard.
- v. If a Competitor does intentionally exit their raft, the Team must observe the following restrictions during the exit:
  1. Competitors may exit their raft only at a time and location where it can be done safely.
  2. No member of the Team can use any means or methods to intentionally interfere with their opponent's progress.
  3. The Team may carry, pull and reposition their raft, but only the minimal distance needed to remedy the reason for exiting.
  4. Competitors must immediately re-enter their raft after the reason for the exit is remedied.

**e. H2H Penalties**

- i. Ten (10) second penalty - Crossing into an opponent's marked Starting Lane (3.c.i.4)
- ii. Fifty (50) second penalty - disregard for H2H Safety Rules (3.d)
- iii. Fifty (50) second penalty - negotiating only one (1) marker correctly.
- iv. One Hundred (100) second penalty - negotiating no markers correctly.
- v. Disqualification from the H2H round:
  1. Practicing the negotiation of any marker after their final placements. This penalty will be applied only under one the following conditions:
    - a. A protest is made by an opposing team in accordance with standard protest procedures and supported by video evidence that clearly shows the infraction to the satisfaction of the Jury.
    - b. It is witnessed by a Judge.
  2. Teams taking longer than 15 minutes to descend entire H2H course. This time limit may be altered by the Jury after consultation with the H2H course designer if necessary.

#### 4. Slalom

##### a. Scoring

- i. Each Team is allowed two runs. The faster run is used to determine a Team's score.
- ii. In the case of a tie, the times of the slower runs are compared to determine the winner.

##### b. Start and Finish

- i. At A and B Level Events, the Start and Finish shall use an electronic timing system.
- ii. If possible, the starting order should be in reverse order according to the total previous achieved points, so the highest ranked Team will start last.
- iii. The start intervals between Teams should be between 1 and 4 minutes.
- iv. The finish line is also judged.
- v. Training runs on the river section used for the slalom course are not mandatory.

##### c. Slalom Course Design

- i. The length of the course should allow the duration of a single run to be between 3 and 4 minutes.
- ii. The course should be constructed on a section of river or waterway where scouting is viable.
- iii. There should be a minimum of 8 gates and a maximum of 14 gates of which a minimum of two and a maximum of six should be upstream gates, distributed equally for left and right approach.
- iv. For A and B Level Events, final positioning of the gates is to be decided as per Race Rule K.12.a.
- v. The course should be ready for inspection by the Jury, ideally 24 hours but no less than 2 hours, prior to the first run.
- vi. The course may be changed by a vote from the Jury.
- vii. Teams are not allowed to practice the slalom course prior to the race. Penalty for infringement: disqualification from the slalom.
- viii. In A and B Level Events it is strongly desired that the event organizer organizes a demonstration run on the race slalom course (already inspected by the Jury) before the slalom race begins. The demonstration run is to be done by a raft team that has not been registered to this specific Event. The demonstration run should be done as a full-length run.

##### d. Gate Construction and Marking

- i. Gates are constructed using two poles or a single pole. For D level events, if it is not possible to set up gates then an alternative set up, like buoys, are acceptable. These will then be defined as "poles" for rule interpretations.
- ii. Gates should hang so that the bottom of the pole is between 50 cm and 1 meter above the water (considering pulsing of water and type of raft and with respect to fair and easy judging).
- iii. The minimum distance between two poles should be 2.50 meters.
- iv. Single pole gates must adhere to the following guidelines:
  1. They may be used for upstream gates only.
  2. They must use a second pole as a visual reference for fair and easy judging of the gate line. A visual reference pole is not part of the gate, is not subject to penalization and must not interfere with gate negotiation.
  3. The visual reference pole must be secluded/confined from the public to prevent disturbance, and cannot be changed or disturbed during or between the two slalom runs.
- v. Downstream and upstream gates must be easily distinguished from each other. Downstream gates should be painted with green and white rings, and upstream gates painted with red and white rings.

- vi. The minimum length of gate poles is 2 meters. The recommended pole diameter is 70 mm but must be no less than 50 mm, and must be weighted in the base so as to prevent excessive movement by wind or water.
- vii. Each gate must be clearly marked with a number plate with black paint against a white or yellow background. The number plate, which should be fastened inside the top of each gate, must have the number inscribed on both sides. The plate should measure a minimum of 30 cm x 30 cm, and the number should measure 20 cm in height. On the side of the plate opposite the direction of correct negotiation, a diagonal red line must be painted across the number. For D level events the "gates" must be as clearly marked as possible to ensure visibility and prevent confusion of order to be taken.

**e. Gate Negotiation**

- i. The 'gate line' is defined as the two dimensional area bounded by a slalom gate and the water's surface. This area may vary in size and angle, depending upon whether a gate pole is static or in motion.
  - 1. When a gate has two poles, the gate line area is located between the two poles.
  - 2. When a gate has a single pole, the gate line area is projected horizontally from the gate pole towards the visual reference pole. The side of the gate without a pole is not delineated.
  - 3. In all circumstances, whether a pole is static or in motion, the gate line area is projected vertically from outside edge of the bottom of a pole to the water's surface.
- ii. A gate is considered entered the moment that a Team Member's whole head has crossed the gate line.
- iii. The negotiation of a gate begins when the gate is entered or a pole is touched.
- iv. The negotiation of a gate ends when a higher numbered gate is negotiated (entered or touched), or the finish line is crossed.
- v. To negotiate a gate correctly:
  - 1. The gate must be negotiated in the correct numerical order.
  - 2. All Team Members must be inside the raft.
  - 3. The whole head of every Team Member must cross the gate line during a single attempt.
  - 4. No head may cross the gate line in the wrong direction.
  - 5. A Team Member cannot touch a pole with any part of the body, equipment, paddle or raft.

**f. Slalom Penalties**

- i. A gate that is negotiated correctly as defined in Rule 4.e.v, will not be penalized.
- ii. Teams late for the start may forfeit their run.
- iii. A Team may be penalised a maximum of 50 points for each gate.
- iv. Five (5) Point Penalty**
  - 1. If a gate pole is touched with any part of the body, equipment, paddle or raft. Repeated touching of the same (or both) gate pole(s) is only penalised once.
- v. Fifty (50) Point Penalty**
  - 1. If the finish line is crossed without all Team Members inside the raft.
  - 2. For each gate that is negotiated without all Team Members inside the raft.
  - 3. For each gate the raft passes upside down through the gate.
  - 4. For each gate where the whole head of each Team Member does not cross the gate line during a negotiation attempt.
  - 5. For each gate where a Team Member's whole head crosses the gate line in the wrong direction.



6. For each gate that is not negotiated before a higher numbered gate is negotiated or the finish line is crossed.
7. For the intentional displacement of a pole to allow the negotiation of a gate. Intentional displacement is defined as pushing a pole with an abnormal or unexpected action (for example with a paddle or body motion), so that a Team Member is able to negotiate the gate when they are not in a position to do so.

## 5. Downriver race

- a. Training runs in the Downriver race are mandatory. For D level events, if the majority of members per team are familiar with the section of river that team need not do the training run but must notify the Jury and Safety Director beforehand.
- b. The total duration of a Downriver race should be between 20 to 60 minutes depending on the rapids and access to the river (the duration of the Downriver race should be submitted at the time of proposal to the IRF).
- c. The race should be started in groups of between 4 and 8 rafts depending on the venue conditions. However, if the possibility exists for more than 8 rafts to start simultaneously, then this configuration should be chosen.
- d. The Start Line should be as fair as possible for every Team. If venue conditions do not permit this, Teams will be allowed to select their starting position in order from highest ranked to lowest ranked according to the total previous achieved points.
- e. If multiple groups are raced one immediately after the other, the highest ranked Teams will race in the first heat, the next ranked Teams in the second, and so on.
- f. Intervals between the groups should be a minimum of one minute.
- g. The results of the Downriver race are determined by the final racing times irrespective of starting position or group.
- h. Le Mans starts can be used if there is a beach at the venue with sufficient space for Competitors to run towards the lined up rafts at the shore. Rafts shall be lined up according to each Teams ranking. All Competitors must stand behind a clearly marked line before the start signal is given.
- i. Sailing starts are allowed where the venue has sufficient space for all rafts in a start group to cross the Start Line side-by-side. Slalom poles or buoys should be used to mark the Start Lanes. Teams are allowed to approach the Start Line at any speed they desire, but if a Team crosses the Start Line before the start signal is given, a False Start will be called against the Team.
- j. To prevent False Starts (except in the case of a Le Mans or Yachting Start), each raft should be held back by a Pre-Starter.
- k. Teams late for the start may forfeit the race.
- l. Downriver penalties:
  - i. Intentional blocking is prohibited in the Downriver. Intentional blocking is defined as a Team intentionally changing the direction of their raft more than once, with the intended aim of impeding the progress of a faster team. Penalty per infringement: 10 seconds.  
If a Team is intentionally blocked by another Team, the blocked Team shall have 10 seconds subtracted from their total time for each blocking infraction.
  - ii. Intentional contact between paddle to paddle, paddle to person, paddle to raft, or person to person is illegal. Intentional raft to raft contact (ramming) is allowed. Penalty per infringement: 10 seconds.
  - iii. Rafts are to stay within the course defined for the Downriver. Cutting corners or other course markers like buoys will result in a 50 second penalty for the team

## **F. General Rules for Competition**

1. A raft must be upright and all Team Members must be in the raft when crossing the finish line. Penalty for infringement: 50 seconds.
2. When an organiser issues competitors a raft for a discipline, it then becomes the responsibility of the team to ensure that the raft is in race-ready condition at the start. If a raft is discovered to be defective, the team must advise race officials as soon as the problem is discovered so that a replacement can be issued. Teams that do not advise race officials of a defect within 5 minutes of their start, will receive a DNS if they are unable to start. The organizer is not responsible if a raft deflates or is damaged during the run. No re run will be allowed.
3. Should a Team Member be unable to continue racing due to injury, the Team may only continue once the injured Team Member has been handed over to the care of Event safety/medical personnel.
4. Outside assistance (by persons other than Team Members) is prohibited during the Competition with the exception of dangerous situations. Penalty for infringement: disqualification from the run.
5. After runs, Teams must, if requested, assist Event personnel in carrying rafts back to the start or loading the trailers for transport. Arrangements will be stated at the previous Captains Meeting.
6. Captains Meetings for A and B Level Events:
  - a. The first Captains Meeting must be held the night before the first official day of the Event. The Event program/schedule is to be provided to all Team Captains at that time.
  - b. Subsequent Captains Meetings should be held the day prior to each competitive discipline.
  - c. Event Organisers are to reliably inform the teams of any significant changes that take place during the event either electronically or by minutes of captain's meetings.
  - d. The Captains Meeting room should be separate and isolated, with no unrelated activities or distractions occurring during the meetings.
  - e. Only Captain and one Manager or Coach per team, and where needed, their interpreters, are allowed into the Captains Meetings. Exceptions must be approved by the Chief Judge.
  - f. All Captains must sign the register on entering the meeting and ensure that they can either take a printed version of the meeting minutes or can access the online version of the meeting minutes afterwards (as per Rule F.6.c).
7. Captains Meetings for C- and D-Level Events:
  - a. Should be held the day prior to each competitive discipline.
  - b. During National Selections or other important Events. Event Organisers should provide written minutes to all Captains at the end of all Captains Meetings (as per Rule F.6.c).
8. In every discipline, the timing begins when either the Chief Starter or specified delegate gives the start signal and the Pre-Starter(s) simultaneously release the raft(s) OR when first part of raft crosses the Start Line. Where the start is not measured electronically, the Chief Starter or specified delegate can ask for paddles to be out of the water until they give the start signal. The start procedure details will be announced in the Captains Meeting before each discipline.
9. The timing stops when any part of the raft first crosses the Finish Line.
10. Electronic timing is mandatory for A and B Level Events. Timing and scoring systems must be integrated, so that minimum manual entry is required.
11. Attempting to cheat the start or finish signals, photo cells, or timing systems is illegal. Penalty for infringement: 50 seconds at start, 10 seconds at finish.
12. If a false start occurs, the start must be repeated. If a Team makes two false starts, they are automatically disqualified from the discipline. The vacant starting position will not be filled by another Team.
13. In a case where there is a tie in points and time, Teams will select their starting positions by drawing from a hat or by flipping a coin. If Teams are tied for positions in the Downriver race, they are to be started in the same group where possible.
14. At the end of the Competition, in the unlikely case of two Teams having equal overall points, the Downriver score will be used to break the tie.

15. Gate Judges and Section Judges are to be provided with an isolated or roped-off area. Competitors can be penalised for not moving out of this area when requested to do so by any Judge.
16. The Jury reserves the right, and is responsible for, correcting technical judging mistakes before the next discipline starts.
17. For A and B Level Events (and suggested for C and D Events), the Event Organiser must have a reliable system in place to quickly transfer all penalty sheets to the Jury. If there is a failure in this system, the Jury may choose to delay the release of the official results until the penalty sheets have been recovered and examined to ensure that no technical mistakes or unspecific errors have occurred that would affect the scoring.
18. Should any member of a Team - including its Competitors, Managers, Coaches, or supporters - be found guilty of bringing the sport of rafting, the IRF, the organisers or any group or person that is part of the event, into disrepute, that person or their team or their National Federation may 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 of the IRF, the sport of rafting, the Event Organisers, Event spectators and/or participants.
19. During the event, all teams must respect the official training schedule and demands from the organisation. Teams disrespecting an official training schedule shall be in breach of Rule F.18.
20. The Jury at the Event can be advised, by anyone in writing within 24 hours, of an occurrence believed to have brought the sport into disrepute. It should then 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 may include but not be 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 Events
21. If a Team is disqualified from a discipline, the Team will receive no points in that discipline. If a Team is disqualified from the Event, the Team loses the right to compete in the remaining disciplines.
22. Whereas the inappropriate discard of rubbish during an IRF Event is considered unsportsmanlike behaviour bringing the sport of rafting into disrepute:
  - a. Any person affiliated with the IRF, whether they be a competitor, official, staff or volunteer, that inappropriately discards rubbish during the event, shall be penalized under Rule F.20. A fine equal to not less than \$500 USD per incident may also be levied.
  - b. This action, and the penalty described above apply at all times during the Event, including while racing, training, spectating and general attendance.

## G. Scoring System

1. Teams are awarded points in each discipline according to their finishing position.
2. The overall results are determined by ranking Teams according to the total points they have achieved over the duration of the Competition.
3. The maximum points awarded are:

Discipline	Maximum Points
Sprint	100
H2H	200
Slalom	350
Downriver	350
TOTAL	1000

4. The points awarded to each Team are calculated as a percentage of the maximum points available rounded to the nearest whole number. Points will be calculated as follows (and for your convenience - use "IRF New Scoring System 2019" document):
  - 1st place - 100%
  - 2nd place - 92%
  - 3rd place - 86%
  - 4th place - 82%
  - 5th to 18th place - less 3% for each place
  - 19th to 32nd place - less 2% for each place
  - 33nd to 42th place – less 1% for each place
  - 43th place down will receive 1% of the maximum points
5. A Team that does not start a race, will receive no score and no points for the race.
6. A Team that does not finish a race, will receive no score and no points for the race.

## H. Rafts and Equipment

1. Rafts used in IRF Events are the basic symmetric river raft design used worldwide by various outfitters and whitewater enthusiasts, or rafts provided by the Organisers and approved by the IRF Executive Committee.
2. In A and B Level Events:
  - a. Event Organisers are to provide identical rafts.
  - b. The number of rafts provided should equal at least half of the total number of Teams present, plus one or two spare rafts.
  - c. Rafts used for an individual discipline must be identical in length, width, weight, tube diameter, material construction, and design unless an exception is permitted by the IRF Executive Committee.
3. Ideally, all rafts should be self-bailing and meet the following specific requirements:

Type	4-person	6-person
Minimum length	365 cm (12 foot)	425 cm (14 foot)
Minimum width	170 cm	200 cm
Thwarts	2	3
Foot cones (optional)	4 - 6	6 - 8
Min. tube diameter	45 cm	50 cm
Minimum weight	40 kg	50 kg

4. 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. Spare paddles are allowed to be rigged inside the raft if done in a safe manner.
5. All rafts must be equipped with foot cones or other acceptable devices for allowing each paddler to stabilise 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 they should be fixed by the manufacturer in advance. Open foot loops, straps or ropes are NOT acceptable.
6. The inflated floor should be of standard drop stitch or I-beam construction using raft fabric material. Pressure release valves in floors are recommended.
7. Every Competitor is free to use their own single blade C1 paddle. Paddle blades should have no sharp edges capable of injuring a Competitor, raft, or buoy. Oars are prohibited.
8. At A Level Events, and preferably at B Level Events, the rafts must be checked before each race with a pressure gauge to ensure all rafts are equally inflated. The check should be done once the raft has entered the water.
9. Any Competitor found tampering with a raft will receive a time penalty on their Team's next discipline and possibly sanctioning. The time penalty will be decided by the Jury and will be in accordance to the severity and type of tampering, and the time length of the next discipline. Tampering entails, but is not limited to:
  - a. Inflating the raft above the specified pressure after it has been checked.
  - b. Blocking release valves.
  - c. Changing the design or structure of a raft in any way to give the Team an advantage.
  - d. Altering the pressure or configuration of another Team's raft without their consent.

## I. **Bibs and Flags**

1. A, and B Level Events:
  - a. Event Organizers must provide all Competitors in each Team with a bib which uniquely identifies their Team (including their Nation, Division, and Category) from all other Teams that are competing in the Event. To accomplish this requirement, bibs must be designed in the following manner:
    - i. Each Team's bib must have printed on one side their national flag, and an id (identification) code which includes:
      1. the Team's IOC three-letter national code (Germany - GER, United States - USA, Russia - RUS, Brazil - BRA, etc.)
      2. the Team's Division code (Open - O, Master - M, Junior - J, Youth - Y)
      3. the Team's Category code (Men - M, Women - W)

Examples of the id code would be as follows: Costa Rica Master Men (CRC-MM), Bulgaria Open Women (BUL-OW), Indonesia Junior Men (INA-JM), Czech Republic Youth Women (CZE-YW)

- ii. In competitions where it is permitted to have more than one Team from the same Nation competing in the same Division and Category, the id code must also include a corresponding Team number (e.g. AUS-OW1, AUS-OW2; SLO-MM1, SLO-MM2 etc.).
  - iii. The combined flag and id code minimum size must be 15 x 23 cm. The space below the flag and id code, and the reverse side of the bib, may be reserved for sponsor logos only.
  - iv. If desired, Divisions and Categories may be further distinguished by using colour coding, stripping, or other visible means that are quickly recognisable by race officials.
- b. Each Team Member is fully responsible for their bib. A deposit may be required from each Team when bibs are issued. If a Competitor is not wearing their bib while racing, their Team will be fined a \$50 fee, or given a 10 second penalty.
  - c. At A Level Events and Euro Champs, the front of each raft must display the national flag of the participating Team. The flag must be at least 30 x 40 cm, be fixed securely to the front of the raft, and be displayed correctly (right side up). At Pan-American, Asia/Oceanian and African Champs the above is preferred but not compulsory.
  - d. The IRF flag must be flown at the race site.
2. C and D Level Event requirements for bibs and flags are optional.

## **J. Event Safety**

1. Every Competitor must provide their own personal safety equipment. This equipment must be used during the entire Event at all times while on the water. Personal safety equipment must be from recognised and established manufacturers guaranteeing the quality of material and meeting industry standards; and the structure, shape or composition of the equipment must not be modified in any way that is not recommended or approved by the manufacturer. The required minimum personal safety equipment consists of the following:
  - a. A personal flotation device (PFD) in the form of a buoyancy jacket that is designed specifically for whitewater use. The IRF recommends the use of PFDs buoyancy jackets equipped with reinforced shoulder straps and an adjustable cinching system that permits the PFD to be tightly fitted.
  - b. A safety whitewater helmet that conforms to National and International standards
  - c. Appropriate protective footwear. Being barefoot is not allowed.
2. Prior to the start of an IRF race, an IRF judge or a member of the Event Staff may inspect and/or test buoyancy jackets to determine their buoyancy value. The inspection and testing procedure may include the following:
  - a. A visual inspection to ensure that the buoyancy jacket has not been modified in any way.
  - b. A visual inspection to ensure that the buoyancy jacket carries the appropriate labelling, which must be EN ISO 12402-5 (Level 50) or equivalent approved national standard. This applies to all sizes of buoyancy jacket regardless of body weight.
  - c. A physical test of the buoyancy jacket's uplift using a 6.12 Kg calibrated stainless steel weight or its equivalent in other metals.  
(NOTE: In the event that Race Organizers require that the Level 50 buoyancy standard must be increased (J.2.b), the inspection and testing procedures will be adjusted to accommodate the increased standard)
3. When water temperatures are low, the Organiser may require the use of a wet or dry suit, or other cold water protection. The IRF recommends wearing cold water protection for water temperatures below 15 degrees Celsius.
4. On natural river venues, it is compulsory in all disciplines that at least one Team Member carry the following minimum Team safety equipment:
  - a. Flip line.
  - b. River knife. River knives should be accessible with one hand.
  - c. Throw bag. Throw bags must be stored safely, and must be a minimum of 15 meters in length unless otherwise specified by the Event Organisers.
5. On artificial course venues, Team safety equipment will be defined by the Safety Director.

6. Event Organisers must announce in the program information about the following at least three months in advance for A and B level events, two months for C and D level events:
  - a. required minimum person safety equipment (as per Rule J.1)
  - b. any increase in the minimum PFD buoyancy requirement (as per Rule J.2)
  - c. required cold water protective clothing specifications (as per Rule J.3)
  - d. required minimum Team safety equipment (as per rule J.4. and J.5)
  - e. required length of the throw bag (as per rule J.4.c and J.5)
7. Prior to the start of the first race, the Safety Director or a delegated member of the Safety Team may check a Team's safety equipment. The Chief Starter or a delegated assistant may do the same. Any Team not complying with the safety equipment requirements will not be allowed to continue until the requirements are met. A Team's run may be forfeited if they do not satisfy the safety equipment requirements by their allocated start time.
8. The Safety Director has the right to stop the Competition immediately if any hazards to the Competitors and/or Officials arise. No race shall start without approval from the Safety Director.
9. In safety issues, the Safety Team has the final say. All Teams/Competitors must follow the orders of the Safety Team. If the Safety Team requires a Competitor or Team to stop or help with a safety situation, they will give a specified signal and this signal must be obeyed. This signal will be described at the Captains Meeting prior to that discipline. Any Competitor or Team ignoring safety instructions given by a Race Official, or who displays a disregard for their own or others' safety, may receive penalties or be disqualified from a discipline or the Event.
10. In any Event, Competitors take part at their own risk. Neither the IRF, nor Event sponsors, nor Organisers or Race Officials assume responsibility for accidents or damage that may occur during a Competition. Every participant, including the Event Staff and Competitors, is obliged to act in a safety conscious manner at all times so as to minimise the risk of an accident or damage.
11. Under no circumstances will the IRF endorse a Competition held on Class VI white water. If there is a Class VI or other potentially hazardous river feature at, or downriver from, the race venue, Competitors must be informed and safe stopping above the hazard must be guaranteed.
12. Organisers registering Competitors for the Event may require proof that the registered Competitors have the ability to perform self-rescue. Competitors and/or Teams must have the following minimum self-rescue knowledge and demonstrative skills:
  - a. Re-righting a flipped raft quickly and unaided.
  - b. Climbing onto/into a raft unaided.
  - c. Passive and aggressive swimming techniques in white water.
  - d. Passive and aggressive use of a throw bag.
  - e. Awareness and understanding of all risks involved in raft racing.
13. Competitors are responsible for their actions on the shore and on the water regarding safety. Each Competitor is required to act in a safe manner, conscious of their own safety as well as that of their Team and other Event participants. Competitors are required to safely maintain their personal equipment, their position inside the raft, and their set-up inside the raft e.g. eliminating potential dangers around them such as sharp edges, loose ropes, loops, open carabineers, etc.
14. The Safety Team is entitled to require adjustments on a Competitors personal equipment, their position inside the raft and their set-up to meet safety requirements. Failure to follow the Safety Team's instructions or requirements may result in penalties or disqualification from a discipline or the Event.
15. The Race Director and Safety Director have the right to change the above stated rules where it is deemed necessary for improved safety. Such changes must be announced in advance.
16. Teams finishing their runs must remain in their raft just below the finish line to act as safety, until the next 2 competing teams have successfully completed their runs. This safety measure shall be applied to all IRF races UNLESS the Safety Director has specifically and officially informed all teams during captain's meetings that this safety measure is not required.

## **K. Officials and Duties**

### **1. Head of the Organising Committee / Event Director:**

- a. The Event Director is responsible for overseeing the running of the Event and coordinating all local preparations.
- b. Specific responsibilities include, but are not limited to, Team registration, coordinating with local authorities, Event staff management, media coordination, arranging for technical and raft equipment, prize giving, arranging lodging and meeting facilities for Event officials, Judges and Competitors, and fulfilment of bid agreements and contracts with the IRF.

### **2. Race Director**

- a. The Race Director, in concert with the Jury, is responsible for running the Event races according to the IRF Race Rules.

### **3. Safety Director**

- a. The Safety Director reports to the Race Director and is in charge of safety during the Competition.
- b. The Safety Director is able to call for an immediate stop to the Competition if they consider that any dangerous or potentially dangerous situation arises or the river level reaches a pre-determined unsafe level.
- c. The Safety Director, together with the Organising Committee, is responsible for the delivery of the Risk Assessment and the Safety & Rescue Plan as detailed in the IRF Safety Document. [These documents are published on the IRF website](#).
- d. The Safety Director has the right to check the self-rescue abilities of any Competitor, and may disqualify a Competitor that is unable to comply with the minimum expectations as defined in Rule J.12
- e. The Safety Director may test the paddling skills of any Competitor, and can disqualify Competitors who do not possess the minimum skills needed to paddle the class of white water required for the venue. If after testing, the Safety Director is in doubt of a Competitors skills, the Competitor may request a second test.
- f. The Safety Director, together with the Race Director, has the right to change the Start and Finish positions due to safety reasons.

### **4. IRF Safety Representative (for A and B Level Events)**

- a. The IRF Safety Representative is an IRF GT&E Assessor responsible for ensuring that a Safety & Rescue Plan (SRP) is approved and followed. The IRF Safety Representative works closely with the Safety Director and may halt the race or the Event if the SRP is flagrantly disregarded and/or unacceptable safety risk(s) are evident.
- b. If the Safety Director is a certified IRF GT&E Assessor, they may assume the role of IRF Safety Representative.

### **5. Jury and Head Judge**

- a. The Jury is a 3 person panel made up of three Judges, including one that is the Head Judge. For a WRC or Euro Championship, the Head Judge must be a certified Assessor and the two remaining Jury members should be certified Chief Judges or Assessors.
- b. The Jury ensures that the entire Competition is run correctly in accordance with the Race Rules, and is responsible for overseeing all judging and Judges.
- c. The Jury receives protests concerning penalties and non-observance of the Race Rules and issues decisions on these protests.
- d. The Jury may grant a re-run if a protest is successful (although they are under no obligation to do so). The Jury may also disqualify a Competitor or a Team for reasons detailed in the Race Rules.
- e. The Jury is responsible for ensuring that a Judges Workshop is conducted prior to the event, and that a [Judges Workshop Form](#) is completed by the Workshop Assessor(s) and submitted to the IRF Administration.



- f. Specific duties of the Head Judge:
  - i. Serves as primary contact between Judges and the Organiser and Event Director.
  - ii. Represents the Jury at all Captains meetings.
  - iii. Oversees the general work of the Judging team.
  - iv. Schedules and leads all Judges' meetings.
  - v. Leads the Protest procedure.
  - vi. Decides matters not covered by the Race Rules, and decides tie votes.
  - vii. Signs off on all race results before they are deemed Official.
  - viii. Provides a full report to the IRF Executive Committee within one month of the Event.
  - ix. Sends a complete list of all Event Judges to the IRF Administration.
- g. Specific duties of the 2nd member of the Jury:
  - i. Oversees the timing.
  - ii. Sets the start and the finish.
  - iii. Double checks all results and timing.
- h. Specific duties of the 3rd member of the Jury:
  - i. Assigns Judge's positions and tasks for the Event.
  - ii. Ensures that all Judges have the equipment and the information that they need.
  - iii. Reviews the Judges' work for quality control.
  - iv. Collects and secures all Judge score sheets after each race.
  - v. Double checks all Judge's sheets e.g. compares Gate Judge and Section Judge score sheets with the final results.

## 6. Chief Starter

- a. The Chief Starter ensures that Teams are in the correct race order and gives permission to start.
- b. The Chief Starter will be assisted by Starters/Pre-Starters for each raft to ensure that the start is as fair as possible and to prevent a false start. Rafts are always held from the stern at the start, preferably by the outside line, rear handle or a stern rope.
- c. The Chief Starter can refuse to start a Team if the Team or a Team Member:
  - i. Fails to respect the safety rules.
  - ii. Is late for the start.
  - iii. Is not wearing the issued bib(s).
  - iv. Does not follow the Starter's orders.
- d. In the case of a false start, the Chief Starter will stop the race immediately and give the Team responsible an official warning. In the case of a second false start caused by the same Team the Chief Starter must disqualify the Team from this particular race.
- e. The Chief Starter or specified delegate announces a countdown to the Teams at the start according to the start interval: 5 minutes, 1 minute, 30 sec., 20 sec., 10 sec., "paddles out of the water" (at 5 seconds before start). At "0" the start signal is sounded. The start signal must be loud and clear.

## 7. Section Judge

- a. The Section Judge is in charge of a section of the Slalom race venue, and is responsible for the Gate Judges in that section, and collecting score sheets from these Judges.
- b. The Section Judge will transmit the scores from the score sheets to the Chief of Scoring as soon as possible by radio, phone or running personnel.

- c. If a Section Judge sees evident discrepancy in the gate scoring of their section, they can overrule immediately.

#### **8. Gate Judge**

- a. A Gate Judge is responsible for scoring a Team's performance at Slalom gates in accordance with the Race Rules described in section E.4.
- b. A minimum of two Gate Judges are required to monitor each gate of the Slalom course.
- c. Gate Judges must have a clear and unobstructed view of the gates that they are scoring, and should be positioned on river left and river right when necessary.
- d. Each Team must be scored on each gate. Penalties must be clearly marked on official score sheets and a reason for each penalty must be given.
- e. Gate Judges are responsible for keeping their score sheets secure until handed over to the Section Judge or the Chief of Scoring.

#### **9. Finish Judge**

- a. The Finish Judge determines when the Teams have crossed the Finish Line and in what order.
- b. The Finish Judge will be assisted by, and will work closely with, the Time Keeper, and will co-ordinate with the Chief Starter.
- c. The Finish Judge must have a clear and unobstructed view of the Finish Line.

#### **10. Time Keeper**

- a. The Time Keeper is responsible for keeping the official time and transmitting it to the Chief of Scoring. The Time Keeper works closely with the Chief Starter and the Finish Judge.
- b. The Time Keeper must keep independent back-up timing for all teams and runs in case the official timing system fails, and back-up timing results must be made available if the Jury requests it.

#### **11. Chief of Scoring**

The Chief of Scoring is responsible for calculating the results according to the IRF scoring system, and to ensure they are given to the Media Liaison or to an IRF appointed media representative immediately after the results are deemed official. Official results must be generated in a format that is easily posted and publishable online.

#### **12. Course Designer**

- a. The Course Designer is responsible for designing the Slalom course and assisting in the other disciplines. For A and B Level Events, the final positioning of the Slalom gates must be agreed by the Course Designer and the two other non-local, suitable persons voted for by the captains at the captains meeting and/or appointed by the S&C Com and/or Jury.
- b. The Course Designer is responsible for proper hanging of the Slalom gates and ensures that the Slalom course is maintained in its original design during the Slalom race. They may interrupt the ongoing Slalom race if a gate has changed position for any reason.
- c. The Course Designer is in charge of setting all Starts, Finishes and buoys, including having the H2H start set up in time.

#### **13. Media Liaison**

- a. The Media Liaison is responsible for ensuring that the daily results of A and B Level Events are published on the IRF website as soon as possible.
- b. The Media Liaison is responsible for collecting and collating as much Event media as possible, and ensuring it is made available to Teams and IRF members through the IRF website.

**NOTE:** Officials 2 and 5-10 must be certified IRF judges for World and Euro Championships. For all other IRF events this requirement is not mandatory but is strongly encouraged whenever possible.

## L. Judges

1. IRF Judges are under the control and supervision of the Judges Committee. All official IRF Judges must successfully complete a certification process.
2. There are 4 types of IRF Judge Certifications - Assistant, General, Chief and Assessor. They are defined as:
  - a. **Assistant Judges** (specifically trained for judging at C or D Level Events):
    - i. Judging - can judge at C or D Level Events. At A or B Level Events, an Assistant Judge can only assist a General, Chief or Assessor Judge. Can judge at Pan Am, Asia/Oceanian or African Champs until such time as sufficient General Judges are available in those areas.
    - ii. Assessment - Must pass an exam on sections 0, 0, 0 of the Race Rules and have a working knowledge of J, 16, 0 and e sections.
    - iii. Expiry - Must judge at a minimum of one (1) Event over a two (2) year period OR attend a Judges Workshop to remain current.
    - iv. Renewal if expired - Must be re-assessed.
  - b. **General Judges** (anyone who wishes to judge long term):
    - i. Judging - Can judge at any Level Event. Cannot be Head Judge at A Level or ERC Events.
    - ii. Assessment - Must complete the IRF Judges Workshop with an IRF Assessor. Must pass an exam on thorough knowledge of all sections of the rules, and must pass a practical skills assessment during an IRF sanctioned race.
    - iii. Expiry - Must judge at a minimum of one (1) Event OR attend a Judges Workshop over a two (2) year period to remain current.
    - iv. Renewal if expired - Must be re-assessed or at discretion of Judges Com
  - c. **Chief Judges:**
    - i. Judging - Can judge at any Level Event. Cannot be Head Judge at A Level or ERC Events.
    - ii. Assessment - Must inform the IRF/ Judge committee of their intention to apply to become a Chief Judge in advance so that they can be appointed to higher levels of responsibility at events. Must complete a Chief Judge Assessment Form and submit it to the IRF Administration and the Judge Committee. Must assist an Assessor at a minimum of one Judges Workshop, who will then assess and pass/fail their ability to teach and examine Assistant Judges.
    - iii. Training and Assessing - Can train and assess Assistant Judges.
    - iv. IRF Representative - When a Chief Judge is the Head Judge on the Jury at an Event (B, C or D Level) they also serve as the IRF representative. They are to be involved in medal ceremonies.
    - v. Expiry - SHOULD judge at least one (1) Event during a one (1) year period, and MUST judge at least one (1) Event during a two (2) year period and needs to be part of/running a judge workshop at least every two (2) years or risk demotion to General Judge status.
    - vi. Renewal if expired - At discretion of Judges Com.
  - d. **Assessors:**
    - i. Judging - Can judge at any Level Event. Can be Head Judge of Jury at any Event.
    - ii. Assessment - Potential Assessor candidates are proposed to the Judges Committee by an Assessor. Candidates must be a Chief Judge in good standing and must submit an application detailing their judging history. Must assist an Assessor at a minimum of one (1) Judges Workshop. Must have a thorough knowledge of the IRF rules.
    - iii. Training and Assessing - Assessors can train and assess Assistant, General and Chief Judges.
    - iv. IRF Representatives - Assessors are representatives of the IRF. When serving as Head Judge at an Event, they are to be involved in medal ceremonies.
    - v. Expiry - Must judge at a minimum of one (1) A or B level Event OR attend/teach a Judges Workshop every two (2) years or will be demoted to Chief Judge status. Demoted Assessors may regain full status after judging an A or B level event AND attending a Judges Workshop.

- vi. Renewal if expired - At discretion of Judges Com.

### 3. Judge Education and Certification

- a. Education and certification of IRF Judges must be done in a workshop format following the criteria established by the Judges Committee. These criteria are detailed and kept continually updated in the IRF Judge Workbook.
- b. All IRF Assessors and Chief Judges are required to exactly follow the requirements and recommendations in the IRF Judge Workbook when conducting an IRF Judge Workshop.
- c. At A or B Level Events, Workshops must be run immediately prior to the Event to train new Judges and to educate certified Judges of any recent changes in the Rules. Attendance is mandatory for any Judge wanting to judge at the Event. Event Competitors, Event Officials, and interested participants should be strongly encouraged to attend Judge Workshops to grow the number of certified IRF Judges.
- d. Examination of Judges will consist of a theoretical and a practical section. The examination will vary on the depth of knowledge of the Race Rules that Judges need to know, according to the type of certification that the Judge candidate wishes to obtain.
- e. The education and certification of Judges can be done regionally if done by an Assessor.
- f. After every Judges Workshop, a Judges Workshop Form must be completed and returned to the IRF Administration by the Judge responsible for running the workshop.

#### Notes:

- a. All Judges are to keep a log book with the following details: Date, name, location and Level of Event; name of Head Judge; and position held at Event.
- b. Judges must comply with specific criteria (e.g. language and literary skills, agility, etc.) before they will be appointed as a Judge at any specific Event, in particular for A and B Level Events. This is to ensure that all Judges are able to communicate clearly with the Jury as well as being physically capable of carrying out their duties.
- c. During A Level and B Level events, an individual cannot serve as an Official Judge if they are also an official coach/manager or competitor of a competing team.
- d. Any Judge who fails to keep within the IRF requirements, or brings the IRF into disrepute, or for any reason that the BOD or Judges Com feels is valid, may have their certification downgraded or revoked.
- e. All Judge documents mentioned above can be found on the IRF website.

### M. Protests

- 1. For each discipline, protests must be lodged with the Jury within the following times:
  - 1. Sprint: 5 minutes after the provisional results have been posted
  - 2. Head-to-Head: 10 minutes after the provisional results have been posted
  - 3. Slalom: 15 minutes after the provisional results have been posted
  - 4. Downriver: 5 minutes after the provisional results have been posted
- 2. The Jury may change the time limit for a protest if they determine that the allotted time is not long enough to give Teams a fair chance to protest. The time limit should be posted on the Jury tent so that Teams are aware of it.
- 3. Official Protests must be made in writing on protest forms that will be supplied by the Finish Judge or Jury and may only be lodged by a Team Member or their coach or manager.
- 4. Protests are to be heard in a secluded area, and attended only by the Jury and the Team Captain (or the Team Member lodging the protest). This enclosed area should have technical facilities to view video or other relevant material if possible. Attendance by other Team Members or witnesses are only allowed by express permission of the Jury.
- 5. Protest fee at A and B level events shall be \$100 USD currency or the equivalent amount in Euros or the local currency. At C and D level events the Jury can set the amount in local currency. The Head Judge shall set the USD

equivalent amounts during the first captains meeting. Protest fees must be submitted along with the written protest or the protest will not be accepted. No cash, no protest!

6. When the Organizer has provided comprehensive video/TV coverage of the race, the Jury shall use this as the official source of video evidence. If the Jury finds that the official video is unsuitable for a fair review, or is unavailable to review in a timely manner, they may choose to accept video evidence from (an) outside source(s).
7. If the protest is successful the protest fee will be returned.
8. During an Event, a National Federation's official representative may inquire against another National Federation one (1) time without a fee. The inquiry must be made in writing within one hour after the final results of the discipline having been posted. The Head Judge will review all of the available information for the processing of the inquiry. If the inquiry culminates in a changed race result, the National Federation making the inquiry will not lose their one (1) inquiry and all Teams affected by the result must be informed. The decision of the Head Judge will thereafter be a matter of fact and cannot be protested further.
9. To overrule a judging decision, the Jury must be provided with clear, indisputable evidence that a judging error was made
10. If after an Event has ended, a National Federation wishes the IRF to investigate any part of the race because they believe a procedural or technical error was made, the request must meet the following conditions:
  1. Must be requested by an official representative of the National Federation.
  2. Must be received by the IRF Administration within one week after the Official Race Results are posted.
  3. Must be made in writing and specify exactly an area of credible concern where a procedural or technical error may have affected the final results.
  4. Must be accompanied by a \$300 inquiry fee.

Procedure:

- d. Post-Event investigations will be conducted by the Head Judge and/or other IRF officials under the direction of the IRF Administration using all available information. If the investigation reveals that an error occurred that affected the Official Race Results, the details and conclusions of the investigation must be passed to the IRF Board of Directors.
- e. Only the IRF Board of Directors, after careful deliberation, will have the power to change a post-Event Official Race Result.
- f. After the process has concluded, the decision thereafter will be a matter of fact and cannot be protested further. If the decision requires a change in the Official Race Results, all teams and National Federations affected by the changed result will be informed, and the inquiry fee will be returned.

## **N. Doping**

1. Doping is strictly prohibited and the IRF operates in full accordance with the policies and regulations established by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) ([www.wada-ama.org](http://www.wada-ama.org)).
2. The IRF has developed a comprehensive addendum of Anti-Doping Rules, which have been adopted and implemented in accordance with the IRF's responsibilities under the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Code, and in furtherance of the IRF's continuing efforts to eradicate doping in sport.
3. The [IRF Anti-Doping Rules](#) shall serve as an amendment to these Official Rules, and shall govern all aspects of IRF anti-doping efforts

## **O. Prize Giving and Awards**

1. Titles are awarded for each discipline and overall.
2. The prize giving for each discipline should be held the same day as the race where possible.
3. The overall prize giving should be held immediately after the prize giving for the last race.
4. Prize giving activities may be arranged in accordance with the requirements of the main sponsor. The decision will be made by the IRF Executive Committee.

5. For A and B Level Events:
  - a. Medals must be provided in gold, silver and bronze for the three top placed Teams in each Division and Category.
  - b. In each discipline, medals must be awarded to each Competitor - 4 medals for R4 and 6 medals for R6.
  - c. For the overall titles, medals must be awarded to all Team Members - 5 medals for R4 and 7 medals for R6.
  - d. Medals can be provided by the IRF or the host organisation. The host is required to cover the costs of the medals as well as getting the medals transported to them.
  - e. The host organisation must let the IRF know at least 3 months ahead of the Event as to whether they wish to have the IRF provide medals.
  - f. Medals that are provided by the host need to first be approved by the BOD. The majority of the front side must be the IRF logo as provided by the IRF, and the back side may be designed according to the feel of the Event and culture the host is representing.
  - g. Medals must include the place (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> unless it is very clear which is Gold and which is Bronze), the venue/location, the year, the discipline, the Category (Women or Men) and the division (Open, Youth, Junior or Masters)
  - h. All Team Members must be called to the podium.
  - i. Only overall medals need to be given if there are less than 6 Teams in any Category. As stated in Rule A.c.vi.
6. At the Overall prize giving in A and B Level Events, the national anthem of the winning Team must be played after the medals are awarded to each of the athletes. National Anthems are not compulsory at the medal ceremonies for each discipline.
7. Medals are to be awarded by a member of the IRF BOD, S&C Com, Jury and Event Officials or by Sponsors/VIPs.
8. Only the medal winners and a maximum of one manager/ coach are permitted on the podium.
9. All Team athletes must either wear their Team or national uniforms. If the prize giving is held immediately after the race finish, Teams may wear their national water gear. Paddles are allowed to be carried onto the podium.
10. Teams are to note Rule F.18 with regard to behaviour at the Prize Giving.

## **P. Invitations, Entries and Confirmations**

1. All IRF Member Nations have the right to compete in any IRF Event. Invitations to an Event may be sent electronically or physically to the National Federation of the Member Nation, or published on the IRF Website and social media.
2. All Events will typically have specific requirements and restrictions and Member Nations should familiarise themselves with these details before attempting to register for the Event.
3. A and B Level Events:
  - a. Organisers must define their requirements for Event registration and entry fee payment at least 8 months prior to the start of the Event.
  - b. Organisers must coordinate these requirements with the IRF Administration, and immediately communicate the requirements to all IRF National Federations.
  - c. Organisers must confirm each Event entry within one week of receipt, and the registering party must be informed of the status of the registration.
  - d. If a registration is rejected, the Organiser must inform the registering party of the reason for the rejection, and (if possible) what may be done to remedy the rejection.
4. C and D Level Events
  - a. Organisers may determine all entries and deadlines at their discretion.

----- END OF RACE RULES -----

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