

National Competition Committee Report to Executive 13th May 2008 and Council 10th June 2008

A. MEETINGS AND ATTENDANCE

1. The committee has met once since the last report to Council, on 20th January 2008 at the River and Rowing Museum, Henley. The following attended :

C H Llewellyn, Chairman, S Darnborough, Secretary, A V Cooke (Veteran Commission), Mrs D M Ellis, A J Evans, I A Fisher, M H Groom, R Mallett (for NDC), R Murray (National Championships), P Moore, Mrs A Phelps, Mrs A Southey, M Stallard, W C Thomson, M J Walker.

B. MATTERS ARISING FROM LAST REPORT

2. Competition Review

At the December 2007 Council meeting, the Committee was asked to return to this meeting with some new proposals taking into account the feedback received as a result of the proposals made to that meeting. The sub-group that had prepared those proposals has met several times and considered the proposals carefully including, where possible, use of information available on the distribution from the membership database and a look ahead at the effect of the proposals.

Following presentation by the sub-group to the Committee and the ensuing discussion, new proposals are presented to Council in Appendix A. In order to assist Council members to understand the proposals, members of the sub-group are developing a strategy to communicate with members and their constituents before the September Council meeting. Further details will be given at the Council meeting. Council are asked to consider the new proposals and agree that they will be communicated to members according the strategy to be proposed (Recommendation D6).

3. Rules of Racing

The note "Any reference in these rules to "Row Safe" or "A Guide to Safe Practice in Rowing" shall be taken as a reference to the ARA Water Safety Code until such time as the ARA Water Safety Code is superseded by Row Safe, A Guide to Safe Practice in Rowing" was approved by Council and placed at the beginning of the Rules of Racing.

C. NEW BUSINESS

4. Regatta Calendar

A draft calendar for 2009-10 is presented for information only, to allow Council members and Regional Councils to identify any potential problems.

5. Veteran Rowing Commission

The Commission is considering regatta events with some restrictions on eligibility based on previous wins.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS

6. That the proposals set out in Appendix A be communicated to members according to a strategy being developed by the Committee (via its sub-group).

C H Llewellyn, May 2008 (revised).

National Competition Committee Report Appendix A

Group Membership: Ann Southey (NCC), Ron Paterson (ARA Treasurer), Tommy Thomson (NCC & ARA Council), Matt Stallard (NCC & ARA Council), John Clayton (ARA Council), Mike Kennedy (by Invitation), Alistair Groves (ARA Information Officer, by invitation (some meetings)), Tony Evans (NCC & ARA Council) (reporting).

This summarises the proposals produced by the above group, during a series of meetings held during the Winter of 2007/8, to be presented to the ARA Council in June 2008. A comprehensive discussion is given in the full report, in which the same numbering sequence for proposals (in Section 4) is followed.

The basic reasons behind the changes proposed are that the current status system ranging from Novice to 12 points, with racing split into 6 categories, is not operating well, since:-

- Very few rowers reach a points tally greater than 5.
- The system is not responsive enough in rewarding success and failure.
- There is great confusion at the Novice/zero points level.
- There is no incentive to competitors and coaches to race at the highest level.
- “Rare Racers” don’t hold the points that their performance merits and/or their high profile wins (e.g. HRR and HWR) deserve.

Proposal 1. All events in which at least two crews cross the finish line shall be qualifying.

In the case of an event in which only two crews have been entered, if the verdict is n.r.o, disqualification etc, then the event would be non-qualifying. This rule would apply in all classes of racing.

This single measure has by far the greatest effect upon the distribution of points. It increases the number of points won during a season by at least 60%. If it results in “over promotion” of rowers, then regression is possible, and this can be adjusted in future if there is a great problem.

Proposal 2. An individual points range should be from 0 to 12, with sculling and rowing ranked independently.

The confusion caused by the current system, in which “novice” is equivalent to having –1 point, since a rower is deemed to have zero points having won at the novice level, is removed. In the new system, anyone who has not won an event has zero points. As soon as they have won an event they have one point.

The separation of rowing and sculling is left unchanged at present.

Proposal 3. The status system should be re-classified as shown below:-

Class Name	Novice	Intermediate 3	Intermediate 2	Intermediate 1	Senior	Elite
Points 1x	0	1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8 9	10 11 12
Points 8o	0	8 16	24 32	40 48	56 64 72	80 88 96

Existing system

Class Name	Novice	Senior 4	Senior 3	Senior 2	Senior 1	Elite
Points 1x	(-1)	0	1 2	3 4 5	6 7 8	9 10 11 12
Points 8o	(-8)	4	8 16	24 32 40	48 56 64	72 80 88 96

Advantages of the new system are:-

1. It accommodates the new range of points (0 – 12)
2. The changes from the old system are not great.
3. There are the same number of categories as in the existing system and therefore the same number of opportunities for winning.
4. The names of the groups, Novice, Intermediate, Senior, Elite are aimed at restoring the “pride” factor, lost when the system was changed from Novice, Junior, Junior-Senior, Senior to Novice, Senior, Elite.
5. The “conversion” rules for Junior wins are simplified: the first Junior 16(A or B), J18(A or B), and Sch/J win in any year will count for a Senior point.

The effect upon Juniors is that if they race only in their age groups (J16 and J18 (two years)), 3 points is the maximum they can achieve, regardless of the number of wins, i.e. one point per year.

Proposal 4. Regression should remain unchanged

The group believes that some form of regression (upon request) is necessary, in order to retain rowers in the sport when their life style changes, or when they find themselves promoted above their true ability. Since promotion is likely to be more rapid, due to the new qualifying race rules, it is felt that regression should also be fairly responsive. However, this is an area which should be kept under review.

Proposal 5. Transition Arrangements

Upon implementation, all those holding points 0 to 11 at present, should have their individual points tallies increased by one. This includes all those who have regressed their points at any stage. Current Novices should be registered as having 0 points.

Proposal 6. Winners at Henley Royal Regatta and Women's Henley Regatta should have their points topped up to agreed levels.

In practice, this would probably affect very few rowers, so is not crucial, but is a high profile action. The current position, in which no points are awarded to winners at HRR is widely commented upon. Informal discussions with HRR and HWR have indicated that this general approach would be well received.

Both HRR and WHR should be kept informed of these proposals as the recommendations are progressed through Executive and Council.

Proposal 7. The National Competition Committee should examine the special entry conditions currently in place for Henley Women's Regatta.

The group feel that the low maximum points levels demanded in some events cause many crews to stop racing throughout the regatta season from year to year, for fear of gaining points and being forced to race at Elite level. The group feel that this is counter-productive, and does not encourage ambition and better quality racing for all.

The National Competition Committee's view is that this objective should be achieved by means of a joint meeting of the principals of both Committees.

Proposal 8.

a. Mixed events should remain non-qualifying

There is a fear that mixed events could become a "refuge" for those who wish to continue racing (and winning) but still retain the option to regress their points. Should these events become very much more popular, for this reason, then the situation should be reviewed in the future.

b. Plate events should remain non-qualifying.

Since by definition, all crews have been beaten in order to reach a plate competition, they are not the fastest crew of their class, and therefore should not receive points for winning. A plate competition is not an open event, being restricted to first round losers.

29/4/08

National Competition Committee Report to Executive 13th May 2008 and Council 10th June 2008

Appendix B

Racing Status Review Group Proposals

Group Membership: Ann Southey (NCC), Ron Paterson (ARA Treasurer), Tommy Thomson (NCC & ARA Council), Matt Stallard (NCC & ARA Council), John Clayton (ARA Council), Mike Kennedy (by Invitation), Alistair Groves (ARA Information Officer, by invitation (some meetings)), Tony Evans (NCC & ARA Council) (reporting).

Nomenclature:-

Race = a side-by-side contest between two or more crews.

Event = a series of races designed to produce one winning crew.

Regatta = a collection of events.

1. Introduction

Having concerns about the state of domestic competition, the ARA commissioned Ann Colborne to carry out a review. The report was published in 2003, and identified many problems and gave some recommendations. Some of the proposals have been implemented, to some degree, e.g. Primary Regattas, but others, such as the grading of Regattas failed to gain the necessary support. One reason was that there was not enough racing at the highest levels to produce financially viable, National, multi-lane regattas.

Subsequently, some members of the National Competition Committee (NCC), disappointed by the lack of further progress, developed a set of proposals that attempted to solve some of the underlying problems. In November 2007, the ARA Council accepted some of these. Others, in view of the general feedback received prior to the Council meeting, were withdrawn. Council asked a sub-group of the NCC to work up alternative recommendations, to place before Council in June 2008.

Subsequently, a strengthened Group, containing some of those who had provided positive ideas for alternative approaches, has met on a monthly basis, to produce the following set of recommendations. To aid a more complete understanding of what is a fairly complex situation, reference is also made to some of the earlier, withdrawn, proposals.

At the outset, all agreed:-

1. That a points system was desirable, and should be made to produce good, close, meaningful competition, at all levels and that any new status system: -
 - a. must be compatible with OARA system.
 - b. must be simple enough to be understood and administered by all.
 - c. should encourage crews and coaches to have the ambition to race at their highest level.
2. They shared the “gut feeling” that as a bench mark, we would expect rowers competing in the Club and Student events at Henley Royal Regatta (and the equivalent events at Henley Women’s Regatta) to be racing in domestic regattas at the current S1 level.

3. Given the points distribution tabulated below and from everyone's experience, this is patently not the case.
4. The overall objective must be to increase the population of the higher points levels. This could be achieved by:-
 - Either
 - Increasing the rate of promotion.
 - and/or
 - Decreasing the rate of regression.
5. A responsive system that recognised winning and losing was needed, since it would reflect the rowers' current performance and provide immediate reward for success.

2. The current position

The need for change in the adult competition "scene" was identified by the report commissioned by the ARA and carried out by Ann Colborne . The changes put forward here do not meet all the objectives of the Report, but are aimed at some. The ARA Council agreed that proposals based upon the report should be developed. The Group feel that a series of changes are needed, which could be introduced over a period of years. One reason for this being that, whilst attempts have been made to model the effects of changes, accurate data is still lacking, despite having access to the OARA system. Also it is dangerous to delude oneself into thinking that the reaction of the rowers and their coaches to changed circumstances can be predicted accurately!

There now follows an overview of the current situation in the main areas covered by Group :-

2.1 Points distribution

The distribution of points in adult both rowing and sculling, is highly skewed towards the low end, indicating that the current system is either not promoting winners into the higher status events fast enough, or permits too many to regress to the lower levels too quickly. This results in a thinly populated upper region of the status table, and an overpopulated lower region. Many of the crews currently racing at the S2 and S3 level contain high standard rowers, albeit with few points, who train very hard. These rowers have a "blocking" effect, particularly if they take part in non-qualifying events and don't gain points.

2.2 Plethora of events

There are many possible combinations of boat size / status. At some Regattas, this leads to many individual events with very low entries, leading to poor standards and many non-qualifying events (less than four crews racing).

2.3 "High Jump" or "Limbo"

It is a common perception that the majority of Clubs and their coaches are so focussed upon winning at all costs, that even a successful crew will be changed so that it can race again at the same level, rather than keep the same crew and race up one level. Much discussion has taken place on the cause of this apparent lack of any ambition, and the lack of any desire / incentive to gain points.

It was felt that the change from novice / low status events being raced in restricted boats, and only experienced rowers being allowed to use/ race in best boats had removed one important

driving force, but it was recognised that this was a change that would be very difficult, if not impossible to reverse.

In a previous system a further incentive was the status names themselves. i.e no-one wished to remain a “maiden”, “junior”, or even “junior-senior”, but aspired to be a “senior”. In the current system, everyone above “novice” is “senior”.

As will be seen later, the group has suggested some status group name changes.

In the specific case of Women’s rowing, the group felt that the very low entry limits currently set by Henley Women’s Regatta were an additional factor in deterring crews from racing and winning points, at any time of the year. This was no doubt an example of the law of unintended consequences, but, given the Regatta’s importance in women’s rowing, it is felt that these limits have had a very large effect.

2.4 Participation and Performance

There are many newcomers and ex performance rowers for whom the current competition system, with the exception of winter Head Races, does not cater. Participation rowing falls outside the current remit of this group, but we feel that this is most deserving of attention.

2.5 Regatta formats

The Regatta format, based upon a series of “knock-out” contests, has remained un-altered for over 150 years. It may be heresy to suggest change, but life-styles have changed, and perhaps not all rowers now wish to have a succession of Saturdays blocked out in their diaries, when in fact they may be on the road home at 9.30am after a first round loss.

Regattas should be an enjoyable experience that rowers and their supporters, wish to attend.

2.6 Rare Racers

Some very good crews do not race very often, and are therefore faster than their points total would suggest. Some of these now race above their status, at some Regattas.

2.7 Remit

Both 2.4. and 2.5. above, whilst having relevance, fall outside the remit of the Group, and perhaps fall into the remit of the National Development Committee and/or the National Competition Committee or somewhere between the two. Little effort has been spent to date, in formulating recommendations in these areas, but ideas abound!

3 Discussion

This section examines the items in 2 in more depth. This paper may seem to be following a rather tortuous path, but since any change may affect the whole, it is important that current practices are well understood.

3.1 Points Distribution

The tables below utilise data from the OARA system and show the current situation. The reader’s attention is drawn to these tables by including them here, rather than merely appending them, since, if there is a general feeling that this situation is acceptable, there is no reason to make any changes. If it is not acceptable, then some changes must be made.



1 Male Sweep Points

Points	Male Students Sweep	Male Sweep Seniors of All Ages i.e. over 18 yrs old and not students	Male Sweep Seniors. Only those Between 18 & 36 yrs old and not students	Male Sweep Seniors. All older than 36
NV	1638	1656	748	908
0	311	725	219	506
1	243	456	236	220
2	131	327	195	132
3	86	239	127	112
4	37	252	112	140
5	20	101	66	35
6	26	76	36	40
7	11	40	30	10
8	11	41	22	19
9	3	17	12	5
10	1	26	14	12
11	3	8	7	1
12	43	190	76	114
R4	9	734	88	646
R5	2	98	27	71
R6	0	62	27	35
R7	1	47	21	26
R8	1	39	20	19
R9	0	33	10	23
R10	0	20	11	9
R11	0	16	9	7
R12	0	18	11	7
Total	2577	5221	2124	3097

2 Female Sweep Points

Points	Female Students Sweep	Female Sweep Seniors of All Ages i.e. older than 18 yrs and not students.	Female Sweep Seniors. Only those Between 18 & 36 yrs old and not students	Female Sweep Seniors. All older than 36
NV	1551	1271	765	506
0	206	365	205	160
1	183	330	183	147
2	82	209	82	127
3	33	144	33	111
4	19	100	19	81
5	12	43	12	31
6	14	21	14	7
7	3	13	3	10
8	2	8	5	3
9	0	7	6	1
10	2	5	5	0
11	1	1	1	0
12	10	43	31	12
R4	2	162	40	122
R5	2	36	16	20
R6	0	25	8	17
R7	0	13	6	7
R8	0	9	5	4
R9	0	3	2	1
R10	0	5	3	2
R11	0	3		3
R12	0	4	2	2
Total	2122	2820	1446	1374

Note 1. R before a status level indicates that a rower has regressed their points at some stage in their career.

Note 2. Sculling data shows a very similar pattern.

Assuming that a change is considered necessary, then a way of increasing the population of the higher levels must be found. In short, this comes down to:-

Either

Increasing the rate of promotion.

and/or

Decreasing the rate of regression.

3.1.1 Increasing the rate of promotion

Increasing the rate of promotion can only be achieved by issuing more points per regatta. There are several ways in which this could be achieved.

- a. Giving more than one point for a win.
- b. Giving points for second, third places.
- c. Changing the qualifying rule (currently 4 crews must race)
- d. “Topping” up winners’ points if they win “prestigious” events.

The Group has considered all of the above.

- a. Giving more than one point for a win soon develops into a complex procedure. Even at some of the “top” regattas, not all events are equally prestigious, and the quality of the entry varies from year to year. It would be unpopular to vary the outcome (in terms of points won) after the entry has closed. To vary the number of points won in proportion to the size of the entry is considered too complicated to be easily handled by regatta administration and the OARA system.
- b. Giving points for 2nd and 3rd places was considered to be a non-starter, since the sport is so focussed upon winning, except at the very highest levels (e.g. Olympic, World Champs). In addition, some form of prize would have to accompany the points, and this would increase regatta costs, with the inevitable effect of increasing entry fees.
- c. Changing the qualifying rule seems the most effective way of increasing the number of points won per season, without a major disruption to the sport. There will no doubt be objections to the proposal that follows, and some of these are covered in the responses to hypothetical Frequently Asked Questions (see appendix).
- d. In conjunction with c. above, the group feel that a proposal in this area has great merit; not that it will affect many competitors. It further extends the principle, already set with Olympic and other International wins, that there are some events that have sufficient “kudos” to make the “topping up” of winners’ point to a standard points level acceptable.

3.1.2 Decreasing the Rate of Regression

The number of ways in which the rate of regression can be lowered is probably smaller and include:-

- a. Abolishing it,
- b. Making it age related.
- c. Increasing the “dwell time” at the highest level.
- d. Decreasing the number of points that can be lost per unsuccessful year.

These will be examined later.

3.2 Plethora of events

Events can be held in combinations of all the following:-

Boat types (7) x status (6) x (Open, Women, Mixed) x age (10+) x weight (2) of which ~400 were reported to be in regular use in the Colborne report.

Just considering adult, male, heavyweight competition, the current 7 boat types and 6 status groups gives 42 possible events, and nearly all of the possible combinations will be raced during the course of the British regatta season. Recent trends in coaching and selection policies, mean that competitors have access to many more small boats than used to be the case, and therefore events such as S3 2- are now quite common.

As many regattas offer every possible combination of boat and status, it is not surprising that many end up staging a great many two or three boat events, that are currently non-qualifying.

Some time ago the results for the 2003 season as listed in the Almanack were analysed. The number of crews racing in each event at every Regatta (91 for men 93 for women) was been tabulated. (2 day Regattas count as separate regattas). Men's and women's events were analysed separately, as were sweep-oar and sculling.

The overall results of this showed that:-

- a. In men's sweep oar, only 59% of the pots won carried a point; 3836 pots won, only 2,266 points awarded.
- b. In women's sweep oar, only 57.9% of the pots won carried a point; 2322 pots won, only 1344 points awarded.
- c. In men's sculling (4x,2x,1x), only 50.7% of the pots won carried a point; 920 pots won, only 466 points awarded.
- d. In women's sculling (4x,2x,1x), only 52.6% of the pots won carried a point; 666 pots were won, only 350 points awarded.

More recently, other analyses have shown that this was a typical year.

Overall, 40% to 50% of all "winners" do not pick up a point. Given that not everyone wins, it is not surprising that the distribution of points is skewed to the low end.

However, there is no desire to reduce the number of boat types, age groups, weight categories, and no proposal to do so is made.

The proposals withdrawn in November 2007 reduced the number of statuses from the current 6 to 4. It was argued that this should not have resulted in smaller total entries at regattas, but larger entries per event / status level, thus increasing the number of qualifying events and hence increasing the rate of promotion. However, a large number of objections were made to this proposal on the grounds that there would be fewer chances of winning; the sport is very focussed upon "winning"! Further analysis also showed that since the number of events had been reduced, the number of points won would also fall, and the desired effect may not have been achieved.

This only leaves qualification rules and a proposal to change these follows.

3.3 Participation and Performance

Whilst the numbers of Novices was large, it was felt that many of these were probably recreational rowers, who never entered regattas, and that some way of separating performance and participation rowers should be found, and that they should “compete” in separate events, albeit at the same regattas.

3.4 Regatta formats

It would be misleading to suggest that changing the racing status system to achieve better quality racing at all levels, and to better utilise the available range of individual points, will, “at a stroke”, solve all the problems.

The group feel that many Regattas have failed to react to the changing times / life styles, and that efforts need to be made to promote new methods of working such as the multi-phase regatta (e.g. Wallingford, Marlow Spring) and plate competitions (Bedford). However, this again is outside its current remit.

4 Recommendations

Hopefully, the previous few pages will now have set the scene and outlined the task set by Council. The following recommendations are made.

4.1 Draft Recommendation 1.

A Change should be made to the existing Qualifying rule.

All events in which at least two crews cross the finish line shall be qualifying, i.e in the case of an event in which only two crews have been entered, if the verdict is n.r.o, disqualification etc, then the event would be non-qualifying. This rule would apply in all classes of racing, as at present.

As has been explained above, this change has the great merit that it is easily understood and easily implemented. Arguments against it are covered in the FAQ appendix attached.

This would have by far the greatest effect upon the distribution of points. It increases the number of points won during a season by at least 60%. It is recognised that rowers could find themselves promoted to a level where they would be non-competitive. Under the existing regression rules, they can drop one point per non-winning year, to a minimum of four points. If this level still proves to be too high for a significant number of rowers, then a review of the regression threshold (currently 4) should be made at some time in the future.

4.1.1 The effect upon Juniors

Many junior races, at all age groups are currently non-qualifying. i.e. less than 4 crews race. Again this is due to the plethora of possible events. In 2006 over 1300 events for Juniors were staged covering 115 different varieties of events. These attracted over 6,000 entries. When racing as Juniors in A events, it makes no difference whether the event is qualifying or not, since there is no higher category within the age based system, in which to race.

The effect of changing the qualifying rule is twofold:-

- a. Winning a Junior Maiden, or Junior B event will now immediately promote a crew to the next higher class; assuming that two crews finish as described above. However, of the 6355 entries made in 2006, only 462 were in “B” events, and some of these were qualifying under the existing rules. Very few Maiden events are offered.



- b. The “conversion” rules for Junior wins are simplified: the first Junior 16(A or B), J18(A or B), and SchJ win in any year will count for a Senior point.

If Juniors only race in their age groups (J16 and J18 (two years)), 3 points is the maximum they can achieve regardless of the number of wins, i.e. one point per year.

4.2 Draft Recommendation 2

An individual points range should be from 0 to 12, with sculling and rowing ranked independently.

In this way the confusion caused by the current system, in which “novice” is equivalent to having –1 point, since a rower is deemed to have zero points having won at the novice level, is removed. In the new system, anyone who has not won an event has zero points. As soon as they have won an event they have one point.

It should be noted that upon the adoption of these rules, all rowers and scullers should have their points increased by 1 point (except for novices) to allow for the removal of the current novice (= -1) point anomaly. See recommendation 5.

The separation of rowing and sculling is left unchanged at present. It has been considered, but no clear way forward has emerged.

4.3 Draft Recommendation 3

The status system should be re-classified as shown below:-

Class Name	Novice	Intermediate 3	Intermediate 2	Intermediate 1	Senior	Elite
Points 1x	0	1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8 9	10 11 12
Points 8o	0	8 16	24 32	40 48	56 64 72	80 88 96

Existing system

Class Name	Novice	Senior 4	Senior 3	Senior 2	Senior 1	Elite
Points 1x	(-1)	0	1 2	3 4 5	6 7 8	9 10 11 12
Points 8o	(-8)	4	8 16	24 32 40	48 56 64	72 80 88 96

Advantages of the new system are:-

1. It accommodates the new range of points (0 – 12)
2. The changes from the old system are not great.
3. There are the same number of categories as in the existing system and therefore the same number of opportunities for winning.
4. The names of the groups, Novice, Intermediate, Senior, Elite are aimed at restoring the “pride” factor, lost when the system was changed from Novice, Junior, Junior-

Senior, Senior to Novice, Senior, Elite. It is to be hoped that this will instil some desire amongst rowers (and coaches) to expand their ambitions.

Much criticism was made of the previous proposal (withdrawn in Nov 2007) because it was felt that successful juniors were pitched at too high a level within the Senior system.

In these proposals, a successful Junior's career could be:-

Win at ages below J16 without gaining any senior points (as at present).

Win when J16 many times, but first win counts as a (senior) win = 1 point.

Win when J17 (racing J18) many times, but will just gain 1 further point.

Win when J18 (racing J18) many times and gain another 1 point.

Ending up with a total of 3 points. If a whole crew remained together (or as a single sculler), this would put them into the lower end of the new Intermediate 2 category. In crew racing, it would be possible for an individual to race lower than this, if the remainder of the crew had lower points.

N.B. If Juniors race in non-age group races i.e. in adult competition, and win, then they gain points appropriately.

4.4 Draft Recommendation 4

Regression

The group believes that some form of regression (upon request) is necessary, in order to retain rowers in the sport when their life style changes, or when they find themselves promoted above their true ability. Since promotion is likely to be more rapid, due to the new qualifying race rules, it is felt that regression should also be fairly responsive.

In all, the rapid promotion and relatively quick regression (as at present) should produce a system in which a rower who races fairly regularly has an individual status that reflects more closely their boat moving ability.

Regression should remain unchanged:-

1. Only upon request.
2. Only to a lower limit of 4 points. n.b. due to the change in the status system, the regression limit is essentially lower by one point, relative to the old system. i.e. 5th rank out of 13 c.f. 6th rank out of 14
3. Regression is to be allowed at the rate of 1 point per non-win year i.e. if someone with say 10 points, had not won for 5 years, and then applies for regression, their points tally would be reduced to 5. If they don't win the next year, upon application, their points tally could be reduced to 4.

This is an area that should be kept under close annual review, since patterns of behaviour amongst competitors could change.

4.5 Draft Recommendation 5

Transition Arrangements

Upon implementation, all those holding points 0 to 11 at present, should have their individual points tallies increased by one. This includes all those who have regressed their points at any stage. Current Novices should be registered as having 0 points.

4.6 Draft Recommendation 6

Winners at Henley Royal Regatta and Women's Henley Regatta should have their points topped up to agreed levels.

In practice, this would probably affect very few rowers, so is not crucial, but is a high profile action. The current position, in which no points are awarded is widely commented upon. Informal discussions with HRR have indicated that this general approach would be well received.

The following levels are proposed:

Open Men – Grand, Stewards, Queen Mother, Goblets, Double Sculls, Diamonds, to 12 points.

Open Women – Remenham, Princess Grace, Princess Royal, to 12 points

Intermediate Men - Ladies Plate, Visitors, Mens Quads to 10 points

Club/Student Men – Thames, Temple, Wyfold, Britannia, Prince Albert to 9 points

Junior Men – Princess Elizabeth, Fawley to 7 points.

These points would be applicable only in the discipline in which they were won i.e. either rowing or sculling.

n.b. any rower already holding the points at these levels before winning, would gain an extra point, up to 12.

Whilst it is recognised that at present, being an ARA event, single points are added to winners' cards, wins at Henley Women's Regatta should be recognised as follows:-

Elite Events – raised to 10 points

Senior – raised to 7 points

Intermediate – raised to 5 points

These points would be applicable only in the discipline in which they were won i.e. either rowing or sculling.

n.b. any rower already holding the points at these levels before winning, would gain an extra point, up to a maximum of 12.

These levels are lower than the HRR equivalents due to the very low entry limits currently in place. And should be reviewed annually. Discussions with HWR have indicated a general agreement, but no immediate action has been agreed.

Both HRR and WHR should be kept informed of these proposals as the recommendations are progressed through Executive and Council.

4.7 Draft Recommendation 7

The National Competition Committee should examine the special entry conditions currently in place for Henley Women's Regatta.

The group feel that the low maximum points levels demanded in some events cause many crews to stop racing throughout the regatta season from year to year, for fear of gaining points and thus being forced to race at Elite level. The group feel that this is counter productive, and does not encourage ambition and better quality racing for all.

The existing rules are:

Entry Rules for Eights. (n.b. points are those held at 31st March in the year of competition).

- a. Elite – No limit.
- b. Senior – Must not exceed 32 points.
- c. Intermediate – Must not exceed 16 points.

Smaller boats follow the same pattern.

A joint meeting of the principals in both Committees has proved impossible to arrange, but individual correspondences have again indicated a general acceptance in principle, of these proposals.

It has also been suggested that not only should their current limits be raised, but that the effective date of competitor's points should be when entries closed, rather than 31st March.

4.8 Draft Recommendation 8

Mixed events should remain non-qualifying.

When all the above changes take effect, there may be a growth of interest in mixed events, since rowers could take part in these, and win non-qualifying races. They would therefore be able to regress points whilst maintaining fitness and winning. Should this prove to be the case, then the position of mixed events should be re-examined, but for the time being, there is no recommendation to make them qualifying.

Plate events should remain non-qualifying.

5 Implementation

The Group recognise that if accepted and implemented, there are likely to be teething problems in implementing the above. In addition, a great deal of explanation will be needed. A way of achieving this must be found.

6 Concluding Remarks

The Group also recognise that there are very many other suggestions that could be tried, but in general they have tried to keep the system as simple as possible. However, a few will be outlined here, for the sake of completeness.

6.1 Rare racers

One problem that has not been cracked is that of top quality crews who only race a few times per year. Under both old and new systems, these will never gather many points. A solution could be to extend the system proposed for winners at the two Henley Regattas to other top level events, but it is not clear that at present these events have the necessary "kudos" to maintain high entry levels if this were to be the case. It also complicates the system.

6.2 Points for Heads

In Head races, when a crew is baulked, the only action that can be taken is to penalise the crew in the wrong. The baulked crew cannot be recompensed, so racing is likely to be a little unfair. Frequently, where the event is run as a number of divisions, there can be significant differences in conditions for competitors in the same status. Whilst this is acceptable at present, it would be less so if points were at stake. In addition, more Head races are held than Regattas, in all types of boat and status levels, so many more points would be "on offer". This would require the establishment of an entirely new points system.



We propose therefore that no attempt should be made on a National basis to award status points to rowers for their performance in processional HOR type racing.

If problems arise from the same crews always winning, it is recommended that organisers agree local rules amongst themselves to ensure that winners of status divisions progress in status as they move from one event to another. Present Rules of Racing allow for such actions by organising committees so no new rule is felt necessary.

6.3 Henley Royal Regatta

Informal talks with HRR have indicated that there may be some interest in extending their current use of status points (currently only used in small boat events), to ensure that crews entering the Regatta are of a sufficiently high standard, provided that the points system in use was robust and that it accurately reflected the standard of the crew.

29/4/08

National Competition Committee Report to Executive 13th May 2008 and Council 10th June 2008

Appendix C

New Status FAQ's. 29 Apr 2008

1. Why is it necessary to make any changes? If it ain't broke, then don't fix it!

Answer: The tables that are in the report, that show how skewed the points distribution has become. Only 12% of men over 18 have 6 or more rowing points i.e. 633 rowers, of whom, approximately half are over 36 years old.

The vast bulk of all competitors have four points or less. In the 2008 Men's HERR (when Squad members were excluded due to the proximity of trials) there were 8 crews entered as Elite; in fact only 2 of these were Elite by virtue of their points. Similarly in the Women's HERR, there was just one non-overseas Elite crew. These figures continue a downward trend in entries in Elite and S1 seen over the last ten years or so.

2. Two crews to finish is new qualifying rule.

a. Question: "What about Splashers B.C. A v Splashers B.C. B?"

Answer: Splashers B.C. have the option to withdraw both crews, or the regatta could offer them both a place in the next higher event, and run a plate event for 1st round losers.

b. Question: "What about 3 crews on a 2 lane course, one crew gets a bye?"

Answer: Every time an odd number of entries is received on a two lane course, some crews will have to race an "extra" round. Some crews would regard this as an advantage; they've had a chance to warm up, learn the course etc. others would consider it a disadvantage, since they are now tired.

c. Question: "What if two crews enter, and one then scratches – it'll ruin our regatta, we have a lot of two boat events?"

Answer: If a regatta has historically received a lot of two boat entries, then perhaps it should consider reducing the number of events it offers. Alternatively, it could announce that in cases where it only receives two entries, then events in adjacent categories will be amalgamated. They could then run a plate event for the 1st round losers. Winners of plate events need not be awarded pots, and wouldn't attract points. (see 8.b). The concept of "no pot without a point" is to be encouraged.

d. Question: "If I enter two events at the same regatta, and each only attracts one other entry, I could go home with two more points. I don't want that!"

Answer: That was always a possibility under the old rules. There could have been 4 crews racing in each event, and you might have won both.

e. Question: "I could strike lucky, and win at some regattas against poor opposition, and then find myself totally out classed. If I haven't attained more than 4 points, I can't regress to a level where I can become competitive. In this case I'll pack up and leave the sport".

Answer: This has been recognised, and the regression threshold level (currently at 4 points) may well be lowered in the not too distant future. We are not recommending change at present, because we want to assess the effect of the new system. If we make a lot of changes simultaneously, it is very difficult to analyse the result of any one change.

n.b. It is quite likely that the new system will lead to fewer 2 boat races as rowers will be moving up through the statuses more quickly thus filling the gaps in the higher statuses.

3. Points range is from 0 to 12.

- a. Question: “This has reduced to range from effectively 13 to twelve. This is too few. If anything, it should be increased to allow for the vast difference between an International and a Novice.”

Answer: We have some sympathy with this view, but such a radical change would be very costly to implement w.r.t. licence cards, reprogramming of OARA system, that it is not considered viable at present, when other options can be explored.

A Novice still has to win 9 events each of a higher standard to reach Elite and if he/she does so, deserves to compete with the best, and should welcome the opportunity. It is relatively rare to come across internationals (either current or former) racing in domestic open regattas other than HRR / HWR, and with the awarding of points (in some cases in both rowing and sculling), this is likely to even less common in future.

4. New Status Categories

- a. Question: “We’ve lost the old S4 category. In effect, crews now go straight from Novice to S3”.

Answer: Yes, but this is true for all crews, so the opposition will be similarly qualified crews. This is the level where crews really learn about racing. Now the hard work really starts!

However, since rowers may only win twice at this level (if crews are kept together) there should be a constant movement of individuals through the status rather than a “bunching” of rowers who previously have remained in a category too long by virtue of winning some (many) non-qualifying races.

Perhaps regattas will need to include more “slots” in their draws, for “regatta winners” to take up, since there will be far more crews gaining points each week-end.

5. Regression is unchanged.

- a. Question: “Regression shouldn’t be allowed at all.”

Answer: It gives rowers a chance to return to the sport after taking a “rowing career” break for what ever reason.

Answer: It allows smaller clubs to form viable racing crews rather than asking 0,1, 2 or 3 point members to race at an unfeasibly high status because the only other rower(s) within the club were once members of a now defunct successful crew. Otherwise it almost replicates the problems of the past when a crew had to race at the level of the highest ranked rower in it.

Answer: It allows over-promoted rowers to return to a more realistic level.

- b. Question: “It should be possible to regress to a lower level. “

Answer: We’ll keep this under review.

- c. Question: “It should be related to age. “

Answer: This makes it more complicated, but again will be kept under review.

d. Question: “Regression should be automatic, if I haven’t won in the year.”

Answer: There are some events that stipulate minimum entry requirements e.g. Fours Head, HRR Diamonds, Goblets etc. so some rowers don’t want to regress in order to be able to race in these events. Others are proud of their points and wish to remain where they are.

6. 7 points for Junior Internationals

a. Question: “7 points is too many for Junior Internationals.”

Answer: It puts them at the lower end of the new Senior status, which we feel to be correct, but will be kept under review.

7. Winners at HRR get points topped up

a. Question: “HRR is not an ARA Regatta and the ARA has no control over it, so points should not be awarded.”

Answer: Similarly, the ARA has no control over Ghent and not much over FISA events, but points are awarded for them.

Answer: In the past the ARA Rules stated that anyone competing in the Diamonds/double sculls at HRR would be classified as “Senior” and there were no problems.

Answer: So someone from abroad who has won a Henley medal rowing for say an American Univ or School, could apply to become a member of an ARA Club, and his Henley win wouldn’t be taken into account when allocating his points??!!

Answer: There is a large groundswell of opinion amongst the rowers that this should be implemented, although in fact, it would probably affect very few British rowers, since a fair proportion of winners are from abroad.

Note: Points levels have still to be agreed, and also HRR’s view/ agreement must be sought. Similarly with Women’s Henley.

8. Mixed events don’t qualify for status points.

Question: This allows competitors to win and yet still regress their points. Is this right?

Answer: Mixed events are generally considered to be “fun” events. If the uptake increases, then their status will be reviewed.

9. Plate Events should remain non-qualifying.

Question: “Points should be awarded”

Answer: All crews in a plate event have been beaten by a crew on that day, and therefore are not the fastest crew in the event. In addition, the plate event was not “open”, since it was restricted to first round losers.

10. League system.

Question: Why not start a League system?

Answer: League systems have been discussed, but thought not to be a good idea, since the inevitable result was that the big Clubs would remain at the top and the little ones at the bottom, which did neither any good!