



BRITISH ROWING

Club Dispute and Regional Dispute Resolution Procedure

April 2026

Club Dispute and Regional Dispute Resolution Procedure

1. Scope and application of this procedure

- 1.1. This Procedure applies to all disputes falling within its scope involving British Rowing Affiliated Clubs (“Clubs”) and Regional Rowing Councils.
- 1.2. This Procedure forms part of the regulatory framework of British Rowing and must be adopted and implemented by all British Rowing Affiliated Clubs and Regional Rowing Councils.
- 1.3. For the purposes of this Procedure, disputes are classified as either:
 - (a) Club-Level Matter
 - (b) Regional Dispute

Club-Level Matters

- 1.4. A “Club-Level Matter” is a dispute which:
 - (a) arises from the activities, governance, or decisions of a single Club; and/or
 - (b) involves members, officers, officials, volunteers, or participants within that Club; and/or
 - (c) concerns a decision taken by a Club affecting an individual or group.
- 1.5. A Club-Level Matter must be determined in the first instance by the relevant Club, in accordance with this Procedure. A matter does not become a Regional Dispute solely because a party is dissatisfied with the outcome at Club level.
- 1.6. By way of illustration (and without limitation), Club-Level Matters may include:
 - selection decisions for crews, squads or training groups;
 - disputes relating to membership fees
 - training arrangements, squad organisation, or allocation of equipment;
 - disagreements between committee members or minor interpersonal conflicts;
 - scheduling or use of club facilities, including boathouse access or boat allocation
 - breaches of internal club rules;
 - incident(s) of poor behaviour; and
 - routine administrative or communication issues arising within the Club.
- 1.7. For completeness, poor behaviour of a club member at any formal or informal social gathering of club members off premises fall within the scope of this procedure.

Regional Dispute

- 1.8. A “Regional Dispute” is a dispute which:
 - (a) involves a Regional Rowing Council as a party; and/or
 - (b) arises between two or more Clubs; and/or

- (c) cannot reasonably or fairly be determined by a single Club due to the nature of the dispute; or
- (d) where it would be inappropriate for a Club to determine the matter due to a material conflict of interest affecting the Club as a whole

1.9. A Regional Dispute shall be determined in the first instance by the relevant Regional Rowing Council in accordance with this Procedure.

2. Exclusions and Responsibility

2.1. This Procedure does not apply to:

- 2.1.1. safeguarding matters involving Children or Adults at Risk;
- 2.1.2. allegations of discrimination, harassment, bullying and serious misconduct;
- 2.1.3. matters falling within the scope of the British Rowing Disciplinary Rules or Safeguarding Regulations.

2.2. Any matter falling within paragraph 2.1 must be referred to British Rowing in accordance with its reporting requirements and must not be dealt with under this Procedure.

2.3. Any matter involving a Child or an Adult at Risk must be referred to British Rowing as soon as possible and in any event within 48 hours. All parties must cooperate fully with any safeguarding investigation and comply with any directions issued by British Rowing.

2.4. Clubs and Regional Rowing Councils are responsible for ensuring that disputes within the scope of this Procedure are managed in accordance with its terms.

2.5. For the avoidance of doubt, British Rowing will not provide advice, guidance or case-specific direction to Clubs or Regional Rowing Councils on how to determine individual disputes. Responsibility for compliance with this Procedure rests solely with these entities.

2.6. Clubs and Regional Rowing Councils must not determine matters falling outside the scope of this Procedure. Where there is any uncertainty as to whether a matter falls within scope, it must be referred to British Rowing. British Rowing may determine whether a matter falls within the scope of this procedure or not.

2.7. Dissatisfaction with the outcome of a dispute or appeal, of itself, does not constitute a valid basis for reporting the matter (concerning the subject of the initial dispute or the process in which it was issued) or the making of a complaint to British Rowing, and any such report and/or complaint may be rejected.

3. Informal Resolution

3.1. The parties to a dispute shall use reasonable endeavours to resolve the matter informally and amicably.

3.2. Where appropriate, an independent person may be appointed to act as a mediator, provided that such person has had no direct or indirect involvement in the matter. Requests can be made of British Rowing Disciplinary and Grievance Panel for an individual to assist with mediating disputes.

3.3. If a dispute is resolved informally, no further action shall be required under this Procedure.

3.4. Where a dispute cannot be resolved informally, it shall be determined in accordance with the formal process set out below.

4. Initial Determination by Independent Panel

4.1. Where a dispute proceeds to formal determination, it shall be referred to the appropriate appointing body as follows:

Club-Level Matter

- (a) in the case of a Club-Level Matter, the Chair of the relevant Club or, where that person is conflicted or unable to act, another appropriate officer of the Club;

Regional Dispute

- (b) in the case of a Regional Dispute, the Chair of the relevant Regional Rowing Council or, where that person is conflicted or unable to act, another appropriate officer of the Regional Rowing Council.

4.2. Where a matter proceeds to formal determination, the appointing body shall appoint an independent panel (the "Panel") to determine the dispute. The Panel shall determine the matter in the first instance, ordinarily by way of a paper-based process in accordance with paragraph 4.7.

4.3. The Panel shall typically consist of three individuals. Where it is not reasonably practicable to appoint three, the Panel may consist of not fewer than two individuals who:

- (a) have had no prior involvement in the matter;
- (b) are impartial and free from actual conflict of interest; and
- (c) do not have any direct personal interest in the outcome of the dispute.

4.4. In assessing whether a conflict of interest exists, regard shall be had to the size and nature of the rowing community. General familiarity, prior association, or participation in rowing shall not, of itself, constitute a conflict of interest.

4.5. The parties shall be notified of the proposed composition of the Panel and shall have seven (7) days in which to raise any reasonable objection. Any objection shall be determined by the appointing body acting reasonably, and its decision shall be final.

4.6. The Panel members shall appoint one of their number to act as Chair.

4.7. The default method of determination shall be a paper-based process conducted on the basis of written submissions and evidence. The Panel is not required to adopt a formal adversarial procedure.

4.8. The Panel may determine that an oral hearing is required where it considers this necessary in order to ensure fairness, including where there are material disputes of fact that cannot be resolved on the written evidence alone.

4.9. Where an oral hearing is held, the parties shall be given reasonable notice of the arrangements, and the Chair shall determine the conduct of the hearing. Hearings may take place in person or by remote means.

- 4.10. Whether proceeding on the papers or by way of an oral hearing, the Panel shall ensure that:
- 4.10.1. each party or individual affected by the matter has a reasonable opportunity to present their case;
 - 4.10.2. relevant evidence may be submitted, including written witness evidence; and
 - 4.10.3. the process is conducted in a fair, proportionate and timely manner.
- 4.11. The Panel shall have discretion to:
- 4.11.1. request further information or clarification;
 - 4.11.2. limit the scope or extent of evidence or submissions; and
 - 4.11.3. determine the weight to be given to any evidence.
- 4.12. The Panel shall reach its decision as soon as reasonably practicable and shall provide a written decision within a reasonable timeframe.
- 4.13. The decision shall include:
- 4.13.1. a summary of the issues;
 - 4.13.2. findings of fact; and
 - 4.13.3. the reasons for the decision.
- 4.14. The decision must also include the contact details of the relevant Regional Rowing Council, to whom an affected party may lodge an appeal in line with Paragraph 5 below, should they choose to do so.
- 4.14. The Panel may determine the dispute and make any decision within the authority of the appointing body in line with their powers from their own constitution and disciplinary policies. Authority of a body may vary dependent on specific constitutional/disciplinary documents, but are likely to include the ability to impose:
- Formal Warnings: Verbal or written reprimands.
 - Suspension: Temporary suspension from club activities, training, or premises.
 - Expulsion: Permanent removal of membership.
 - Restriction of Rights: Removal from a club role/office, restriction of access to facilities, or limitations on volunteering/supervising.
 - Conditions/Reparation: Requiring formal apologies, compensation for damage, attendance at training, or monitoring of behaviour.
 - Interim Suspension: Suspending a member temporarily pending the outcome of an investigation.
 - Handling Vexatious Complaints: Clubs/Regional Council's may restrict contact with members who submit frivolous or malicious complaints

5. Appeal (Club-Level Matters and Regional Disputes)

- 5.1. A party may appeal the decision of the Panel as follows:

Club-Level Matter

- a) In the case of a Club-Level Matter an appeal may be made to an independent appeal panel appointed by the relevant Regional Rowing Council. The decision of that appeal panel shall be final within this Procedure and no further appeal is available.

Regional Dispute

- (a) In the case of a Regional Dispute, an appeal may be made to an independent appeal panel appointed by the relevant Regional Rowing Council. **The decision of that appeal panel shall be final within this Procedure and no further appeal is available.**
- 5.2. Notice of Appeal must be given within 14 days of receipt of the Panel's decision to the Relevant Regional Rowing Council and the opposing party. The Notice of Appeal must set out the specific grounds upon which the appeal is brought (Paragraph 5.5). The opposing party will have 14 days to respond in writing.
- 5.3. The appeal panel shall be constituted independently of the original Panel and in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 4.
- 5.4. The appeal shall ordinarily be conducted as a review on the papers, unless the appeal panel determines that an oral hearing is required in the interests of fairness.
- 5.5. An appeal may be brought on one or more of the following grounds:
 - 5.5.1. a material procedural irregularity which may have affected the outcome;
 - 5.5.2. a failure to consider relevant evidence or the taking into account of irrelevant evidence;
 - 5.5.3. bias or conflict of interest;
 - 5.5.4. that the decision was one which no reasonable panel could have reached
 - 5.5.5. that new relevant evidence has become available which could not reasonably have been provided earlier; or
 - 5.5.6. that the Panel exceeded or failed to exercise its jurisdiction.
- 5.6. The appeal panel may:
 - 5.5.1. uphold the original decision;
 - 5.5.2. vary the decision; or
 - 5.5.3. set aside the decision.
- 5.7. The appeal panel shall issue a reasoned written decision within a reasonable timeframe.

6. Inability to Constitute a Panel

- 7.1. Where a Club or Regional Rowing Council is unable to constitute a panel (or appeal panel) in accordance with this Procedure including due to conflicts of interest or lack of available individuals, the matter may be referred to British Rowing, who will appoint an independent panel.

8. Regulatory Oversight and Intervention

- 8.1. British Rowing may, at its discretion, intervene (without limitation and in any way it considers appropriate) in any matter governed by this Procedure where it considers it necessary to ensure compliance with its Rules, Regulations, Policies and Procedures.
- 8.2. Without limitation, British Rowing may:

- (a) require a Club or Regional Rowing Council to inform British Rowing of the process it has followed and/or provide documentation they hold relevant to the matter, for the purposes of review;
- (b) require a Club or Regional Rowing Council to take specified procedural steps;
- (c) refer the matter to the British Rowing Disciplinary Group for advice, recommendations, and/or to act as a mediator where appropriate;
- (d) appoint an independent person or panel to determine any stage of the dispute;
- (e) substitute (or require that the Club or Region substitutes) an alternative panel where the prescribed process cannot be followed;
- (f) set aside any procedural step which has not been conducted in accordance with this Procedure; and/or
- (g) determine the appropriate procedural route in the circumstances (where applicable).

8.3. Any panel appointed by British Rowing under this paragraph shall have the same status and powers as the panel it replaces.

8.4. Clubs and Regional Rowing Councils must comply with any direction issued by British Rowing under this Procedure.

9. Other British Rowing Regulatory Procedures

9.1. This Procedure does not apply to matters falling within the scope of the Safeguarding Regulations or Disciplinary Rules.

9.2. British Rowing may at any time determine that a matter should be dealt with under those Regulations instead of, or in addition to, this Procedure.

9.3. Where a matter is subsequently dealt with under the Safeguarding Regulations or Disciplinary Rules, British Rowing shall not be bound by any findings or outcome reached under this Procedure.

9.4. If a matter a Club-Level Matter or Regional Dispute is reported to British Rowing (in error, or due to uncertainty, for example) who determine the matter is one that should be dealt with under this Procedure, British Rowing will refer the matter back to be dealt with by the relevant entity.

9.5. Failure by a Club or Regional Rowing Council to comply with this Procedure may constitute a breach of the British Rowing Rules, Regulations and Policies and may result in action being taken under the applicable disciplinary procedures.

10. Finality

10.1. This Procedure constitutes a complete and final mechanism for the resolution of disputes within its scope.

10.2. No further appeal shall lie within this Procedure following the conclusion of the final appeal stage of each route.

- 10.3.** A matter may not be referred/reported to British Rowing solely on the basis that a party disagrees with the outcome of a decision properly reached under this Procedure.