

## **Canoe Sprint Competition Rules – 4. Boat Control:**

### **A basic guide for Boat Controllers**

A Boat Controller's job is to test the craft taking part in a competition and ensure that it fulfils the ICF requirements concerning classification.<sup>2</sup> A boat presented for measuring should be either right or wrong. By that I mean the decision has to be decisive, including the decision on the boat's sectional and longitudinal lines. The rule 8.7 is resolute regarding innovations. Boat Controllers must be up-to-date in their knowledge of all new and approved innovations which are not just limited to boats but to all equipment and clothing. If a boat is rejected at any time the decision must be referred to the Competition Committee for authorisation. There will normally be a team of controllers employed together with a number of assistants.

For the Olympic Games there are additional rules concerning the display of propaganda or advertising on all equipment (boats and paddles) and on any clothing worn or used by the athlete.

The Boat Controller must:

- be fully conversant with Articles numbered 7, 8, and 9 of the ICF Canoe Sprint Competition Rules<sup>2</sup>
- have the ability to handle people tactfully and with confidence
- demonstrate courtesy and respect
- be decisive in making decisions.

There are three occasions when the Boat Controller is required:

1. two to three days prior to the start of the competition
2. prior to embarkation of crews for the start of their race
3. on completion of each race.

The Controller should be equipped with:

- a numbered list to assign a number and record each boat checked, and a set of scrutiny record forms to list details of each team's fleet of boats checked. Controllers' process checklists for each boat
- 1100 centimetre flexible steel rule
- callipers for outside measurements or other gauges set for 5 cm, 6 cm, and 7 cm
- a 30 cm steel straight edge
- large try-square
- set of self adhesive event stickers and black or contrasting waterproof marker pen
- a microscope for checking that the surface skin of the hull is entirely clean and not porous/cellular, and wet sponges to check the hull has no water soluble substance

adhering to it. A credit card type of plastic is useful to run over a small part of the hull to check for any foreign deposit adhering to it.

- at least two electronic scales which must be certified as correct.
- the organisers may supply gauges set for 520 cm, 650 cm, 900 cm, and 1100 cm to check the maximum length requirements. However, if gauges are supplied they must be checked with a steel rule.

In the days prior to the competition teams must submit their fleet of boats for scrutiny. Teams will normally be given a time slot although some flexibility must be allowed for late arrivals. The Team Manager should accompany the team. The Chief Controller should be readily available on the arrival of each team and exchange greetings with the Team Manager. He should enquire as to the number of boats to be scrutinised and their classifications in order to manage the process with the least possible delay. Boats should be processed in groups: all K1s – C1s – K2s – C2s – K4s and finally C4s. To avoid congestion and consequential accidents, only the Team Leader, Boat Controllers and the assistants must be allowed in the scrutiny area. Team Members must be on ready to hand over their boats for checking and be available to receive them back after scrutiny.

The layout of the measuring equipment is important. The best way is to use a walk through tent to facilitate a production-line basis, checking these points:

- first, boats are measured to confirm dimensions.
- secondly, test that the hull's section and longitudinal lines are not concave, has no foreign bodies added to it, and carries no banned advertising material
- thirdly, weighed and weight added if required
- fourthly, paperwork completed and each boat assigned a unique number.

It is highly disrespectful for an official to smoke within the vicinity of the athletes.

**Measurers should have checklist detailing each measurement to be checked; this should accompany the process of each boat down the line:**

#### **Dimensions to be checked:**

- Length.
- Horizontally, the highest point of the deck is not greater than the highest point of the first cockpit. (Try-square may be needed.)
- **Kayaks** have one rudder only and placed under the hull of the boat.
- **Canoes** –
  - Minimum length of cockpit opening
  - Maximum extension of decking along the defined opening
  - Number of strengthening bars and their maximum width
  - No rudder or guiding apparatus and that the keel is straight along the length of the hull.

Caution regarding canoes – in checking the minimum length of the cockpit opening, the measurement must be taken from the point where the extension of any decking from the gunwale is reduced to 5 cm (C1 and C2) or 6 cm (C4).

## **Construction**

- Kayaks must be the sit-in type and not sit-on type (Kayak as opposed to Surf Ski).
- All horizontal and vertical sections of the hull can be flat but must not be concave. (Check with 30-cm steel straight edge.)
- The boat must not carry any advertising of tobacco or strong spirit drinks, and any other advertising material it may display must not interfere with the competitor's identification. However, there are special conditions and very strict limitations for the Olympic Games.
- The boat must not have any foreign substance added to it that may give the competitor an advantage. The surface skin of the hull must be checked with a microscope to ensure it is not porous/cellular/honeycombed.
- The boat must not contain any electric or electronic devices unless approved under Rule 8.4
- The boat must be equipped with a slot to carry a lane number.
- Check that the boat has no damage or rough parts that could cause an injury to the competitor, a rescuer, or anyone in boat control. (See the second caution below.)

Caution - Sections not being concave means they can be convex and even flat. Normally any doubtful section of the hull can be detected by eye but if necessary a 30-cm steel straight edge can be applied to look for daylight beneath which would indicate a concave surface. In such a circumstance the boat is not acceptable and authorisation must be sought from the Competition Committee.

However, most boats will have a defect in their surface somewhere, which could be construed as breaking the rules and the cheaper the construction the greater likelihood of a defect. The real point is, does the defect offer an advantage to the competitor? In such circumstance, the Controller must always refer to the Chief Controller for guidance. If the Chief Controller is not happy to accept a boat, he in turn must refer to the Competition Committee who will confirm in their experience that such a defect offers an advantage.

Caution - A boat may be legal according to the rules, but if someone is injured through contact with a damaged coaming for example (be it a rescuer or even the competitor himself), the Competition Committee and Organisers may be exposed to liability in a court of law, for a foreseeable consequence of inaction in allowing the use of unsafe equipment.

## **Weighing**

- Boats must be weighed without a lane number on their decks. There must be a slot on the aft deck to facilitate holding of a lane number.

- Before each boat is weighed a check must be made to confirm that the scales are registering nil.
- The boat must be completely dry at the first weighing including any attachments such as buoyancy which may absorb water, and have all loose fittings removed including any items that are merely lodged in the boat.
- After the above checks, weigh the boat and make a note of the reading on the process checklist.
- Add weight if necessary to bring the boat above the minimal weight requirement and make a note on the process checklist of the amount of weight added. Teams are responsible for fixing any additional weight in their boat.

## Records

From the process checklist confirm that each process has been done and then complete the records.

- Fix a self-adhesive event sticker to the deck near the left side of the first cockpit for kayaks and by the coaming on the left side of the fore deck for canoes.
- From the numbered list write the assigned number on the sticker with a waterproof marker pen.
- Complete the numbered list with the Country/Team name and classification of boat.
- Complete the scrutiny form listing and recording the Team's boats with:
  1. allocated number and Classification of boat
  2. weight of boat on presentation and any additional weight added
  3. details of any damaged area of equipment, which on inspection was considered dangerous. And, what the Team did to make it safe for handling by anyone.

Both the Chief Controller and Team Manager should sign the Team's list of scrutinised boats as being an accurate record; it is good practice if a copy of the list is given to the Team Manager.

No alteration of any boat is permitted after the first scrutiny and before the competition. The Chief Controller must retain a copy of all scrutiny lists, and the originals must be handed to the Competition Committee together with the completed assigned number record.

## Before each race

Two or more Controllers will be assigned to check each boat and crew before embarkation for the Start. Therefore, the Controllers will be required to be on duty at the embarkation pontoon at least 45 minutes before the start of the race. They will need an up-to-date start list (in addition to drinking water, sunscreen and wet weather gear); a table and chairs under shade would provide some welcome comfort. They must check:

- the sticker applied at the first scrutiny and record the assigned boat number on the start list

- that the boat has the correct lane number attached
- that the boat does not have any foreign substance added to it, which may give competitors an unfair advantage. (If in doubt, check the surface of the hull with the use of a wet sponge and a credit card type of plastic.)
- the boat does not contain any device or moving part which can be used to help propel the boat (except for approved moving seat systems)
- that each athletes accreditation matches the athlete themselves and is as listed in the programme
- that the competitors are properly attired:
  - correct Team colours and uniformity. Uniformity of a crew boat includes sleeve lengths, hats, headbands and spray covers.
  - correct competitor's personal number (as shown on the start list), worn on the competitor's back
  - they are not wearing any banned advertising material
- that no competitor is wearing an electric or electronic device such as a heart monitor unless it is a device which falls under Rule 8.4 and is compliant with it.
- for the Olympic Games each competitor's paddles must comply with the International Olympic Committee rules on advertising. (A trademark may appear only once; once on each blade is one too many.)

Ten minutes before the start-time for the race the Controller should communicate and confirm with the Competition Committee that all competitors have been checked and embarked for the race, or supply details of those boats that have failed to be checked.

### **Immediately on completion of the race**

A sheltered site should be allocated near the finish for the Boat Control where three or more boats, according to the decision of the Competition Committee, must come to have their boats checked. Ideally, the site should have a board facing the course to show competitors the lane numbers of those called to have their boats checked. Boats called must come directly to the control. Directly means just that – immediately, crews must not paddle around or indulge in any victory celebration before going to boat control. Neither must any boat re-enter the racing course after the race.

It is best if a group of at least eight assistants are employed to take the boats to be weighed from competitors as they disembark (but only if the competitor would like such assistance).

On completion of a race the Controller must:

- listen for the announcement of numbers of the boats and make a note of them
- mark the information board to show the boats required
- on receipt of the boats, ensure they are dried as much as possible inside and out, and all loose gear is removed together with the lane number
- check and make a record of the number on the sticker applied at the first scrutiny

- weigh the boat to confirm it complies with the minimum weight requirements, and make a record of the boat's actual weight.

A boat failing the Controllers' scrutiny must be held while communication is made with the Competition Committee as they may wish to satisfy themselves and make inquiries. They may wish to refer to the original scrutiny record to try to ascertain the reason for the failure, and will certainly call for the Team Manager. Communication must also be made to the Competition Committee if all is in order.

### **After the competition**

- Keep a log, writing down any significant fact including rule interpretations you may have learned.
- Discuss any incidents with experienced officials and ask questions.
- Analyse and evaluate the way you conducted your duties.

It is very important that the official acts in a professional, competent, respectful manner. There is no substitute for individual study of the Canoe Sprint Competition Rules, supplemented by discussion and experience (including lots of practise in measuring various makes of boat at home to build decisiveness), with a view to gaining competence and the trust of competitors, coaches and fellow officials.

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### **REFERENCE**

2. "International Canoe Sprint Competition Rules 2011". Publisher: The International Canoe Federation