

**N.E.I.R.A.**

**Bylaws**

*Modified January 2026*

**ARTICLE I - Title**

The name of this organization shall be the New England Interscholastic Rowing Association.

**ARTICLE II - Purpose**

1. To sponsor an annual championship Regatta for the Association.
2. To foster and encourage the sport of rowing in the schools in New

England. **ARTICLE III - Membership**

**1. Provisional Membership**

a. A single school, certified by a recognized New England academic organization, may apply for provisional membership in the NEIRA and may apply for Regular Membership under the conditions outlined below.

b. Application to the NEIRA must be made by the school administration declaring the school a "four" or an "eight" school. Schools may apply for different boat class designations for their girls and boys programs. If schools apply to change boat class designations they must remain in that designated boat class for at least 5 years. Schools may petition to change boat classes prior to the 5 years if extenuating circumstances exist. Application for membership must be made to the NEIRA before the annual meeting preceding the NEIRA Regatta. Application must include a letter from the administration of the school indicating that the sport is recognized by the school, that all competitors attend that school, and that they agree to abide by all NEIRA bylaws and regulations.

c. The duration of provisional membership shall not exceed three calendar years from the date of approval.

d. For provisional members the seeding committee will review the regular season racing prior to placement in the NEIRA Regatta.

e. Provisional members must enter at the first boat level.

f. Provisional members must also follow the provisions for regular members, outlined below, including paying dues.

**2. Regular Membership**

a. Only regular members may vote at the annual meeting.

- b. A school not attending the NEIRA Regatta for two consecutive years in the “four” or “eight” boat class may lose its membership. Such a school may reapply for provisional membership.
- c. Any crew rowing in the NEIRA Regatta is eligible for prizes in the event involved.
- d. All crews entering the NEIRA Regatta, ***whether regular or provisional members***, must race at least three different crews from the NEIRA, in three different head to head races, on three different days, in the boat class and at the level at which they intend to race at the NEIRA Regatta. (ONE OF THESE RACES MUST BE IN MAY) ***At least one of these opponents must be a regular member.***
- e. Any school intending to change boat classes must declare this intention at the annual meeting preceding the racing season.
- f. In order to maintain NEIRA membership, all schools must pay annual membership dues. A school failing to pay its annual dues will lose membership. Such a school may reapply for provisional membership.
- g. The NEIRA believes strongly in sportsmanship and that as coaches we are educators first and competitors/coaches second. Failure of programs and/or coaches to follow the guidelines on sportsmanship (appendix C) could result in that program being proclaimed ineligible by the Committee of Management for the next NEIRA regatta.
- h. Failure to comply with any of the provisions above can result in ineligibility for that year's regatta.

#### ARTICLE IV - Meeting

- 1. The Association shall hold an annual meeting in the winter of each year ***on the fourth Saturday in January***. The agenda for the meeting shall be prepared by the Committee of Management, and the Secretary shall circulate the agenda before the meeting takes place. All decisions of the Association shall be made at the annual meeting. Robert's Rules of Order shall apply at all meetings.
- 2. A school not attending the NEIRA annual meeting for two consecutive years will lose its membership. Such a school may reapply for provisional membership.

#### ARTICLE V – Committee of Management

There shall be a Committee of Management, which shall address the issues of the Association, shall meet before the Association's annual meeting, shall conduct the business of the Association, and shall be responsible for all aspects of racing of the NEIRA Regatta. There shall be eight members of the Committee, and there must be at least one who is from a boys' four program, one from a girls' fours program, one from a boys' eights program and one from a girls' eights program. Any coach at an NEIRA school is eligible to be elected. The Committee of Management may elect an “at large member” as a ninth member. The at large member may or may not be a current coach.

Terms shall be for four years, with two member's seats up for election every year. Elections are to be held at the annual meeting. Members of the Committee of Management may be reelected.

## ARTICLE VI - Officers

The officers of the Association shall be a President, a Secretary and a Treasurer. Officers will be selected annually by the Committee of Management. Officers may be re-elected.

a) The President shall preside at the annual meeting, appoint special committees, carry on the business of the Association, procure head officials for the Regatta, and approve all bills.

b) The Secretary shall collect entries and entry fees, keep the minutes of each meeting and send out notices.

c) The Treasurer shall collect and have charge of all other moneys belonging to the Association, pay all bills and make a report at each meeting of the financial condition of the Association.

## ARTICLE VII – Standing Committees

Seeding Committee members are elected every year at the annual meeting. There shall be four sub-committees, *each with three members elected for a three-year term. The terms shall be staggered so that one member of each subcommittee will be up for election at the annual meeting.*

- a) Three members for the girls' eights: a chair, and two members with broad regional representation.
- b) Three members for the boys' eights: a chair, and two members with broad regional representation.
- c) Three members for the girls' fours: a chair, and two members with broad regional representation.
- d) Three members for the boys' fours: a chair, and two members with broad regional representation.

The chair of each sub-committee is responsible for consulting with the other members of the sub-committee and informing the Regatta Director of the seeds on the Monday before the championship race. Members of the Seeding Committee may be reelected.

2. There shall be a Regatta Committee, made up of a Regatta Director and an assistant, if needed, and the President of the NEIRA. The Regatta Director and the assistant shall receive pay or compensation for their work. The amount of payment or compensation shall be determined by the Committee of Management. The Regatta Committee is responsible for the course and the running of the Regatta on race day, and members serve ex-officio on the Committee of Management. Members of the Committee will be selected every year by the Committee of Management and approved by the concurrence of members at the annual meeting. Members may be re-selected.

## ARTICLE VIII - Regattas

1. The annual Regatta shall take place on the fourth Saturday in May.
2. The annual Regatta shall be governed by the Laws of Boat Racing of USRowing, subject, however, to any rules or regulations adopted by the New England Interscholastic Rowing Association.
  - a. Crews scratching from the NEIRA regatta after the deadline of the Thursday before the final seedings for the regatta, may be penalized as follows:
    1. Disqualification from participating in the NEIRA Regatta in the next year in which you qualify after the infraction.
    2. A full member will be placed back onto Provisional membership status and allowed to petition for full membership after two years following the infraction.
    3. A provisional member will lose their provisional membership in the NEIRA and will need to reapply as a provisional member two years following the infraction.

### 3. LANE ASSIGNMENTS FOR MORNING HEATS:

In accordance with previous formal action taken by the NEIRA, the top-seeded crews in the NEIRA Regatta are to be assigned to Lane #1 for the morning heats, with the next best seed in the lane alongside the top seed and so on. In the event of a wind shift that necessitates a change in lane assignments the regatta will follow the procedure outlined below in steps #1, #2, and #3. The objective is to ensure that the top-seed will always be given the lee side of the lake in the event of excessive crosswinds on the racecourse. This procedure will be applied to the morning heats only of the NEIRA Regatta.

### LANE ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE AFTERNOON EVENTS:

For events with three heats (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> boats)

The three heat winners will be placed in lanes 1-2-3 by **random draw** and second place crews from heats will be placed into lanes 4-5-6 by random draw.

Similar procedures will be followed for petite level finals.

For events with two heats (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> boats)

The two heat winners will be placed in lanes 1-2, 2nd place crews in lanes 3-4, 3rd place crews in lanes 5-6.

In the event of a wind shift that necessitates a change in lane assignments the regatta will follow the procedure outlined below.

The procedures will be implemented as follows:

1. For the morning heats, the NEIRA office will draw up three Schedules of lane assignments, dictated by wind conditions. Schedule “A” will show all top-seeded crews in Lane 1 (or the appropriate Worcester shore lane), and Schedule “B” will show all top-seeded crews in Lane 6 (or the appropriate Shrewsbury shore lane), schedule “C” will show all top-seeded crews in the middle of the racecourse (lane 3).
2. It is agreed in advance of the Regatta that Schedule “A” will be followed for the heats, UNLESS wind conditions dictate a change to Schedule “B” or schedule “C”.

**3.** The decision to change will be made by the Regatta Committee on the recommendation of the Committee of Management. Should there be a change, it will be implemented as soon as possible and will be communicated to all coaches via text.

**4.** The new schedule will be followed for all subsequent races unless conditions change sufficiently to dictate another change. In such a case, the same procedure will be followed as outlined in (3).

**5.** For the afternoon finals, schedule “A” will place first and second boat heat winners randomly in lanes 1, 2, and 3 (the “priority lanes”). Schedule “B” will place the same heat winners randomly in lanes 6, 5, and 4. Schedule “C” (“chevron”) will place the same heat winners randomly in the middle of the racecourse (lanes 2, 3, and 4). Third and fourth boat heat winners will be placed randomly in lanes 1 and 2 for Schedule “A”, randomly in Lanes 6 and 5 for Schedule “B”, and randomly in lanes 3 and 4 for schedule “C”.

Schedule “A” will be followed, unless wind conditions dictate a change to Schedule “B”, or schedule “C”, as decided in accordance with procedures outlined in paragraph (3) above.

In the first and second boats, 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishers from the heats will be placed randomly in the three non-priority lanes. In the third and fourth boats, 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishers from the heats will be placed in the two next-priority lanes after the heat winners, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place finishers will be placed in the remaining two lanes.

Agreed to at NEIRA annual meeting 1/11/2020

**4.** Any and all substitutions of rowers or coxswains in all NEIRA regattas, including in-season races, must come up from a lower boat unless agreement has been reached between all coaches before the race.

**5.** If weather issues arise during the regatta the 2<sup>nd</sup> boat petites will be eliminated if necessary to allow time for the remainder of the finals to be completed.

#### ARTICLE IX - Eligibility

1. Eligibility of competitors to participate in the NEIRA Regatta shall be that they are full time students at the NEIRA member school for which they compete. 2. In order to compete schools must meet the following requirements: a) Schools must be current NEIRA members with all fees paid.

- b) Schools must have at least three separate races with three different NEIRA member schools. At least one must be a regular member.
- c) Schools must be USRowing members.
- d) Schools must be qualified for the regatta through appropriate seeding.

#### ARTICLE X - Amendments

The bylaws may be amended or suspended at the annual meeting of the Association by a majority of those present.

Appendix A - Principles of Seeding

Appendix B - Lane Assignments for the Finals at the NEIRA Regatta

Appendix C - Sportsmanship Guidelines

Appendix A - NEIRA Principles of Seeding

The NEIRA adopted the following Principles of Seeding in 2007.

- a) More recent races are more important than older races.
- b) The closer the race distance is to 1500 meters, the more valuable the result. All races must be a minimum of 1,200 meters to count towards seeding.
- c) Times over a given racecourse are not significant. Margins between boats are significant.
- d) Direct results are more significant than indirect results.
- e) All results are counted. A race cannot be thrown out because of additional information (i.e. crew was without a key member, crew did not handle the water well, someone had recently switched sides, etc.)
- f) Programs that do not submit their results will not gain an advantage by doing so. If information is lacking, it may hurt the crew's seeding.
- g) A program must have at least one race in May.
- h) For all races that apply to NEIRA seedings and the NEIRA regatta
  - (i) **SUBSTITUTIONS & SCRATCHES:** Coaches are responsible for ensuring relative boat rank performance in their programs (i.e., the 1st boat is the school's fastest possible crew, the 2nd boat is the second fastest, etc). In the event of an athlete's absence from the roster, coaches will shift up athletes from successively lower boats in a manner that preserves relative boat rank performance. Coaches may not scratch a higher boat while keeping lower boats intact. Any boat scratched must always be the program's lowest boat that would have raced on that day.
  - (ii) **HOT SEATING:** While coaches are encouraged to promote lower boat athletes to fill absences in higher boats whenever possible, "hot seating" is permitted to avoid scratches. When hot seating, a rower will race in their own crew and a higher-ranking crew; a coxswain will race in their own crew and, if a suitable and safe alternative is not available, may also race in another crew not more than two ranks below; adjustments to the racing schedule are permitted to accommodate this except at the NEIRA regatta. Coaches should communicate with each other as early as possible in the event of hot seating situations. Consistent with other causes for athlete absences and lineup changes, seeding committees will only consider the results of racing. If "hot seating" needs to occur at the NEIRA regatta coaches must obtain permission from the COM prior to the race.

## Appendix B - Lane assignments for the NEIRA

### ***Morning Heats:***

#### **LANE ASSIGNMENTS FOR MORNING HEATS:**

In accordance with previous formal action taken by the NEIRA, the top-seeded crews in the NEIRA Regatta are to be assigned to Lane #1 for the morning heats, with the next best seed in the lane alongside the top seed and so on. In the event of a wind shift that necessitates a change in lane assignments the regatta will follow the procedure outlined below in steps #1, #2, and #3. The objective is to ensure that the top-seed will always be given the lee side of the lake in the event of excessive crosswinds on the racecourse. This procedure will be applied to the morning heats only of the NEIRA Regatta.

The procedures will be implemented as follows:

1. For the morning heats, the NEIRA office will draw up three Schedules of lane assignments, dictated by wind conditions. Schedule “A” will show all top-seeded crews in Lane 1 (or the appropriate Worcester shore lane), and Schedule “B” will show all top-seeded crews in Lane 6 (or the appropriate Shrewsbury shore lane), schedule “C” will show all top-seeded crews in the middle of the racecourse (lane 3).
2. It is agreed in advance of the Regatta that Schedule “A” will be followed for the heats, UNLESS wind conditions dictate a change to Schedule “B” or schedule “C”.
3. The decision to change will be made by the Regatta Committee on the recommendation of the Committee of Management. Should there be a change, it will be implemented as soon as possible and will be communicated to all coaches via text.
4. The new schedule will be followed for all subsequent races unless conditions change sufficiently to dictate another change. In such a case, the same procedure will be followed as outlined in (3).

#### ***Lane assignments for races with two heats, by seeded position:***

Lane	Heat 1	Heat 2
1	1	2
2	4	3
3	5	6
4	8	7

5	9	10
6	12	11

For events with three heats:

Lane	Heat 1	Heat 2	Heat 3
1	1	2	3
2	6	5	4
3	7	8	9

4	12	11	10
5	13	14	15
6	18	17	16

***Afternoon finals:***

***As stated in ARTICLE VIII.3 above:***

**5.** For the afternoon finals, schedule “A” will place first and second boat heat winners randomly in lanes 1, 2, and 3 (the “priority lanes”). Schedule “B” will place the same heat winners randomly in lanes 6, 5, and 4. Schedule “C” (“chevron”) will place the same heat winners randomly in the middle of the racecourse (lanes 2, 3, and 4). Third and fourth boat heat winners will be placed randomly in lanes 1 and 2 for Schedule “A”, randomly in Lanes 6 and 5 for Schedule “B”, and randomly in lanes 3 and 4 for schedule “C”.

Schedule “A” will be followed, unless wind conditions dictate a change to Schedule “B”, or schedule “C”, as decided in accordance with procedures outlined in paragraph (3) above.

In the first and second boats, 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishers from the heats will be placed randomly in the three non-priority lanes. In the third and fourth boats, 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishers from the heats will be placed in the two next-priority lanes after the heat winners, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place finishers will be placed in the remaining two lanes.

## Appendix C - NEIRA Sportsmanship Guidelines

### A. Conduct of Coaches

There are endless opportunities for us as coaches to teach values and morals to the future generations. What we teach them on the water through endless hours and thousands of strokes will stay with them longer than any single win. When many of us as coaches feel the pressure to win or base their self-value on the results of teenagers in boats then it is time to get a better perspective on life. Remember we are educators first and coaches second and one should never miss an opportunity to teach. When the pictures fade and the medals dull in color and get put away in drawers, it will be what you stood for as a coach and a mentor that will be remembered and respected by your athletes not their win loss record.

Two of the distinctive aspects of the sport of rowing are its "pure" or "amateur" status and the fact that athletes generally come to our sport much later than to others and thus are less encumbered with parental investment. We are often the first models our athletes have for how to approach rowing; a healthy balance of passion and good humor; a value placed on honest effort, honestly evaluated; a high regard for all who row—regardless of for whom; an appreciation for the fairness of our competitions.

Because of the shortness of our seasons and because high school age kids improve quickly, but at differing rates, a coach must look at her/his boats every week to evaluate whether they are still ordered according to the proper speeds. It may very well be that when the boats were set on week two of the season the third boat was slower than the second boat. But, after another two weeks, this will very likely change. The coach's responsibility is to make sure that the boats are ordered correctly every week, including the final week for the NEIRA regatta.

In order to make sure that the racing at the NEIRA regatta and throughout the season is fair and competitive, the following principles of sportsmanship should be followed by all schools:

A coach's responsibility is to make sure that the 1st boat is the school's fastest possible boat, that the 2nd boat is the second fastest boat, 3rd boat is the third fastest boat, etc. Boatings should always be made based with an eye toward making the higher level boat as fast as possible.

The following is an attempt to list some boating methods that may make racing unfair and are therefore NOT acceptable. These examples could lead to unfair boatings: Boats based simply on the year the rowers are in the school. i.e. a senior boat or a freshman boat.

Crews based simply on body types. i.e., a boat of people who are all short, tall, etc. Boating a crew simply because of its ability to attend races. For example, if a competitor will need to miss a race because of a wedding, dance, or graduation, she/he should still be included in the crew where she/he belongs in subsequent races. It is not fair to one's competitors to put a first boat rower into the second boat because she/he missed one race if that move means that on race day, the

second boat will be a faster crew.

Experience – our league does not include “novice” boats as a separate category. If a fourth boat of beginners is faster than a third boat of experienced kids, it is the coach’s responsibility to make changes that would ensure that the third boat is faster than the fourth, regardless of the level of experience. Note: it is not necessary to move the whole boat up. Indeed, often it may only be a few of the rowers who need to move up to ensure that the higher boat is the faster boat.

On occasion using some of the above methods to boat crews may result in the correct speed of boats. That, of course, is fine. There is no problem to having an all senior second boat, as long as the first boat is faster and the third boat is slower. The problem arises when week after week during the season, a lower level boat outperforms a higher boat. It is the coach’s responsibility to make changes to try to have that program conform with the principle that the 1st boat is a school’s fastest, and the 2nd boat is the second fastest that the school can possibly put on the water, and on down the line. In cases where the coaches simply cannot figure out who makes a boat fastest, they must at least show good faith by trying out new combinations in races each week.

The lineups that we submit for the NEIRA program are not final. More important than having the names appear correctly in the program is to make sure that the boats from each school are the appropriate speed.

It is important to remember that a coach’s obligation is to provide for fair racing.

If the Committee of Management deems “stacking of lineups” may have occurred within a program, the issue will be investigated, and that program may be subject to disciplinary action.

## B. Conduct of Athletes

Competitors should treat each other with respect. It is important that kids learn to compete vigorously and fairly. It is inappropriate for them to “badmouth” their rivals.

On the water we should not indulge in gamesmanship. Deliberate false starts, snickering at a crew that is having trouble getting aligned, and yelling at the other crew are not acceptable behaviors.

After the races, if shirt bets have been agreed upon, the losing crew should find the winning crew and give up their shirts. If no shirt bet has been made, it is still a good idea for the losing crew to go over and shake hands with the winners. Athletes should be encouraged to spend a few moments talking with each other. Winning crews should be respectful of their opponents.

## C. Conduct in the Launch

Our races have at least one launch that follows the race. It will contain the starter/race official, who in many cases during the season will be the coach of the home program. That launch needs to be under control at all times, never waking the racing crews or getting so close to the racing boats that they may feel threatened.

It is also very important for sportsmanship reasons and so that the crews can hear any direction that the race official may need to give to them that there be no noise from the launches that follow the race.

Frequently there is a second or a third launch containing assistant coaches and spectators. These other launches must be behind the Official's launch. Spectators may not use their privileged position in launches to cheer for the crews. The launch driver should make sure that all people on board understand that shouting from a launch is a serious lapse of sportsmanship.

No coach should shout at his/her crew or at any opponent.

Launches should always make sure when returning from the finish line that they come to a dead stop when passing other crews. If they must pass through the starting zone, they must make sure that they do not wake crews racing or lining up to race.

There is a procedure for expressing displeasure with the way a race has been conducted: a crew may protest the race to the official on the water. It is not appropriate to go beyond that, to badmouth the official or the other crew.

#### D. Conduct of Spectators

Spectators should be reminded that sportsmanship requires that they cheer for their own crew but do not jeer an opponent. Although our races are often held in public places, we should all try to follow host/guest etiquette. Ultimately, it is the coaches' responsibility to monitor and, if necessary, control spectator conduct.