

AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION

# OPEN CANOE SLALOM

## Racing Rules

2017

by the

**Open Canoe Slalom** Voting Committee

Michael Cook, *Chairman*  
Heather Matthews, *Northwest*  
Alan Burgmuller, *At Large-Mountain*  
Amy Hunt, *New England*  
Kevin Todd, *Northern New York*  
Eli Helbert, *Dixie*  
Art Fowler, *At Large Dixie*  
Don Beyer, *Ohio Penn-At Large*

Natalie Thomas, *Ohio Penn*  
Ruth Jaeger, *Midwest*  
Keech LeClair, *Atlantic*  
Adrian Nye, *Red River*  
Nate Lord, *Mountain*  
Steffes, *At Large-Midwest*  
Andrew Westwood, *Northern*  
Chuck Wendler, *Mid-Atlantic*

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## **Article I: OBJECT**

1. The object shall be to promote and regulate Whitewater Open Canoe Slalom Racing. Promotion and regulation shall include, but not be limited to, producing quality competition to increase skills and awareness of paddlers and spectators, encouraging new competitors and new canoeists in general, providing safe and fair racing conditions and quality recreational experiences for all involved.
2. It shall also be to coordinate whitewater open canoe racing rules with the existing National Marathon, Slalom, and Downriver Rules.
3. The official name for the annual slalom championships is the:

## **ACA Open Canoe Slalom Nationals& North American Championships**

## **Article II: SANCTIONS**

1. The annual ACA Open Canoe Slalom Nationals& North American Championships and all Regional or Divisional Championships shall be sanctioned by the Open Canoe Slalom Committee of the American Canoe Association, and shall abide by the following rules.
2. Non-championship or local races should be run in general compliance with the non-safety aspects of these rules, though some reasonable adaptations to suit local conditions may be made at the discretion of the Divisional Open Canoe Slalom chairman. Safety Standards should be strictly followed.
3. Application for race sanctioning shall be made to a Divisional Open Canoe Slalom Chairman, or to the National Open Canoe Slalom Chairman.

## **Article III: ELIGIBILITY**

1. Whitewater open canoe competition sanctioned by the ACA shall be open to amateur canoeists as prescribed by current ACA by-laws and policies.
2. Only amateur canoeists who are members in good standing of the ACA may compete in championship competitions. To be National Champion, the competitor must be a citizen of the USA or have been a bona fide resident of the USA for two years. To be divisional and/or regional champion, the competitor must be a member of that ACA Division or region.

## **Article IV: SPECIFICATIONS OF CANOES**

A whitewater open canoe is a traditional open Canadian or Indian canoe which is a boat with ends pointed and higher than the middle, symmetrical side-to-side, and propelled with single bladed paddles.

There will be two categories of canoes. They shall be known as Recreational (REC) and Racing (RAC). Canoes of the Racing classifications are built and used with racing as the primary intent, whereas Recreational canoes are built and used primarily for recreation. The Recreational classes are included so that a large number of whitewater paddlers can race without investment in special equipment. It must be emphasized that National Championship race classes exist for both. The REC Classes are intended to include canoes sold for general recreational use. A recreational canoe must be or have been a commercially available, general production model to qualify for REC Classes. Recreational and Racing canoes can be made of any hull material. Recreational canoes shall be defined by their weight: they shall weigh at least 3 pounds per foot of length plus 6 pounds. There is no minimum weight requirement for racing canoes. A Recreational canoe may be used as a Racing canoe. Cutting down the hull of a Recreational canoe is allowed provided the ends remain higher than the center.

X-CLASS CANOES are experimental canoes. X-class canoes can be any length, width, or weight, made of any material, and made by any manufacturer. Combined length of both decks cannot be more than 46 percent of canoe length ( 54% of canoe length must be open). Decks

cannot be longer than 36 inches measured from the end of the hull, or closer than 24 inches to the center of the canoe.

Center depth must be 14 inches or greater. Ends of the canoe can be lower than the center of the canoe but cannot be less than 12 inches high. Tumblehome (measured from the outside of the hull to the inside of the inwale or cockpit) cannot exceed 5 inches within the center 12 inches of the canoe, and cannot exceed 3 ½ inches at the ends of the open area. The inwale must taper uniformly from the center to the ends of the open area.

The boat must be open below any possible gunwales or decks (excluding air chambers, which are allowed under possible decks but are prohibited elsewhere). Flotation extending beyond any possible decks will be in accordance with Open Canoe Slalom flotation rules.

Asymmetry of the canoe, front to back or side to side, is allowed, but additions to the exterior of the hull such as fins or rudders are not allowed.

Rodeo canoes that meet the specifications for open-canoe rodeo competition are allowed in the X-class. However, canoes that meet current specifications of either REC or RAC canoes are not allowed to enter the X-class.

- 1. Width:** There are no restrictions regarding canoe width or canoe width/length ratios.
- 2. Weight:** For safety and economy, canoes shall meet minimum weight requirements. This weight includes all permanent fixtures and all flotation used for the race, but does not include paddles, containers, unattached portage yokes or other removable equipment. Legal fixtures or flotation may be added to bring a canoe up to the required weight.

RAC Category : no minimum weight requirement

REC Category: 3 pounds per foot of length plus 6 pounds

- 3. Depth** shall not exceed 16.5 inches at a point within one foot of the center hull length, measured vertically from the highest point to the outside bottom, not including a keel. The gunwale shall form a smooth curve or series of compound curves.
- 4. Width of the gunwale and tumblehome** shall not exceed 3.5 inches (plus or minus 1/4<sup>th</sup> inch), measured horizontally from the extreme outside of the hull or outwale to the inside of the inwale.
- 5. Width of the outwale** shall not exceed 1.5 inches measured horizontally from the adjacent hull to the outside of the outwale. Width of the inwale shall not exceed 1.5 inches measured horizontally from the adjacent hull to the inside of the inwale except where it merges into or is under possible decks.
- 6. Length of decks:** Combined length of both decks cannot be more than 46 percent of canoe length (54 % of canoe length must be open). Decks cannot be longer than 36 inches measured from the end of the hull, or closer than 24 inches to the center of the canoe. No part or attachment of the deck may extend more than one inch above the canoe's gunwale.
- 7.** There shall be no devices to remove water other than bailing scoops or sponges.
- 8.** There shall be no devices to assist portaging other than carrying yokes, pads, tumplines, and bow and stern lines.
- 9. Flotation** is used to protect the paddler, the equipment, safety personnel and bystanders who may offer assistance, yet should not be so excessive that the open canoeing tradition is compromised.  
There must be enough permanent flotation (air bags excluded) to float the canoe horizontally if the canoe is full of water. Flotation shall be no more than six inches from the centerline of the canoe, except in tandem canoes where a center bag is allowed. Side flotation may be installed under possible inwales (maximum 1.5" thickness). Flotation shall not be arranged to impede the flow of water toward the bottom of the canoe. Airbags that extend beyond possible decks, or

center bags in tandem canoes, must be deflated such that the entire top surface of the bags remains below the inwales. Air bags under decks can be inflated up to the deck.

As of,

**10.** The canoe shall not be covered by any device or material other than normal seats, thwarts, decks and flotation as limited above.

**11.** There shall be no attachment to the exterior of the hull between the waterline and the gunwale other than safety lines or grab loops.

**12.** Safety lines of at least ¼ inch diameter and 6 feet of length, or grab-loops made of rope of at least ¼ inch diameter (or webbing ½ inch wide or wider) that an average adult hand can easily slip into shall be attached to each end of the canoe.

**13. Length of canoes** is measured along the centerline of the hull. Official lengths are as follows:

**REC Category**

OC-1 any length

OC-2 any length

**RAC Category**

OC-1 any length

OC-1 at least 13 feet

OC-1 at least 15 feet

OC-2 any length

OC-2 at least 15 feet

**14.** It is not permissible to make the boat meet the required dimensions by the addition of taped-on extensions or by similar means. The boat should be designed to and remain within, the required dimensions. To be permissible, corrections must be of a permanent nature except where applied to repair damage during an event, and must in no case constitute a potential safety hazard.

**15.** Competitors who have personal sponsors may display commercial publicity on their boats and accessories.

**Article V: MEASURING**

**1.** Conformity to the specifications is necessary for a safe and fair race. It is the responsibility of paddlers to race a canoe which conforms to specifications. Measurements will be made by the chief boat measurer or other experts designated by the chief boat measurer. Measurement will be made by a combination of instruments and experienced "look and feel".

**2.** All canoes competing in national and regional championships must be measured and marked prior to the start of competition during times specified by the race committee. Spot checks may be made at any time during and after the competition at the discretion of the race officials. At divisional championships, measuring will be at the discretion of the race officials.

**3.** Any canoe failing to comply with the official specifications shall be disqualified and not allowed to start the competition.

**4.** When using instruments, all measuring shall be to the closest 1/8 inch or pound of weight. Marginal decisions shall be determined by judgment of whether the difference gains the competitor any appreciable advantage over others. All final determinations will be made by the chief boat measurer.

**Article VI: CLASSES OF COMPETITION (AWARDS)**

All classes on the class list (page 6) will be offered at the annual national slalom competition. Any class with one or more entries will be run. Championship Open Canoe Slalom awards shall be presented to all competitors (regardless of nationality) as follows: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place awards are given when there are three or more competitors in a class; 1st and 2nd place awards are given if there are two in a class; a 1st place award is given if there is one in a class. A "U.S. National Champion" title shall be awarded to the top placing U.S. Citizen, or legal U.S. resident of at least two years, in each class having four or more U.S. entries. No class will be combined with any other class to attain a larger class size. Awarding

participation certificates to Youths and Juniors is at the discretion of the race organizer. An overall Men's and Women's National Champion title may be awarded based on the discretion of the Committee; if awarded, the method of selection must be included on the race entry form. All modifications to the class list must be final before January 1st of the current year.

### **1. Definitions:**

**Open** a competitor of either sex and of any age.

**Youth** a competitor 16 years of age or younger as of the first day of competition.

**Junior** a competitor 18 years of age or younger as of the first day of competition.

**Senior** a competitor 25 years of age or older as of the first day of competition.

**Master** a competitor 40 years of age or older as of the first day of competition.

**Mixed** one male and one female.

**OC-1 and OC-2** Open Canoes, solo and tandem respectively.

**OC-1X** (see definition under Article IV, page 3).

### **2. Slalom Classes**

There shall be separate competition for the RAC (Racing) category, the REC (Recreational) category, and the X category. There are 26 slalom classes, all eligible for championship awards.

#### **RACE CATEGORY (RAC)**

OC-1 15-ft. Open, Masters

OC-1 13-ft. Open, Women, Masters

OC-2 15-ft. Open, Mixed

OC-1 Open, Women, Masters, Junior (any length)

OC-2 Open, Women, Masters, Mixed, Youth/Senior, Junior (any length)

#### **X-CATEGORY (any length)**

OC-1X Open

#### **RECREATIONAL CATEGORY (REC) (any length)**

OC-1 Open, Women, Masters, Masters Women

OC-2 Open, Women, Masters, Mixed

### **3. Combined Classes (CM)**

Combined classes must use the same paddler(s) and canoe for both the slalom and downriver parts of the race. The hull may not be altered in any way and outfitting may be neither added nor removed. Using different paddles is permitted. The slalom portion will be run in two heats; downriver in one heat. There are 8 classes in the Combined event, all eligible for championship awards.

#### **COMBINED CATEGORY (Slalom-Downriver) (any length)**

OC-1CM Open, Women REC and RAC

OC-2CM Open, Mixed REC and RAC

**A competitor is not permitted to enter more than a total of seven classes at the Open Canoe Slalom Nationals, and no more than three classes on any one day.** A competitor may enter any combination of solo or tandem classes, or any combination of REC or RAC classes.

### **Non-championship classes**

A non-championship Citizens Race shall be held at the annual national slalom competition. A Citizen is defined as a person who has never raced in our annual national slalom competition before or has never placed 1st, 2nd or 3rd in the Citizens Race at two previous annual national slalom competitions. This event is open to any nationality, and Citizens awards will be presented to 3 places. Citizens Race classes will consist of OC-1 Open, OC-1 Women, OC-2 Open, and OC-2 Mixed.

Additionally, there shall be an optional Team Event at the annual national slalom competition, with 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place awards presented if 3 or more teams enter. Conducting this race, however, is at the race organizer's discretion, and if the event is included in the schedule of events it shall be announced on the race application form.

4. A paddler is permitted to race in the same class for both the RAC and REC categories at the same National or Divisional event. However, no paddler may race twice in the same class and thereby compete against herself/himself.
5. Special classes may be formed at the discretion of the organizers of non-championship races when demand for them is sufficient.
6. New classes may be formed as follows: A Open Canoe Slalom Committee member submits a request for a new class to the Open Canoe Slalom Chairman by September 1. The request consists of the definition and motivation for the class followed by endorsing signatures of five other ACA members. If the proposal is approved by the National Open Canoe Slalom Committee, the class becomes a trial class for the next two Nationals (and, optionally, Divisionals). Open Canoe Slalom Championship awards will not be presented for trial classes, but other awards should be arranged by the race committee. If 5 or more boats race the trial class in each of the two trial years, the class then becomes permanent.
7. Any class, trial or permanent, in which 5 boats have not raced for each of 2 consecutive years may be dropped as a class for subsequent years by a vote of the National Open Canoe Slalom Committee in November.
8. Specifications of canoes can be modified, including changes that effect existing classes, based on a majority vote of the representatives of the Open Canoe Slalom Committee.

## **Article VII: COURSE AND SCHEDULE REQUIREMENTS**

The course shall be of sufficient difficulty to test the whitewater ability of the paddlers.

1. A **slalom race course** should be set such that the best paddlers in most classes have a reasonable chance of making a clean run. The Open Canoe Slalom Chairperson shall appoint a representative to review, test and approve the course. The course must be approved prior to the opening of the course for official training. Additional information is presented in Article XVIII.
2. The **schedule of events** shall be as follows: There must be at least 3 days allocated, including one day for practice and two days for racing. The slalom classes should be divided into two or more days of competition.

## **Article VIII: ORGANIZATION OF COMPETITION**

The Open Canoe Slalom Committee will appoint the Chief Judge, who will act as the representative of the Committee and see that the races are run in accordance with these rules, and to the satisfaction of the Open Canoe Slalom Committee. All Competitions shall be under the jurisdiction of a race Chairperson and a Race Committee, approved by the Chairperson of the sanctioning body. It shall be their responsibility to supervise the competition for which they are appointed, by enforcing the paddling rules and performing the following duties:

1. Publish at least five weeks in advance of the date set for such race, suitable notices announcing the title, site, date, programs of events including eligibility of entrants, address where entries and fees will be received, distance of each event, entry fee, type and class of canoes to be used, closing time for receipt of entries, name of sponsor and name of sanctioning body.
2. Appoint the officials as prescribed in Article IX.
3. Provide all physical equipment necessary for the race.
4. Supervise the laying out and marking of the race course, and certify to the sanctioning body the accuracy of the courses.
5. Authority to investigate the eligibility of any contestant, irrespective of the entering of any protest, and if the circumstances so justify, the Race Committee is empowered to refuse entry.
6. A race headquarters shall be established at some convenient location to post information about the events, such as time schedules, maps, lists of competitors, and race times and places. Headquarters should be staffed for at least 3 hours per day from two days before the first race until the day of the last race.
7. Protests - See Article XX.
8. Within two weeks after the conclusion of the race, render to the sanctioning body a complete report, covering the finances for each event, the name and position of each paddler. Such report shall contain a statement of any protest lodged with the Committee and the decision rendered. A final financial report must be sent to the sanctioning body three weeks prior to the next annual National Congress.
9. Within one month after the conclusion of competition, forward the names and positions of all competitors to all race participants.
10. The Race Committee shall see that proper provisions are made for the presentation of the awards to the contestants.
11. Because of seasonal differences in river flows at potential race sites across the country, the Open Canoe Slalom Nationals may take place at times other than the mid-summer period.
12. Open Canoe Slalom members should solicit bids for the Nationals event so that they may be discussed at the paddlers meeting 2 years before the actual event. A bid consists of a formal letter from the local organization with an appendage containing as much of the information listed in Article X as is known at the time. The National Open Canoe Slalom Committee shall make the site selection in November and publicize the decision by January, roughly 18 months before the actual race.
13. If, in case of extreme conditions, the race cannot be properly held at the published site, the National Open Canoe Slalom Committee may move the race to any course on which it has been held in the last 10 years. If such action is taken, the decision must be made at least one week before the first scheduled event with all necessary new information available at the national office of the ACA.
14. In extreme circumstances at the race site, race rules may be temporarily altered by a decision supported by a majority vote of the competitors attending the competitors meeting or by a majority vote of the National Open Canoe Slalom Committee present at the race plus the Race Chairperson and Chief Judge.

#### **Article IX: DUTIES OF OFFICIALS**

Officials shall be appointed by the open canoe slalom Chairperson and his/her designees. Depending on the availability of personnel, an individual may have more than one official capacity.

1. The ***Race Chairperson***, who is also the Chairperson of the Race Committee, appoints the Jury and other officials (with the exception of the Chief Judge) as needed to assure the smooth execution of the race. The Race Chairperson shall arrange for the prerace meeting(s) to advise racers regarding safety and scheduling of the races.

2. The **Chief Judge** is appointed by the Open Canoe Slalom Chairman. He/she is responsible for the correct running of the race in accordance with these rules. He/she interprets these rules, and has the right to disqualify or grant a rerun. He/she is the chairman of the Jury.

3. The **Competition Secretary** or **Recorder** shall be responsible for recording the results and preparing the list of all contestants. He/she shall keep the minutes of the proceedings of any protest.

4. The **Starter** decides all matters concerning the start of the races, and is alone responsible for decisions as to false starts. His/her decision is final. He/She can refuse to start a competitor if the latter:

- a. Fails to follow the safety rules;
- b. Fails to appear at an assigned start time;
- c. Appears without a correct number bib;
- d. Fails to follow the Starter's orders; or
- e. Appears in a canoe that has not been measured and marked.

5. The **Chief Gate Judge** shall be responsible for the hanging and judging of gates for slalom competition. He/she also oversees the duties of the Gate Judges including seeing that all judging stations are manned and that the Gate Judges are properly instructed in their duties.

6. The **Gate Judges** shall judge the negotiation of gates in accordance with these rules. Each judging station shall be manned by at least two Gate Judges. A single judging station may judge several gates provided all may be clearly seen. Gate judges should refrain from communicating with competitors in any way other than their official capacity.

7. The **Finishing Line Judge** shall note the order in which the competitors have passed the finishing line, and must rule on disqualification for crossing the line capsized.

8. The Race Chairperson shall appoint a **Jury/Protest Committee** of 3 or 5 members. The Chief Judge shall be the chairman of the Jury. The Jury controls the correct running of the slalom, receives any protests concerning the non-observance of these rules, and ultimately decides in the event of disagreement on the interpretation of these rules. The decisions of the Jury shall be guided by these rules insofar as possible, but it must also decide on all matters arising during the race which are not covered herein. The Jury can disqualify a competitor for all or part of the race. A member of the Jury must not vote in a decision involving classes in which he/she competes.

9. **Timekeepers** are responsible for noting the time and bib numbers. At National and Regional Championships they must employ both a primary and back-up timing system.

10. The **Measurer** shall supervise the measuring of canoes.

11. The **Safety Officer** shall have overall responsibility for safety measures. Assisted by his/her team and according to the circumstances, shall do his/her utmost for the rescue of competitors who have capsized and do not refuse assistance, and shall make a reasonable effort to recover their equipment.

## **Article X: INVITATIONS**

1. The invitation and entry form should be distributed at least five weeks prior to the entry deadline. The invitation should include the following information.

- a. Time and place of competition.
- b. Description of course, including water conditions and degree of difficulty.
- c. Classes to be run and eligibility requirements.
- d. Sequence and approximate starting times.
- e. Safety measures to be taken.
- f. Address to which entries should be sent and amount of fee.
- g. Last date for entries to be postmarked.
- h. Whether late entries will be accepted and conditions.
- i. Time and place for drawing of starting positions.
- j. Limitations on entries, if any.

- k. Nature of awards to be given.
  - l. Required work assignment for competitors, if any.
  - m. Regulation on training runs.
  - n. Whether meals, camping, or other accommodations are available including public transportation and driving directions.
  - o. Schedule of events, (including water releases, boat measuring, meetings, etc.).
  - p. Statement to be signed by competitor(s) releasing the race organizers from liability during the race and an agreement that the competitor(s) will abide by the ACA Whitewater Open Canoe Slalom Racing Rules.
  - q. Special information for the handicapped.
  - r. Any other information as deemed necessary.
2. In the event that an entry is rejected, notice of rejection (with reasons for the latter), shall be sent by mail to all affected competitors. Withdrawal of an entry for good cause prior to the registration deadline, or cancellation of the race by the Organizers, should result in at least a partial refund less an amount to be held by the Organizers to cover handling costs. At the discretion of the Race Chairman, alteration of entries may be accepted prior to the close of late registration. No entry may be altered after late registration has closed.

#### **Article XI: INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPETITORS**

Each competitor shall receive instructions before the beginning of the competition concerning the following:

1. detailed information on the courses and their markings
2. starting time, interval and order
3. finishing time
4. starting time and procedures
5. competitors racing number
6. safety procedures

It is particularly important to cover any late changes in the course, hazardous spots, or gates to be omitted by some classes. Competitors may ask questions about the course or the operation of the race. Additional meetings may be held as deemed necessary by the Race Chairman. Information presented at these meetings shall be made available to competitors excused from the meeting by a race official.

#### **Article XII: DISQUALIFICATIONS**

1. Any competitor who attempts to win a race by other than honorable means, or who breaks the racing rules, or who disregards the honorable nature of the racing rules shall be disqualified.
  2. Should a competitor have completed a run in a canoe which is shown upon inspection to not comply with these rules, the Race Chairperson shall take appropriate action which may include disqualification.
  3. Slalom Classes: Competitors can change boats between first and second runs in slalom classes as long as the boat qualifies for the class. For tandem slalom classes, the same competitors must compete for both runs.
- Combined Classes: The same boat and competitors must be used for the entirety of the race for the Combined classes; this means both slalom runs of the Combined as well as the downriver run. For the Combined tandem classes, if one team member drops out or if the canoe becomes unusable and beyond repair, the team and canoe are disqualified.

4. No supplies, provisions, or equipment may be picked up or intentionally discarded along the course.
5. No assistance along the race course is permitted. Paddlers receiving assistance will be disqualified.
6. Any competitor who shall fail to remain on the marked course as outlined in advance by the race organizer, or who makes a portage or portages not marked as mandatory or optional shall be disqualified, regardless of advantage gained.
7. Failure to perform a work or safety assignment could entail disqualification for the entire race.
8. Deliberate misrepresentations on an entry form or in statements to Officials will result in disqualification from the category involved or from the entire race, depending on their nature. Except as required above, the Race Chairperson and Chief Judge may disqualify a competitor from a single or from both heats in a class, or from an entire race, depending on the nature of the infraction.

#### **Article XIII: MEANS OF PROPULSION**

1. Open canoes shall be propelled solely by means of single bladed paddles.
2. The paddles may not be supported on the boats in any way.
3. If a competitor loses or breaks a paddle, only a spare carried on the boat from the start of the heat may be used in its place.

#### **Article XIV: STARTS**

Canoes must be started singly as determined by the Race Committee.

#### **Article XV: OVERTAKING**

1. In the downriver segment of Combined competition, it is the duty of the overtaking canoe to keep clear at all times of the boat being overtaken. However, the boat being overtaken is not allowed to alter its course to create difficulties for the overtaking canoe.
2. In Slalom and the slalom segment of Combined, the normal procedure is for Gate Judges to whistle over the overtaken boat and permit the overtaking boat free passage. The Judge must ensure that the interrupted run is not resumed so soon as to cause immediate problems for the overtaking boat. On rare occasions, the overtaking boat may be whistled over and held, allowing the overtaken boat unobstructed passage. Generally, this only occurs when the overtaking boat is running essentially out of control and missing a large number of gates.

#### **Article XVI: FINISH**

The finishing line is reached when any part of the upright canoe with paddlers in it crosses the finish line. All finish times should be rounded to the nearest tenth of a second. Except when a class was started en mass and a winner can be ascertained by visible means, finish times which are the same after rounding result in a tie. A competitors time is complete when he crosses the finish line. the competitor may not cross the finish line more than once.

#### **Article XVII: SAFETY**

1. All competitors must wear:
  - a. U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices (life jackets) or the equivalent over-the-shoulder type.
  - b. hard-shelled head protection.
2. It is the responsibility of each contestant to stop racing and assist other competitors in serious personal danger. Failure to do so shall result in lifelong disbarment from Open Canoe Slalom racing.
3. Any boat withdrawing from the race must notify the officials as soon as possible.

4. The organizers shall make every effort to provide other safety measures according to the difficulty of the course and the experience of the paddlers. Safety boats and/or other safety measures shall be provided along the course. A sweep boat shall be provided for the downriver portion of the Combined classes.
5. Every reasonable measure must be taken to remove any disabled boats or equipment obstructing the course.
6. Safety personnel should not assist contestants if the latter specifically refuses help. However, once assistance has been accepted, the competitor(s) is automatically disqualified and should be listed as a DNF even if the competitor(s) continues on to the finish line.
7. Competitors must at all times be in a position to free themselves immediately from their boats.

## **Article XVIII: SLALOM COMPETITION**

**1. Bib Numbers.** Numbered bibs shall be provided by the organizers. They shall be fixed to the body of the competitor in such a manner that they can be seen clearly. In tandem canoes, the bow paddler must wear the number. Each competitor is responsible for his/her bib number. The number should be unique for each boat and must not be reused by another competitor, or by the same competitor in another class at the same race. The numerals must be at least 6 inches high and have a line width of at least 1/2 inch.

### **2. The Course.**

a. The course for National Championships should be designed to encourage participation by a broad range of competitors, and as such should be only moderately challenging to the top competitors in order to give those mid-range competitors a reasonable opportunity to negotiate most of the gates. The difficulty of the course should take into account the fact that there are many categories for women, juniors and masters as well as both tandem and solo canoes. (see Article VII).

b. The course shall have maximum length of approximately 450 yards measured from the start to the finish line. As far as possible it should contain natural and artificial hazards, such as current, eddies, rapids, rocks, bridge piers, etc. It should contain at least 20 (non-championship courses may reduce this number) and not more than 25 gates, of which at least five are upstream gates. No gate shall be closer than 10 yards to the finish line. The finish line must be clearly marked on both sides and must be downstream of the final gate.

c. The Organizers are advised to design the course in such a manner that smooth and continuous runs may be expected from the better paddlers in all categories at the level of skill for which the competition is intended. Excessive crisscrossing should be avoided, and the gates must not be so close together as to impair negotiation or judging. Reasonable balance between left- and right-handed moves and gate widths must be provided. The course must be navigable throughout, without excessive hazard to life, limb, or equipment. The logical approach and negotiation of a gate must not be unduly hindered, such as by an isolated submerged rock or other obstruction. The ideal course should include reverse maneuvers. The final course layout must be approved by the Chief Judge prior to the start of official training.

### **3. Marking and Hanging Gates**

a. The gates consist of two suspended poles painted with five green and five white rings for downstream gates, and five red and five white rings for upstream gates, with the bottom rings always being white. Gates flush to the current may be either red or green, whichever seems more appropriate in each instance. The width of the gates is 47 inches (1.2m) minimum, and 11'6" (3.5m) maximum, measured between the poles. The poles must be round, at least 6 ft long, 1 1/2 in. to 2 in. in diameter, and of sufficient weight that motion caused by the wind is not excessive. The lower ends of the poles should be a minimum of 6 in above the water, and the poles must not be put in motion by the water. Gates must be numbered in the order of negotiation. The gate

number panels must measure 12 in. x 12 in. The numbers must be painted on both sides of the panels, black on a yellow or white background, and must be at least 8 in. high and have a line width of 1/2 in. On the side of the panel opposite the direction of correct negotiation, a diagonal red line is painted, bottom left to top right.

b. The gate supports should not be placed so high as to permit excessive motions due to the wind. If such placement is unavoidable, a second crossbar and/or additional strings should be used to stabilize the gate.

c. The course must be the same for both heats as nearly as practicable. Gates and gate poles should not be changed after competition has begun unless to restore the course to its original condition. Such changes may only be made under the direction of the Chief Gate Judge.

d. Use of single pole gates shall be allowed. The maximum number of single pole gates shall not exceed 25% of total gates.

#### 4. Negotiation of Gates

a. For the purpose of these rules the following definitions apply:

The Gate Line is an imaginary line drawn between the tips of two poles at any instant, whether they are hanging straight down or have been brought into motion by wind or contact. An imaginary extension of a pole may be needed to define the gate line in some cases involving large motions.

The Head of a competitor means the head only. Hands, arms, and torso are not considered in this context.

The Start Line is considered to be equivalent to a gate.

A Live Gate is any gate that is still subject to penalties.

A Dead Gate is one for which negotiation is completed (Section 4). No additional penalties can be charged on a dead gate.

b. All gates must be negotiated in numerical order, each in accordance with the direction established by the correct side of the number panels. Any boat presentation (forward, reverse, or broadside) is correct.

c. Negotiation of a gate begins when the head crosses the gate line.

d. Negotiation of a gate is **completed** when the negotiation of any subsequent gate begins or the finish line is crossed.

e. A gate is determined to have been **left out** when negotiation of any subsequent gate begins or the finish line is crossed. To clarify, if gate 2, for example, is merely touched before negotiating gate 1 (i.e., the head does not cross the gate line), gate 1 is not "left out." Gate 2, however, receives a 10 second penalty and gates 1 and 2 remain live and legal to negotiate.

f. Negotiation of a gate is **correct** when the head of the competitor (in tandem canoes, both competitors) in an upright boat has crossed the gate line in the correct direction, and the boat has continued through, either onward, or sideward, and left the gate line.

g. Negotiation of a gate is **faultless** when, in addition to being correct, neither pole has been touched by a body part of the competitor, (in tandem canoes, both competitors), the boat, or paddle and negotiation of the gate is completed.

h. When attempting to move through an upstream gate, a competitor is allowed to repeatedly move up and back across the gate line without penalty.

#### 5. Judging (penalties)

a. Penalties are not cumulative at a single gate. Penalties may be incurred at any time until negotiation is completed. If more than one infraction occurs, only the one highest penalty is assessed. All gates are scored 0, 10, or 50 as follows:

No penalty - Faultless negotiation.

10 second penalty - Correct negotiation, but touching one or both poles, any number of times.

50 second penalty - Gate left out or touched but not negotiated.

50 second penalty - Intentionally pushing aside pole in an attempt to lessen a penalty. This penalty is assessed only if the intentional pushing materially affects the negotiation of the gate. It is not judged an intentional push when the body and boat of the competitor was already in a position in which it would have clearly negotiated the gate.

50 second penalty- Negotiation of a gate in the direction opposite to that indicated by the number panel. This penalty is assessed if the body of the competitor (in a tandem canoe either competitor) crosses the gate line from the wrong side.

b. Interpretations

Passing of the boat underneath a pole without touching (undercutting or sneaking) is not penalized.

In all doubtful or borderline cases, the competitor is given the benefit of the doubt and the lower penalty. In particular, if a Judge is in doubt as to whether movement of a pole was caused by contact or by a water splash, no penalty for a gate touch may be given.

Repeated touching of the pole(s) of a single gate is only penalized once.

## **6. Capsize**

If a competitor leaves his boat he/she is disqualified for that heat. In order to avoid confusing Gate Judges, he/she must immediately remove his bib number and leave the course in the most expeditious manner.

## **7. Heats**

A slalom is run in two heats, the better of which counts as the final result. Where a competition is held on uncontrolled water, both heats in a category should be on the same day.

## **8. Interference**

a. If a competitor has been interfered with by another boat, he/she may be granted a rerun by the Chief Judge. To merit a rerun, interference must be substantial and unavoidable, presenting a material impediment to the course.

b. Contact usually, but not always, is interference.

c. Lack of contact usually, but not always, is not interference.

d. Intentionally altering course to initiate contact where it could have been avoided, or other unsportsmanlike conduct in attempting to create interference to obtain a rerun will not be tolerated, and could result in disqualification.

e. Normally a rerun will be granted only to the overtaking boat. Only under highly extenuating circumstances would a rerun be granted to the overtaken boat (for example, see Article XV.2) or to both boats. Extra care must be taken to ensure that no overtaking occurs during a rerun.

f. If the competitor **starts** a rerun, the score for the original run is canceled and may not be considered for placement or listed in the results.

## **9. Dead Heat**

In the event of two or more competitors obtaining the same result, their order shall be decided by the better of the two non-counting runs. If this again produces a dead heat, both competitors or teams shall be given the same placing.

## **Article XIX: DETERMINING THE RESULTS**

## **1. Slalom Races**

In Slalom races, the score is a combination of elapsed time and penalties for gates missed or poles touched upon the course. For calculation of results, the following formula applies:

Time (expressed in seconds) + Penalties = Score

Example of an individual result:

Time elapsed 2 min, 20.8 sec = 140.8 seconds

Penalties 10 + 10 + 50 + 10 = 80.0 seconds

Total Score = 220.8 seconds

## **2. Combined Races**

Scoring for combined classes will be performed in the following manner.

- a. Express all event results in seconds. Slalom is scored as in Article XIX, Section 1 and Downriver is scored by time from start to finish.
- b. For each event, calculate each competitor's score as the percentage of the fastest time for the class, (competitor's time/fastest time in class) X100. The competitor(s) with the fastest time(s) get a score of 100 points.
- c. Add the scores for the two events.
- d. Low score for each class wins.

## **Article XX: PROTESTS**

A Jury/Protest Committee must be appointed by the Race Chairperson with the approval of the sanctioning body.

1. A protest during a competition must be addressed to the Race Chairperson not later than one hour after completion of the race. If protests involve a violation of the rules, the Chairperson may decide; if the protest involves interpretation of the rules, said protest must be referred to the Protest Committee.
2. A late protest shall be referred to the Race Chairperson of said race, in writing not later than 10 days following the completion of the race, and accompanied by a fee of \$10.00. If the protest is upheld, the fee is returned to the protester.
3. Competitors have a right to appeal to the National Open Canoe Slalom Committee a decision of the Protest Committee within 30 days from the announcement of said decision.
4. A protest concerning the right of a competitor to participate must be handed to the Race Chairperson, not later than one hour before the start of the competition. A protest against the right of a competitor to participate may be lodged with the National Open Canoe Slalom Committee within 30 days after the competition if it is based on facts which became known later than one hour before the start of the competition.

## **Article XXI: AMENDMENTS**

1. These rules are to be in effect beginning January 1 of the year following adoption. These rules and regulations may be amended only by a majority vote of the National Open Canoe Slalom Committee. The complete proposed amendment(s) must be submitted to the Chairman of each Division for discussion at least three weeks prior to the date on which the National Open Canoe Slalom Committee will take final vote thereon.
2. The National Open Canoe Slalom Committee may issue interpretations and supplementary rulings on questions as they arise. Such rulings shall take effect immediately upon publication, and shall be noted within the body of the rules.

**3.** Any changes in the gate hanging, negotiation or judging rules by the NSWC will not automatically be incorporated into these rules. Any such changes must be reviewed by the National Open Canoe Slalom Committee or its designees and upon receipt of recommendations the Open Canoe Slalom National Committee may incorporate, modify or reject those changes.

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