

Minutes for MPSRA Spring Regatta Wrap-Up Meeting
6/10/08

In Attendance: Travis Gardner (Andover High), Daniela Fairchild (Malden), Sarah (Malden), Pam Krause (Shrewsbury), Russ Krause (Shrewsbury), Joel Skaliotis (Brookline), Rick Stavros (Worcester), Brian (Wayland-Weston), Gillian Curran (Boston Latin), Will Stevens (Board), John Sisk (Brookline), Kathleen (Somerville), Ted Jenkins (Belmont), Dale Wickenheiser (CRLS), Jen Bauer (Lowell), Kendra Bauer (Lowell)

Agenda

- I. Coaches' Feedback on Spring Regatta
 - II. Organizers' Comments on Spring Regatta
 - III. Notes for next year's regatta
 - IV. Procedural Rules Q&A
 - V. Fall Regatta (in brief)
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- I. Coaches' Comments
 - A. Approach to dock better – no wait time (great dockmaster Jen!)
 - B. Finish line interference from spectators – needs caution tape
 - C. Stake docks for next year?
 - i. Travis looking into it w/ aid of skiers who have a slalom course on the Merrimack
 - ii. Looking for volunteer assistance (contact Travis at travis.gardner@.....)
 - iii. Concerns over feasibility with strength of current
 - D. Some concerns voiced regarding finish times – due to some difficulties, the finish orders are all correct, but some posted margins are not. This will be resolved this for next year.
 - II. Organizers' Comments
 - A. Volunteer Issues
 - i. Need **coaches** not just experienced parents
 1. Possible addition of a “Coach Volunteer” event on Regatta Central for next year – each team signs up for this with a name before the registration deadline

2. Single-coach programs must speak with regatta coordinator (Angela Ruel) beforehand if they cannot provide a coach on the day of the regatta
- ii. Many volunteers arrived after launching started this year – for next year, volunteer arrival time will be **6:30AM** – volunteers will arrive, check-in and be given instructions before the coaches/coxswains' meeting begins and will be expected to go right to their jobs at the conclusion of the meeting.

B. Registration

- i. This year to facilitate the (embarrassingly) new enforcement of the rules, hand-delivery was allowed on the day of the deadline. Next year and this coming Fall 2008, hand-delivery will not be an option. All materials will need to be postmarked by the deadline. (See Procedural Rules for deadlines)
- ii. Submission of materials will likely be primarily electronic next year (making the postmark issue smaller – signed rosters will still need to come by snail mail)

C. Officials

- i. There were a few cases of coaches arguing safety points (heel ties, etc) with the refs/dock staff. This is, clearly, unacceptable.
- ii. In general, please be nice to the refs & inform your teams/parents to do the same – they are hard to come by and do a wonderful job running the regatta. Let them cut lines & don't, under any circumstances, pester them.
- iii. Please discuss the guidelines listed in the Sportsmanship Clause with your team/parents & keep them away from the finish line officials.

D. SAFETY

- i. **An unfortunate number of crews were launched unprepared to race safely.** This is a big concern for the organizers and the refs. **It is the responsibility of the coaches to prepare crews/cox'ns for safe racing and to prevent any unprepared crew from launching.** Once they are on the water, it is an unnecessary burden on the refs to disqualify and then follow home an unprepared crew (which they must do). **Coaches should make that call before launching their own boats!**

E. Novice Discussion

- i. While most of the racing went off cleanly, there is concern over the number and depth of novice events at the regatta. Refs made a strong recommendation that many novice events be eliminated. Board is considering the options for novice events and will have a proposal by the January general meeting. Floor was opened for discussion on this topic.
- ii. Board presents option to eliminate all but 1st Novice events.
Reasoning: This is a Championship regatta; most safety concerns happened in the lower novice boats; the regatta has grown very large – if we eliminate lower novice events, there’s potential to add petite finals for some varsity events, which could do more for encouraging the sport (more teams to finals)
- iii. Joel proposes keeping the 2N as a seeded race, final only, with only the top 6 crews who submit results for the season participating
- iv. Dale suggests that as the day gets longer (more events requiring heats), some events will have to go. This would either be novice events leaving or the league goes to separate 8’s & 4’s championship (like NEIRA), possibly on different days
- v. Importance of novice crews in building up of teams is discussed – positive influence of this regatta on novice return rate
- vi. Eliminating novice events protects the coaches as much as the athletes/refs (if the safety call is placed on the coach, parental pressure to have unprepared kids racing becomes a big factor)
- vii. Travis question regarding the purpose of the regatta – either participation & experience or identification & recognition of fast boats – if the former, keep the novice events, if the latter, add petites; suggests that once the purpose is determined, the primary events should be identified and kept in – extra events (including novice, sculling or lower boats) will fill any space left over
- viii. General consensus that novice events need to be altered – Board will discuss over the next few months & bring a proposal to the league at the January meeting. Comments/Suggestions are welcome and should be emailed to will.coach@gmail.com

III. Next Year’s Regatta

- A. Seeding will be required as described in the Procedural Rules (please read through – this year was a transition year on the requirements; beginning this fall, all deadlines/requirements will be enforced)

- B. Deadlines will be strictly enforced; no crew will be allowed to race without materials submitted on time
- C. Coaches & Cox'ns meetings will be required for all crews.**
- D. Those currently holding trophies should bring them to next year's regatta (a few were missing this year) and also send a photo of each trophy to blsrowing@yahoo.com (we will put these up on the website)
- E. All information on the league & regattas will be posted on the website from now on. We will send reminders to the listserves, but it will ultimately be the coaches' responsibility to retrieve this info and to pass that responsibility on to any new coaches who come into the program. Not knowing the posted information will not be a valid excuse. Website is www.mpsra.org
 - i. Joel proposes a plan to give each team an mpsra email forwarding address – coaches would then be responsible for changing the recipient address(es) when the coaching staff changes, but this would enable us all to reach one another without knowing the names or current email addresses of other programs' coaches

IV. Procedural Rules Discussion – Highlighted Areas

- A. Will outlines formation of rules including –
 - i. Definition of Sphere of Influence
 - ii. Supporting other MPSRA schools by respecting Spheres of Influence during the seasons
- B. Scholastic v. Club v. School programs
 - i. The league doesn't want to be pure "clubs" with potentially no tie to schools, nor does it want to follow the NY Scholastics model and eliminate any programs drawing from multiple schools. (Joel)
 - ii. Sphere of Influence is the MPSRA defining a School Program, which is different than many other league definitions, but we believe has lead to much growth in the state.
 - I. Expansion of the league – 5 programs 8 years ago, 20 now! (Rick)
 - II. Increased success of league programs (5 programs to Nationals last year, 3 this year – up from none a few years ago)
- C. Conflict regarding programs drawing from the same school – what if they want to share? (Travis) Not an option; if trying to grow programs within the schools, we can't encourage athletes choosing between multiple school programs within the same school (Board)
- D. Seeding Requirement was added –

- i. to encourage the growth of programs building through the season to a Championship regatta rather than boats thrown together for one race.
 - ii. to help the seeding committee to complete their task accurately (more and more important as the regatta grows)
- E. Suggestion that guidelines for young novice (7th/8th grade) be posted on the MPSRA website to prevent potential injury to young rowers. (Rick)
- F. Missing Pieces (the rules we neglected to include in these rules) –
 - i. Sculling/Sweeps double rowing (yes between a sweeps & a sculling, no between two sweeps events)
 - ii. Where to submit a petition for participation in the league (Secretary's note: the document says "the Board" but does not specify a name/contact info since these will change with time. However, the correct contact person is the President, and all Board members' contact info is listed on the mpsra.org website)