



St Ayles Skiff International (SASI) Rules of Racing 2026

1. Guiding Principles

1.1 Racing in events held under the rules of St Ayles Skiff International is to be fair, safe, and enjoyable for all.

1.2 All participants are to show respect for each other and for officials at all times.

1.3 All participants should enjoy the spirit of the rules and strive not to test their letter.

2. Boats and Equipment

2.1 Boats taking part in races shall comply with the class rules for their class, as approved or adopted by the SASI.

2.2 Crews shall not attempt to race in a boat which is not sound and fit for its purpose.

2.3 In addition to any requirements in their class rules, whenever on the water on a race day all racing craft shall carry the following equipment:

(a) A waterproofed means of communicating with the shore (preferably a working hand held VHF radio, failing that, a mobile phone with a list of essential numbers for the event).

(b) At least two means of efficiently bailing the boat.

(c) Personal Flotation Devices (either a lifejacket or a buoyancy aid) for each crew member. These must be worn by all crew members at all times.

(d) A length of rope of at least 14mm diameter and at least 8 meters in length, securely attached to a strong point in the bow of the boat and capable of being used to tow the boat with crew.

(e) An Anchor, together with a suitable chain and line of minimum 30 metres, giving a combined minimum weight of anchor, chain and line of 7kg, all as suitable for use in the conditions and area of use.

(f) In addition it is recommended that boats carry a throwing rope; distress alerting means; space blanket for hypothermia, first aid kit, and spare woolly hat.

2.4 No commercial advertisement or company logo shall be exhibited on the hull of a boat.

2.5 If required to do so by race organisers, crews shall display a number in their bow reflecting the register number allocated by the respective National Class Association of

their geographical area, or in lieu of that by St Ayles Skiff International. The numerals shall be at least 20cm in height and displayed on a background of contrasting colour.

3. Insurance

3.1 All boats and crews taking part in events must be covered as a minimum by suitable third party insurance.

3.2 All event organisers must have suitable public liability insurance to cover the activities that they are organising.

4. Coxswain

4.1 The role of coxswain is essential for the safety of their own crew and other participants. Their role must be taken seriously and respected. On the water they are steersman and skipper of their boat. Their crew must obey orders of the coxswain, and the coxswain is the main communicator with other crews and with officials.

4.2 All coxswains shall be at least 16 years of age.

4.3 Coxswains do not require to comply with age and gender categories in the race. e.g. A female over 40 crew can have a 16 year old male coxswain.

4.4 Coxswain weight must be at least 9 stone (57.2 kg) in minimal sports clothing. It is the coxswain's responsibility to carry extra weight at their seat at all times when racing to make themselves up to this weight if necessary.

4.5 Coxswains must not contribute to forward movement of the boat by pulling or pushing on an oar.

5. Rowers

5.1 Boats must finish races with the same complement of crew as they start. Crew members must not be changed between heats and finals except with express permission in advance from the chief umpire.

5.2 Rowers in St Ayles skiffs shall use one oar each, and the craft shall be steered by a coxswain. Specific rules will be issued for other classes as they develop.

5.3 Crew members must not be secured to the craft by any part of their body (unless as a necessary and reasonable adaptation to allow a rower with disabilities to participate). If foot restraints are used, they should be easy to slip the foot out of without using hands.

5.4 Categories:

5.4.1 Age categories refer to the age of each individual rower in the boat on the first day of the regatta .e.g. in an over 40 crew, all the rowers must have passed their 40th birthday on the day the regatta starts. e.g. in an under 19 crew none of the rowers must have attained their 19th Birthday by the first day of the regatta.

5.4.2 A "Novice" Rower shall be defined as a rower who has never won a rowing race in any competition against rowers from any other club in any competition of any rowing discipline prior to the first day of the regatta.

5.4.3 A "Fresher" Rower shall be defined as a rower who has been rowing for less than a year, with no previous experience of competitive rowing in any discipline.

5.4.4 Rowers representing a "New Club" will be rowing for a club that is a member an NCA or a SASI affiliated club and has been putting crews forward for racing in up to two calendar years, or has had the status of "New Club" conferred upon it by SASI for a fixed period of time.

5.4.5 An "Intermediate" Rower shall be a rower in the season of or the first full season (January to December) after their first win in a rowing race in any competition against rowers from any other club in any competition of any rowing discipline. All rowers in an intermediate crew shall be either "intermediate" or "novice" rowers.

5.4.6 Crews racing in "mixed" category events must have at least one male rower in the crew. Not less than half the rowers at any time in the race must be female.

5.4.7 A "Second Crew" (otherwise referred to as "B" crew, where first crews are designated as "A" crews) in any open or age group category at a regatta is a crew in which no members (other than cox) are rowing at the same regatta in the same category in a 'First' crew. e.g. A mixed open second crew, will have no rowers who are also rowing in the mixed open First Crew category at the same regatta, but rowers who row in the women's or men's open First Crew category will be able to race in the Mixed Open "Second Crews" event. Except with the express agreement of the event organiser, a club will not race a "second crew" at an event unless they also race a "first crew" at that event. The expectation is that the "first crew" entered by any club will be a stronger crew than the "second crew".

5.5 The gender of a rower is the gender in which they live within their community.

6. Officials

6.1 All participants must respect and honour the officials, who are essential for safe and fair competition. Any crew not following the instruction of an umpire will be subject to disqualification.

6.2 Event organisers will appoint a referee for each day of their event, who will also take on the role of chief umpire. One umpire will be identified to act as starter. An umpire shall be identified to judge the finish. The referee will act as class measurer for the event, or may personally delegate that task to another suitable individual.

6.3 The referee must consider whether conditions are safe for racing. The referee may take local advice, and consult with crews, but has the ultimate decision as to whether racing can commence or continue.

7. Start

7.1 Start and finish lines to be at 90 degrees to the course of the race.

7.2 The start line will be between two markers. Where practical, fixed points on land should be used as transits with buoys on the water to mark the start and finish gates.

7.3 Boats must assemble on the line in their drawn positions and adjust their positions as

directed by the starter. Note: The coxswain, not the bow of the boat, should be in alignment with the start markers.

7.4 If a crew is warned to move astern twice at the start line and fails to comply they may be disqualified from that race.

7.5 If a boat is asked to come up to the line and fails to comply the starter will use his/her discretion to start the race regardless.

7.6.1 The race is started by the starter giving the command "attention" followed by the command "go".

7.6.2 As a supplementary signal a starter's flag may be raised when crews are under starter's orders, to be dropped on the command "go". The command go may also be accompanied by a horn or other sound signal.

7.7 In the event of a recall the starter will sound the horn two or more blasts and raise a red flag and recall over VHF if available.

7.8 The starter may use his/her discretion to disqualify any boat at the start line which is deemed to be trying to gain an unfair advantage, or require any boat that has false started to undertake a 360 degree turn as a penalty.

8. Course

8.1 All turning buoys must be left to starboard, unless specifically stated otherwise in race instructions.

8.2 Any boat that deliberately or carelessly impedes another's progress by changing course may be disqualified.

8.3 Overtaking boats must keep clear of the boat being overtaken. The overtaking crew must ensure that their oars do not overlap with the oars of the boat being overtaken. This also applies to boats attempting to obtain an overlap on the inside in the approach to a turn. The overtaking manoeuvre is not complete until the overtaking boat has a full boat length clear water on the boat being overtaken.

8.4 Races where more than one boat uses the same turning mark:

8.4.1 In races where more than one boat is using the same turning buoy the following international rule is adopted for rounding of a turning mark:

A zone measured as 5 boat lengths (of the boat involved) before a course turning marker and 1 boat lengths after the turning marker shall be the "Turning Zone" (Where boats of different lengths are approaching or are in the Turning Zone "boat length" shall mean the length of the longer boat involved). When two boats are within the Turning Zone, and the bow of one boat is ahead of the coxswain of the other boat (or of the rower seated nearest the stern in the case of coxless boats), the outside boat must give way during the turn. The outside boat is the one that is on the outside of the turn. A boat which does not give way or which interferes in any other way with another boat when passing a buoy or marker may be penalised by the Umpire.

8.4.2 Following boats on the outside of the turn may continue to overtake. If a leading boat takes a wide turn the following boat may turn inside the leader but the onus remains on the following boat to avoid contact.

8.4.3 The give way boat at five boat lengths before the mark must continue to give way until the boats have left the turning zone. An umpire may give orders or a decision as to which boat has priority from five lengths. That decision is final, not subject to appeal and must be observed immediately and for the whole time that the boats subject to the decision remain in the turning zone.

8.5 Races where boats do not share the same turning mark:

8.5.1 In races where there is no turn, or each boat has their own turning buoy, crews should remain in their drawn lanes throughout the race.

8.5.2 In races where each boat has their own allocated turning buoy, all boats shall turn their buoy in the same direction, which will be to starboard unless stated otherwise in race instructions. In a "turning zone" boats, including their oars, must remain in their lanes.

8.6 At turns the whole hull and rudder must round the turning mark.

8.7 If the hulls of two boats collide during the course of a race, the presumption is that the safety of the crews is being compromised, and that disqualification of one or both crews should occur.

9. Finish

9.1 The winner will be the first boat whose bows cross the finish line.

10. Penalties

10.1 Penalties can be applied at the discretion of any umpire.

10.2 If the actions of any boat compromise the safety of others, that boat shall be subject to disqualification from the race.

10.3 Any boat which is disqualified from the race shall leave the race course immediately without impeding any other boat.

10.4 If any boat gains an unfair advantage by taking any action which transgresses these rules or the spirit of these rules, then that boat may be required to undertake a 360 or 720 degree turn. ("a penalty turn") at the discretion of an umpire. Alternatively a time penalty may be applied by the chief umpire.

10.5 If a boat is required to undertake a penalty turn, they will do so in such a way that does not impede or inconvenience any other boat. They must undertake the turn before crossing the finish line, or at such earlier time as directed by an umpire. It is the crew's responsibility to ensure that an umpire is able to observe their boat undertaking the turn.

10.6 The imposition of a penalty turn shall not be subject to appeal or review.

10.7 A boat which is required to undertake a penalty turn, but fails to do so, shall be

disqualified from the race.

10.8 If a transgression of these rules or the spirit of these rules leads to a crew gaining an unfair advantage which is not punished by an umpire giving a penalty turn during the race, the referee may, at his discretion, demote the crew by one or more places in the finishing order after the race has finished. Alternatively a time penalty may be applied by the chief umpire.

10.9.1 Except where the circumstances set out in 10.9.2 or 10.9.3 apply, the penalty for a transgression of the measurement rules for the class of boat in which the crew are racing, shall be disqualification from the race.

10.9.2 Where the transgression of the measurement rules does not cause an immediate safety concern and the transgression cannot reasonably be rectified before the race starts the referee may use their discretion to permit the crew to race, but shall impose a time penalty after the race is finished.

10.9.3 No penalty will be imposed for a transgression of the measurement rules where an in date exemption certificate has been issued by St Ayles Skiff International in respect of that particular transgression for the vessel under scrutiny. The exemption certificate must have been declared as specified in Measurement Rules 10.2

11 Review

11.1 A club captain of any club involved in a race (or their representative for the purposes of the regatta, should they not be present in person) may apply in writing to the referee for the decision of an umpire to disqualify or fail to disqualify a boat, or a decision of the referee to demote or not to demote a crew in the finishing order, to be reviewed. Any such application must be received within 30 minutes of the last boat crossing the line in that race.

11.2 The Referee shall convene a panel of three persons to consider the review. The panel shall include the Referee, a Committee member of St Ayles Skiff International (unless no such person is attending the regatta) and such other person or persons as the referee considers will bring good and fair judgment to the situation.

11.3 The club captain of each of the clubs involved (or their representative if the club captain is not present at the regatta) has the right to be heard. No other persons have the right to be heard. The panel may, at their discretion, gather evidence from such other persons as they see fit and are available, in order to consider their decision.

11.4 The panel may disqualify a boat from a race, demote or promote a boat affected by rule 10.8, or advise that a boat was wrongly disqualified. A boat wrongly disqualified shall have the satisfaction of being told so but will have no other remedy.

11.5 If a boat has been prevented from finishing a race other than a final due to collision damage caused by another boat which has been disqualified, the panel may award the damaged boat a bye into the next round of the competition.

11.6 If a panel is convened for the purposes of this rule, the referee shall submit a report on the facts of the situation, the deliberations of the panel and their decision to the secretary of St Ayles Skiff International within 7 days of the end of the regatta.

11.7 There shall be no appeal from the decision of a panel convened in terms of this section.

12. Support Vessels

12.1 Organisers shall provide sufficient numbers of suitable vessels to provide safety cover for the event. As a minimum there must be one safety launch and one umpire launch.

12.2 Support vessels must be contactable by VHF radio, and should carry all the equipment set out in rule 2.3

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