

Proposal: Review of Regulations for Racing General rule 3: Update on CUCBCs policy regarding the status of trans and non-binary rowers.

A consultation was undertaken during the month of August 2023. As part of this process, I have spoken to the Secretary of Oxford University Row Clubs and collected responses from the collegiate rowing community. The Cambridge University EDI Office, and CambridgeSU LGBT Campaign were also contacted.

OURCs allow for rowers to self ID in all divisions of Torpids and Summer Vllls. Their guidelines require trans athletes to inform OURCs ahead of racing of their trans status, in order to protect the rower from accusations of unfairness and to prevent colleges from abusing their system. They said that these rules generally affect 2-3 rowers per year, and to-date they have never had a request for recognition of a trans rower in the top 2 divisions. Since its implementation in 2019, there have only been a handful of questions asked, and no formal appeals. After the initial period of adjustment to the guidelines, they feel that their current system is the fairest, and the vast majority of captains are in agreement. Full details of their regulations can be found here: <https://ourcs.co.uk/organisation/racing/>.

Feedback from the Collegiate rowing community has been mixed, but there was majority support for a review (60%). Of those who indicated they do not support a review, many suggested changes which could be made to the regulations, indicating that support for a review of some description is higher than 60%. The results of the survey are not to be taken as indicative or binding, as the review was undertaken during the summer break and is not a representative survey of all clubs and captains. The primary purpose of the survey was to aid in the construction of a new guideline, for captains to ultimately vote on. There was no significant majority for adoption of British Rowing's new guidance as written, or for introduction of a Self ID system. However, there were lots of useful suggestions on how a compromise between both systems can be used. A number of respondents noted that the rules that British Rowing apply to elite or national competitions need not apply to collegiate rowing, as we are not a professional/elite rowing competition.

There was concern raised by a couple of respondents about needing to protect competition in women's divisions. It is not the intention of this review to take away from women's sport or to create an unfair situation, simply to allow people to compete during their time at university without facing further restrictions or assessments. College rowing should be seen as an open and inclusive sport, not an elite competition, and based on the experiences of OURCs there may only be a handful of rowers to which this guidance applies.

One respondent, who identifies as trans or non-binary noted: "For crews not near [women's] headship this is less relevant, especially as being Vllls already dilutes to the effect of any allegedly unfair advantage from an individual. There are other benefits of relaxed regulation to amateur rowing which likely outweigh any alleged unfair conditions in these lower divisions."

Based on the information, guidance, and opinions received, I believe the following should be proposed for adoption at the next Captains meeting as a replacement for CUCBC rules 3.e to 3.h regarding the eligibility of trans and non-binary rowers. The below guidelines allow for self identification, and stipulate protections for athletes.

Yours in rowing,

David, CUCBC Exec Committee

Proposal:

3. That Women's and Men's races be considered discrete.
 - a. That only Men's Crews shall row in Men's races, and only Women's Crews shall row in Women's races, but when the gender of an event is unspecified, mixed crews and crews of either sex may compete.
 - b. That a Men's Crew be defined as a crew consisting of oarsmen and no oarswomen, and a Women's Crew be defined as a crew consisting of oarswomen and no oarsmen.
 - c. That notwithstanding Rule [3.b](#) above, the coxswain need not be of the same sex as the crew.
 - d. That the lowest Men's Crew of a club entered into a set of Bumps be given an exception to Rules [3.a](#) and [3.b](#) and may include up to four oarswomen.
 - e. That notwithstanding Rule [3.b](#) above, in CUCBC-run races trans people should be permitted to participate according to their affirmed gender identity, and that non-binary people should be permitted to participate on the side in which they feel most comfortable.
 - i. For the purposes of CUCBC-run races, a trans rower is defined as any rower who does not identify, in whole or in part, with the gender they were assigned at birth regardless of whether any medical or administrative transition steps have been taken.
 - ii. That under no circumstances can any rower be compelled to disclose any medical history to CUCBC or the committee of any event run under these rules
 - iii. That clubs wishing to compete in a non-CUCBC run race must be aware these regulations may differ, and should check eligibility requirements before entering.
 - f. That any athlete wishing to race in accordance with Rule 3.e is asked to inform CUCBC in confidence by close of entries. This is intended to protect trans and non-binary rowers from discrimination and appeals on the basis of gender and deter clubs from abusing these rules.
 - i. This confidential declaration may be made by a captain of the athlete's club with consent from the athlete, or directly by the athlete to CUCBC.
 - ii. Any appeal against an entry on the grounds of ineligibility of a trans athlete must be made by email to CUCBC Executive and Senior Committees. The appeal may only be made on the grounds that the Regulations for Racing have not been adhered to.
 - iii. Any appeal made to CUCBC regarding the gender of an athlete, where said athlete has made a confidential disclosure to CUCBC, shall be immediately dismissed, and the appealing party informed that no rules have been breached.
 - g. Rowers who were assigned female at birth, and do not identify as female, whose college has no men's crews:
 - i. may choose one college where they are not a student to compete with. This choice must be agreed by both the rower and the new adoptive club and both parties must confirm with CUCBC. They are to be regarded as a full member of that college boat club, and not to be limited to the lowest boat irrespective of CUCBC Regulation for Racing 4.b; this decision is made once, does not need to be approved at the Captains meeting, and does not need to be declared every term.