

Northwest Youth Championship Age Group Proposal

The following proposal is for the region to adopt an age group race schedule for the 2018 NW Youth Championships and assumes a vote in January 2017 for implementation in May 2018.

Important Assumptions and Notes

To ensure the region is in agreement on what is in the best interest of the athletes and to keep the region as unified and competitive as it is now, we propose a super majority be required for implementation. To be enacted a super majority vote of a minimum of 60% of the votes cast in favor are needed. Thus, a vote of 51%/49% IS NOT enough to adopt.

It is **ASSUMED** that the region will change or review the age categories and definitions. The proposed age groupings were chosen for the ease of transferring the traditional schedule in order to see what such a change might look like. It may be in the region's interest to match the age categories of Canada (Brentwood) or USRowing (Club Nationals). The age distinctions are a placeholder for the region to decide and **NOT PART of the PROPOSAL!**

It is **ASSUMED that boat limits for National Qualifiers WILL NOT CHANGE.** National Qualifiers are the only events that will retain the Varsity designation. 2-'s and Lwt 2x's will allow multiple entries as currently stands. Varsity events are the 18 National Qualifiers as currently on the schedule

It is **ASSUMED that MORE THAN 1 BOAT** from a club is allowed in **AGE GROUPED EVENTS** in order to accommodate all entries/qualified participants.

In age grouping, athletes may race-up. The assumption is simply that the coach is doing what is in the best interest of the athlete.

It is **ASSUMED** that all races are **Heats and Finals. TIMED FINAL FOR HS 8+ ONLY.** This is open for discussion.

It is **ASSUMED semis** would be added where needed with events **over 19 entries per rule 5-209(d).**

It is **ASSUMED** that the order of events may be shifted to accommodate equipment conflicts.

Athletes formerly in 4V, 5V, N, and 2N events are redistributed into that same boat class but now by age. For example, when reading the schedule, remember what were novice timed finals on Friday afternoon and 4V/5V heats on Saturday with finals Sunday have been consolidated to Friday and Saturday only.

Please feel free to use this week and a half before the meeting to email, talk, and message each other about concerns or ideas. Please feel free to contact me, Conal as the author of this with any questions or concerns at anytime. conal@seaterowingscenter.com or 360-620-4799 (text is faster for a response).

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Explanation And FAQs

In making this document last years scheduled events were renamed to the relevant Age Group counterparts. In doing this a couple events get listed as the same.(JV is now 19. 3v is now 17. 4V, 5V, N, and 2N are 15.)****(above on assumptions page). Look through a couple of times before assuming I forgot something. I may have but I did try to go through a few times.

FAQ's

1) *"I like this for the former novices (freshman) and it creates a more even playing field for them but struggle to find fairness with the old categories - former old novices rowing age17 or 19 events."*

- You have a couple of factors to think about. You can enter multiple boats according to this proposal in the age group event for the M17 8+ could have two or three entries. Also because the former definitions of what events an athlete can and can not row are gone and athletes can row up age groups there may be more flexibility to get challenging races in the other boat class so for example maybe the 2nd M17 8+ instead focuses on the M19 or M17 4+?

3) *"On my current roster as a large club focusing on 8+'s I'll have 3 or more M19 or M17 8+'s. How will that be better than having some of them row the Novice 8+, or 3V 8+ on the Current Schedule ?"*

- Clubs would have a year to develop necessary changes to culture and logistics to work some of this out. The idea is that athletes are developing a better understanding as a comity of where they stand and are being challenged appropriately based on the average of age and strength. So what might be a novice who is a junior in school may make the top novice boat but not realize the gap to being a top competitive member of the Varsity squad next year. By having them in an environment where they are surrounded by athletes their age and strength they will continually be challenged in a balanced system

4) *"If some events will grow with multiple boats from a club how do I keep them positive about the possibility of a race in the heat and done"*

- That is pretty much the case now in a lot of events. It is always a possibility and relays on coaching expectations and accountability. Novice 2x's most years are just timed finals so one and done. HOWEVER, events larger than 19 would have Semis. AND noting is stopping the region from amending this proposal to have events between 9-14 have a petite final. THE CHALLENGE is keeping the SCHEDULE fit TIME CONSTRAINTS.

Some Regions like the SW have half or there about of their programs not even attend regionals and somehow they have developed culture and enough races to keep athletes interested and developing to consistently be one if not the strongest region year in and year out.

5) *"What do I do with an athlete that starts in February and is older than 15? Won't they not have a good experience in the 19 or 17 ranks?"*

We have a year to think about how you would handle this. It is agreed in the fall a "novice" or LTR classification makes sense but by spring athletes that are older are generally ahead because of strength and maturity over younger counterparts. As coaches we will have to be creative to get athletes up to speed if they are switch in to the sport for spring. In two months I have generally been able to get athletes that are juniors or seniors "into the mix" of at least current JV athletes.

6) *"Our club can not afford more coaches and equipment to implement this."*

- Since the athlete numbers are not changing on the definitions of how we are dividing them current staffing and resources should continue to work. Coaches will shift to new "titles" or

designations. Instead of Coaching V &JV, 3v 4V, Novice, and second Novice maybe coaches are now V8+ & Lwt 8+, 19, 17, 15. Or maybe it works that you put like boat speeds together. One theorized advantage is that large programs “may” see a smoother distribution of athletes and coaches through the program. Where a current large program has 4+ coaches and 5-6 eights on the Varsity side and only two coaches and 2 or 2 1/2 boats on the novice side the age groups may create categories where coach to athlete ratios and sustainability of athlete progression evens out.

7) “ *I am worried how this will change the culture of our current programs’ novices and how that is a bonding year for them*”

The majority of athletes will be surrounded by their peers and be stimulated by appropriate skills and strength challenges. Older juniors and seniors will not frustrate the average 15yr olds from a spot in the now top Novice Boat. The current junior or senior novice will be around peers their age and maturity level, strength and challenged by equals. They will be behind in technical skills perhaps so there will be pressure if they want to succeed to the highest level, but they are also surrounded by the expectation of what is needed to be where they want to be. Older new to the sport athletes will be exposed to the whole scope of development earlier and should more often respond quicker and healthier to it. The 15 and 16 year olds are still making relationships that will grow and “bond” over. And since athletes can row up if their skill and strengths are advanced you will still have the cross overs of aged athletes just more universally balanced by the skills challenge levels.

8) “ I just don’t like this.”

-Okay. these topics and ideas come up and are pursued because as a bunch of competitive, passionate and caring coaches we are looking to ensure what is in the best interest of the region and its athletes. We are also looking to build a stronger and better system of developing our young athletes as sport participants and young people. This age group has been taken about for years, many areas of the country are adding so this is just a proposal to show what one possibility could be. USRowing is likely to continue to move this way as it has with the Club Nationals Program.