

Use of Juniors in Adult Crews – Policy Guidance and Protocol

Following discussions with external authorities and relevant internal stakeholders, the following areas have been reviewed:

- Participation of juniors in CPGA events
- Participation of juniors in adult mixed crews (training and racing)
- Participation of juniors in Regattas, including the Great River Race (GRR) and Endurance Rows

Insurance and Risk Management

Currently, club insurance policies do not specifically categorise juniors or young adults. Therefore, it is the club's policies, risk assessments, and guidance that provide the necessary framework for their inclusion.

A risk assessment (RA) has been developed, and incorporated into the whole-club RA. This assessment includes:

- **Ability**, competence, and willingness of all parties to participate in mixed crews.
- **Pressure**, no undue pressure on coxes, parents, or Juniors to participate.
- **Consent**, clear consent must be sought from both the cox and the junior, before any junior rows in an adult crew (in training or racing).

This conversation must occur in a safe, supportive environment and be conducted by a trusted individual (e.g. Cox, Captain, or Welfare Officer).

The decision must come from the Junior themselves; parents may not respond on their behalf. This does not exclude the use of Parents answering Call Ups, but rather during the actual attendance.

Juniors must not be pressured into participating under any circumstances, nor coxes pressured to include a Junior into their crew.

Juniors must understand that they are part of a crew and not a temporary or emergency substitute. Their involvement should be based on a desire to improve skills and gain experience, not on filling gaps or meeting club needs. Their development is important and should be encouraged thoughtfully.

Ability and Progression

With regard to ability, Juniors should be demonstrating continued progression both on the water and/or through a set ergo programme. This is to ensure that any squad that is supplemented with a Junior is not at a disadvantage if problems are encountered on the water, such as inclement weather, man overboard etc.

In the event that ergo times are not available, the Junior coaches, alongside the Squad Captain, are to indicate if abilities meet progression and ability improvements.

Cox Authority and Crew Selection

The cox has the final say in whether a Junior is suitable for a particular event or crew. This is non-negotiable. No member – adult or junior – may pressure or challenge the cox's decision. All coxes have undergone DBS checks and are ultimately responsible for everyone in the boat.

Event-Specific Guidance

CPGA Events

No one under the age of 16 are permitted to race in adult events, in line with CPGA Race Rules.

Given the competitive nature of these events, it is neither appropriate nor fair to place juniors in these races (notwithstanding Specific junior CPGA Races)

Regattas

Juniors aged 14 and over may participate in adult races.

It is strongly recommended that Juniors are only entered into B crews or lower.

If either the cox or junior is uncomfortable with the arrangement, crews must be adjusted accordingly.

The inclusion of junior should never displace adult crew members unfairly.

While juniors are valued members of the club, so too are the adult members who contribute to the club's operation and development.

The presence of juniors in crews could potentially lead to other clubs being pressured to "go easy" or modify their race approach, therefore if concerns are raised by other clubs, they should be seriously considered by the Captain or Vice Captains, and crews managed accordingly.

Endurance Races, such as Great River Race (GRR)

In the event of multiple crews, considering the coxes' DBS status and other factors, it is recommended that Juniors row together in the same boat where possible.

However, if a Junior is rowing with their parent, this is considered low risk.

As with all events, coxes and juniors must confirm their willingness to participate in a safe, supportive environment.

Training Sessions

As with racing and the aforementioned stipulations, participation in training must be based on explicit agreement from both the juniors and the cox.

Adult members' places in training crews should not be adversely affected by the inclusion of juniors.

Additional Safeguards

Coxes are reminded to monitor language and topics of conversation when juniors are present in a crew to ensure a safe and respectful environment for all.

It should be noted that for the purposes of clarity, a Junior is defined as 10-16 years old, a Young Adult (solely TTGC definition) is defined as 16 - 25, however in terms of safeguarding and child protection, anyone under the age of 18 years old is classed as a child.

Final Notes

None of the above decisions have been made unilaterally or with any malice. In fact, the growth and strength of our juniors and junior crews is something we are extremely proud of. Rowing with adult crews offers great opportunities to develop fitness, technique, and confidence – and this should continue to be encouraged.

However, concerns have been raised by juniors, parents, coxes, and other club members. This policy reflects those concerns and aims to protect all involved by providing clear, inclusive, and transparent guidance.

We would also like to thank our coxes for their continued support. Without their commitment and responsibility, the opportunity for juniors to row alongside adult crews would not be possible.