

Waka Ama Aotearoa NZ Race Rules Update and Rationale - November 2025

Previous Race Rule	Updated Race Rule	Rationale
Previous Race Rule 2.1 In line with the constitution, NKOA (WAKA AMA NZ) supports clean sport. The use of any prohibited substances or methods included on the Prohibited List is banned in our sport. (The Prohibited List is published annually by the World Anti-Doping Agency and is available on the Drug Free Sport New Zealand website). NKOA (WAKA AMA NZ) adopts the Sports Anti-Doping Rules (“SADR”) made by Drug Free Sport New Zealand as its Anti-Doping Policy, pursuant to the Sports Anti-Doping Act 2006, and any amendments to or replacements of those Rules. All participants in events sanctioned by NKOA (WAKA AMA NZ) and its member organisations are bound by the SADR and any amendments to or replacements of those Rules. All members clubs of NKOA (WAKA AMA NZ) and members of NKOA (WAKA AMA NZ) member clubs agree to be bound to the SADR.	Updated Race Rule 2.1 <i>In line with the constitution, WAANZ supports clean sport. The use of any prohibited substances or methods included on the Prohibited List is banned in our sport. (The Prohibited List is published annually by the World Anti-Doping Agency and is available on the Sport Integrity Commission Te Kahu Raunui website.)</i> <i>WAANZ adopts the Sports Anti-Doping Rules (“SADR”) made by Sport Integrity Commission Te Kahu Raunui as its Anti-Doping Policy, pursuant to section 23 of the Integrity Sport and Recreation Act 2023, and any amendments to or replacements of those Rules.</i> <i>All participants in events sanctioned by WAANZ and its member organisations are bound by the SADR and any amendments to or replacements of those Rules. All member clubs of WAANZ and members of WAANZ member clubs agree to be bound to the SADR.</i>	Updated to reflect the changes to Drug Free Sport now Sport Integrity Commission Te Kahu Raunui

Previous Race Rule: 6.5 Paddling, including any stationary use of the paddle in the water, is to be carried out only in a seated position on the seat.	Updated Race Rule 6.5 <i>Paddling, including any stationary use of the paddle in the water, is only allowed while the competitor is in a sitting position on a seat in the canoe. Competitors must remain in a seated contact position in the canoe (no standing or kneeling)</i>	The race rule will be updated to reflect the current IVF rules
Current Race Rule: 15.1 In any race involving turns the canoe must turn counter-clockwise around the flag. During a turn, the canoe shall not run over the flag	Updated Race Rule 15.1 <i>During a turn, the canoe shall not run over the flag in such a way that the flag is between the ama and the hull. If this occurs, the competitor shall be disqualified.</i>	The rule will be updated to reflect the International Va'a Federation Rules
Current Race Rule: 21.1 Residency: To be eligible to compete at a National Championship, competitors must be a New Zealand citizen, or have been a continuous resident in New Zealand for a minimum of three (3) months prior to the event, or be from a country with Domestic Status; namely the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau	New Race Rule 21.1 a - f <i>21.1 Domestic Status Competitors – Entry Limits and Conditions:</i> <i>a) The number of entries from countries with Domestic Status (Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau) may be limited at the discretion of the Organising Committee.</i> <i>b) For individual events (e.g., W1), a maximum of two (2) eligible competitors per age division from each Domestic Status country may be entered.</i> <i>c) If more than two competitors from the same country wish to enter an age division, it is the responsibility of that country federation to determine and nominate their top two paddlers.</i> <i>d) Additional competitors may be permitted as international entries, space permitting, and are not eligible for medals.</i>	Current rules allow for unrestricted entries from countries with Domestic Status, which could create imbalance, particularly in World Sprint qualifying years. This update ensures fair opportunity for participation while protecting the competitive structure of the Waka Ama Sprint Nationals and World Sprints qualification process.

	e) For team events (e.g., W6), one team per division may be entered under a designated Domestic Status Club (e.g., “Cook Islands Resident Club”). These teams must be clearly identified as separate from New Zealand-based clubs. <i>Eligibility for Domestic Status entries:</i> f) Competitors must provide proof of current residency in the respective country (e.g., passport with residency stamp, school principal or employer letter, utility bill, or verification from a recognised local authority such as CICA). g) Competitors and teams from Domestic Status countries: • Are eligible for medals. • Are not eligible to qualify for the New Zealand quota for World Sprint or Distance Championships.	
Current Rule: 24.2 At the organising committee’s discretion, paddlers may be eligible to compete in more than one division, as long as they meet the relevant age requirements.	<i>Rule 24.2 will be removed</i>	Rule 24.2 will be removed as the race director already has discretion for all rules under Rule 1.7. Therefore, this rule will be removed as it implies that paddling for more than one division could be encouraged.

Previous Rule: 24.3 Until such time a grade has more than one heat (i.e., more than 8 entries), that grade shall be able to compete in the same event in another W6 grade provided all paddlers are eligible.	Updated Race Rule 24.3 <i>Until such time a grade has more than one heat (i.e., more than 8 entries), paddlers in that grade shall be able to compete in the same event in one other W6 grade, provided they are eligible.</i>	Rule 24.3: This amendment will enable paddlers aged M70+ in M75 and older events, where eligible, to help complete crews within the same club.
Previous Rule: 50.2 The minimum age for participation of any paddler in an open water event shall be 16 years. Age is taken as reaching the specified age in the year of the competition	Updated Race Rule: 50.2 <i>The minimum age for participation of any paddler in an open water event shall be 14 years. Age is taken as reaching the specified age in the year of the competition</i>	This race rule will be updated to a minimum age of 14 years. The sanctioning process will also be updated to specify additional requirements for open water events that include U16 and younger divisions. Including but not limited to: Paddlers' open water experience, proximity to land, safe landing areas and stricter safety protocols.

Further explanation and additional actions

Domestic Status Entries

The proposed amendment provides necessary clarification and regulation regarding the participation of competitors from countries with Domestic Status, specifically the Cook Islands, at the New Zealand National Championships. Under the current rules, unrestricted entry may lead to an imbalance in competition and impact the fairness of World Sprint qualification, particularly in qualifying years. By distinguishing between Cook Islands residents and Cook Islanders residing in New Zealand, this rule ensures consistent and equitable eligibility criteria. It aligns with international precedents used in similar contexts (e.g., USA and Hawaii), supports the integrity of the New Zealand quota system, and preserves the competitive structure of national events, while continuing to provide meaningful opportunities for participation by athletes from the Cook Islands and other Domestic Status nations.

W6 Waka Weight

A working group will be established to engage with stakeholders to explore fair and effective solutions relating to W6 canoe weights, including considerations around minimum weights for long-distance races or the introduction of a canoe division.

Te Waka o Aoraki W1 - Master 70/75/80

For the 2026 Waka Ama Sprint Nationals, M70/75/80 South Island paddlers may trial at Te Waka o Aoraki (TWOA) W1 regionals and join a different club team (from any region) at Nationals.

Eligibility Criteria:

- W1: Paddlers must compete and qualify through the Te Waka o Aoraki (TWOA) Regionals to be eligible for the Sprint Nationals.
- For a TWOA W1 paddler to paddle for a W6 club team (in any region), the W6 team must include at least three (3) paddlers from the host club and may include up to three (3) paddlers from TWOA.
- This provision applies only to paddlers from the TWOA region.
- This allowance applies only to M70, M75, and M80 divisions to support participation while maintaining fairness and club integrity.
- Once the W1 qualification is confirmed, their entries will need to be added to the Sprint Nationals entries.
- We will need written confirmation from the club they will be paddling with at Nationals.
- Please note we will not be extending this to other age groups or changing eligibility for W12 make-up.

WAANZ National Event Protest Committee

WAANZ will ensure the protest committee process, including protest submission procedures, is consistently communicated and followed across all National events, such as the Takapuna Beach Cup, and will provide guidelines for other sanctioned events.

Electric Bilge Pumps

While electric pumps have become more popular, Waka Ama Aotearoa NZ does not permit their use at events. Relying on pumps can reduce paddlers' bailing skills, create a false sense of safety, and pose electrical hazards. Efficient manual bailing is a key skill for safety, competitiveness, and preparation for international events, where electric pumps are also not permitted

Updated and Additional Definitions

- **Open Water:** Open water refers to any body of water used for Waka Ama racing that is not fully enclosed by land or artificial barriers, such as open ocean, lakes, rivers, harbors, or coastal areas. Impacting conditions, including surf, wind, waves, swell, tide, rips, adverse currents, and general exposure to weather, and their effect on these bodies of water, along with proximity of the race course to the shore are considered when assessing open water safety and race conditions.
- **Ruddered:** Single-person outrigger canoe fitted with a rudder to assist with steering.
- **Rudderless:** Single-person outrigger canoe without a rudder.
- **W4:** Four person outrigger canoe, designated as ruddered or rudderless

General Changes

Updated organisation name from NKOA (WANZ) to Waka Ama Aotearoa New Zealand (WAANZ)

If you have any additional questions, please contact admin@wakaama.co.nz