

UNITED STATES CANOE ASSOCIATION, INC



COMPETITION RULES

CANOE AND KAYAK SPECIFICATIONS

SANCTIONED RACE SPONSOR

REQUIREMENTS

As of January 15, 2026

NOTE: *There is a one year waiting period for changing canoe or kayak specifications only. Rules can be modified or changed at either the Annual Meeting or the Semi-annual Meeting by a majority vote of the Delegates of the Association in attendance.*

Last Revised 1/29/2026

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

- Reorganization of document
 - Moved previous Appendices into body of the document.
 - Consolidated PFD and Paddle rules – were previously in boat specs for some boats and in general rules for others.
- Removed all outdated “date” references – “Starting in 1992, all racers.....”
- Incorporation of rule/spec changes approved at the August 2025 Semi-Annual Meeting.
 - Handheld Paddles only for USCA events.
 - Deletion of the “Novice” paddler classification.
 - Clarifications regarding allowed Kayak Hull Modifications.
 - Addition of new rule regarding allowed Canoe Hull Modifications.
 - Deletion of maximum deck length for competition cruiser
 - Deletion of 25 lb. floatation requirement for all USCA boat classes.
 - Deletion of “Super Aluminum” Canoe Spec.
 - Deletion of International Long Distance Kayak Spec.
 - Deletion of International Long Distance Canoe Spec.
 - Clarification regarding kayak stern mounted rudders.
 - Addition of an OC2 Spec.
 - Modification of SUP specs, rules and class names to align with ICF.
- Update of Sanctioned Race Sponsor requirements section.
- Update of Nationals Host Requirements section.
- Update PFD requirements as a result of changes to USCG regulations.
- Classification of Paddlers:
 - Delete “Novice” as approved at SAM.
 - Changed name of 18–39-year-old group from “Open” to “Adult 18-39.”
- Updated Marathon Nationals Awards methodology as approved during the USCA Annual Meeting, January 2026.
 - Racers will race within their appropriate age group with medals awarded to the top three finishers in each group.
 - The fastest time in each boat class will be deemed as the National Champion in that class. Trophies will be awarded as available.
 - The National Champion in each boat class is also first place in their respective age group.
- Updated Marathon Race Schedule to include OC2.
- Change from SUP Unlimited to SUP 14 Class for Marathon Nationals.
- Added age bracket definitions to Adult Sprints.
- Moved Adult/Youth Sprint events to Youth Sprints.
- Removed references to paddlers with disabilities from sprints.
- Stock Aluminum Canoe Specs re-written to match what was used in 2025 Aluminum Nationals.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. USCA SANCTIONED RACE SPONSOR REQUIREMENTS4
 - A. USCA Race Sponsor (Other than Nationals).....4
 - B. USCA National Championship Race Sponsor4
- II. GENERAL RULES FOR ALL USCA SANCTIONED RACES (including the USCA Nationals Events) 5
 - A. Competitor Information5
 - B. Equipment and Assistance6
 - C. Classifications of Competitors:..... 10
 - D. Settling Disputes: 12
- III. USCA National Championship Events 13
 - A. USCA National Marathon Championships 13
 - B. USCA National Adult Sprint Championships 18
 - C. USCA Youth Sprint Championships21
 - D. USCA National Orienteering Championships23
 - E. USCA National Stock Aluminum Canoe Marathon Championships.....24
- IV. USCA BOAT SPECIFICATIONS 24
 - A. Canoes24
 - B. Kayaks28
 - C. Solo Outrigger & Kayaks for Adaptive Paddling29
 - D. Stand-Up Paddleboard (SUP)29
- V. Points of Contact30

I. **USCA SANCTIONED RACE SPONSOR REQUIREMENTS**

A. USCA Race Sponsor (Other than Nationals)

1. **Membership:** To become a sanctioned (approved) race sponsor, one must first hold a Race Sponsor or Affiliated Club membership in USCA.
2. **Sanctioning:** Only the USCA President or Competition Chairman has the authority to approve a USCA Race Sponsor or Affiliated Club race as a USCA Sanctioned Race. Applications for USCA race sanctioning shall be submitted via the Application for USCA Race Sanction form located on the USCA website.
3. **Course:** Racecourse not to exceed Class II (The International Scale of River Difficulty) water conditions.
4. **Classes:** A sanctioned race sponsor must offer as many USCA Nationals Championship classes as possible, but at least ONE, in order to qualify for sanctioning. Nationals Championship Classes are provided in section III.A.7 of this document.
5. **Rules:** Current delegate approved USCA canoe and kayak competition rules must be used in all USCA Classes.
6. **Insurance:** All USCA sanctioned races must be insured. The USCA requires proof of insurance from that insurance company, and the limits must be "per occurrence" of at least \$1 million general liability, 1 million legal liability, \$300K damage, \$5K medical :expenses, \$1 million personal injury, \$1 million COMP/OP AGG, \$1 million hired automobile, \$2 million excess liability, \$5K athletic participant AD&D, \$25K athletic accident excluding medical. The proof of insurance must be provided to the USCA President/Competition Chairman and must list the USCA, its Officers and Delegates as 'Additional Insured'.
7. **Race Changes:** Race sponsors cannot change a rule after a race has started. Race sponsors cannot change the racecourse after a race has started unless all the competitors can be notified.
8. **Race Management:** Information in section I.9 of this document shall be the basis for conducting all USCA sanctioned races.

B. USCA National Championship Race Sponsor

1. Membership: To become a sanctioned (approved) race sponsor, one must first hold a Race Sponsor or Affiliated Club membership in USCA. The Membership Chair shall supply USCA race sanctioning information to non-Nationals race sponsors or affiliated clubs who want to conduct a race.
2. Course: Racecourse not to exceed Class II (The International Scale of River Difficulty) water conditions.
3. Rules: Current delegate approved USCA canoe and kayak competition rules must be used in all USCA Classes.
4. Insurance: All USCA sanctioned races must be insured. The USCA requires proof of insurance from that insurance company, and the limits must be "per occurrence" of at least \$1 million general liability, 1 million legal liability, \$300K damage, \$5K medical :expenses, \$1 million personal injury, \$1 million COMP/OP AGG, \$1 million hired automobile, \$2 million excess liability, \$5K athletic participant AD&D, \$25K athletic accident excluding medical. The proof of insurance must be provided to the USCA President and must list the USCA, its Officers and Delegates as 'Additional Insured'.
5. Race Management: Information in section III.A.9 of this document shall be the basis for conducting all USCA sanctioned races.
6. Applications to host the USCA National Marathon Championships shall be submitted via the USCA Marathon Bid Application form available on the USCA website. Bid applications should be returned to the USCA Nationals Coordinator and others as directed in the bid by September 1st or as directed. Bids are approved at USCA Annual meetings only. Multi-year bids are welcome.
7. Applications to host the USCA National Stock Aluminum Canoe Championships. Shall be submitted via the USCA Stock Aluminum Nationals application form available on the USCA website.
8. All USCA National events must adhere to the applicable sections of this document.

II. GENERAL RULES FOR ALL USCA SANCTIONED RACES (INCLUDING THE USCA NATIONALS EVENTS)

A. Competitor Information

1. Paddlers are expected to conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner at all times.

2. Competitors waive all rights and claims against the USCA and its representatives.
3. Advertising in USCA races: sponsorship shall be allowed and their advertising on boats shall be allowed in USCA races.
4. Amateur Rules: There is no distinction in the USCA between amateurs and professionals, and either person by any organization's standard may compete in and win a USCA National Championship.
5. Did Not Finish (DNF): All competitors who quit a race for any reason before the finish line must report to the race sponsor or his representatives as soon as possible.
6. Must comply with the following pertaining to lightning safety:
 - a) *Before a race has started: If thunder is heard and/or lightning seen, or a lightning detector indicates an approaching thunderstorm, the racers, paddlers, helpers, and spectators shall take proper shelter on shore and wait at least 30 minutes after hearing the last thunder.*
 - b) *Once a race has started: If lightning is seen, count the time until you hear thunder. If this time is 30 seconds (6 miles) or less, or if you do not see the lightning but hear loud thunder; get off the water immediately and seek proper shelter. The race is considered officially stopped at that moment in time, and the order of the paddlers on the racecourse at that instance will be considered their placement in the finishing order, based upon discussion with the racers and race officials at the finishing area. Thirty minutes after hearing the last thunder, the racers may proceed down the racecourse, and safety boaters may retake their posts.*
7. In the event of existing or forecast of bad weather in the form of dense fog, high winds, heavy rains, unexpected cold, storms with lightning and highly fast water, etc., the race promoter/organizer or the race committee has the right to change the route, delay the start, cancel the event, or move to an alternate day for the safety of the racers and spectators
8. Racers are expected to monitor race conditions and seek shelter when in danger.
9. Racers are expected to help other racers who are endangered

B. Equipment and Assistance

1. Personal Flotation Devices/Life Jackets/Life Preservers
 - a) *Usage Requirements*

(1) Federal Inventory Requirement (33 CFR 175.15) – Each competitor must have in his or her possession during the entire race an easily accessible and immediately available Personal Flotation Device (PFD) approved by the United States Coast Guard. In order to meet this requirement, the PFD must:

- (a) *Have an attached label which clearly shows the USCG approval number.*
- (b) *Have a proper fit. The size, weight and age listed on the PFD label must match those of the competitor.*
- (c) *Must be in serviceable condition.*
- (d) *Must be used in accordance with all other PFD label instructions.*

(2) When the water temperature is below 50°F, each competitor shall wear a USCG approved PFD.

(3) All youth competitors 14 years of age and younger are required to wear a USCG approved PFD at all times during any race.

(4) A race sponsor/organizer may require PFDs to be worn by all competitors if the conditions warrant.

(5) Federal/State/Local regulations on PFDs that are more stringent than USCA rules shall prevail. Some states/locales have PFD requirements which exceed the federal requirements.

(6) If the PFD must be worn, it shall be properly adjusted, with all buckles attached and zippers fully zipped.

(7) If not worn, the PFD must:

- (a) *Be approved to meet the Federal Inventory requirement when not worn. Inherently buoyant Type III/Level 70 or higher devices generally meet this requirement. Inflatable, Hybrid and Level 50 devices generally do not meet this requirement. The attached label will identify PFDs which do not meet this requirement.*
- (b) *Be secured to the vessel in a manner that allows it to be released with one hand. PFDs secured to a vessel (e.g. bungee cords or straps) must be able to be released quickly with one hand. Securing by duct tape is prohibited.*

(8) A PFD is NOT considered to be in serviceable condition if it exhibits deteriorations that could diminish the performance of the PFD including:

- (a) *Rips, tears, or open seams in fabric or coatings, that are large enough to allow the loss of buoyant material.*

(b) Buoyant material that has become hardened, non-resilient, permanently compressed, waterlogged, oil-soaked, or which shows evidence of fungus or mildew.

(c) Loss of buoyant material or buoyant material that is not securely held in position.

(9) Rules specific to USCG approved Level 50 PFDs:

(a) May not be worn by non-swimmers.

(b) May only be used by youth under the age of 16 if the U.S. Coast Guard approved that specific model for use by youth under the age of 16.

(10) Rules specific to inflatable and hybrid PFDs:

(a) May only be used by youth under the age of 16 if the U.S. Coast Guard approved that specific model for use by youth under the age of 16.

(b) Must be properly armed, maintained and inspected in accordance with the PFD label and/or user's manual.

(c) If inflated during a race, the competitor must either:

(i) Properly repack and rearm the PFD with a new cylinder prior to continuing the race, or;

(ii) The PFD must remain fully inflated and properly worn for the duration of the race.

(d) Inflatable PFDs may not be worn by Stand-Up Paddleboard (SUP) paddlers during any race with Class II (The International Scale of River Difficulty) water conditions.

(11) Although the USCA will attempt to notify competitors regarding PFD requirements for each event, it is the Competitor that bears primary responsibility for selection and use of a PFD that meets all federal, state and local requirements. In the case of minors, this responsibility rests with the competitor's guardian.

(12) PFDs are subject to technical inspection at the completion of USCA sanctioned races. Competitors who fail to meet the PFD requirements are subject to disqualification.

b) *Approved PFDs*

(1) In January 2025, the United States Coast Guard issued new regulations regarding the approval, labelling and use of PFDs via a set of rules called PFD Harmonization. This was a joint program with Transport Canada that replaces the previous “Type I-V” classifications with a “Performance Level” based upon the PFD’s buoyancy. As with the previous system, the new PFD labels will clearly state that the device is USCG approved and will contain a USCG approval number. PFDs approved under the old system will continue to be legal provided they are in serviceable condition.

(2) ISO 12402-5 Level 50 PFDs – International Organization for Standards ISO 12402-5 approved Level 50 PFDs like those produced by Mocke and Viakobi are NOT USCG approved. Although these devices DO NOT satisfy the Federal Inventory Requirements, they may be used during USCA events under the following conditions:

(a) Federal Regulation 33 CFR 175.17(b) exempts “racing shells, rowing sculls, racing canoes, and racing kayaks” from the Federal PFD Inventory Requirement. As a result, competitors at USCA events who are 16 years old or older may use an ISO 12402-5 Level 50 PFD in lieu of a USCG approved PFD provided:

- (i) The PFD is worn in accordance with the instructions printed on its label.*
- (ii) State/local regulations do not impose requirements which exceed the federal requirement.*
- (iii) The competitor is paddling a boat which meets the generic description of “racing canoe” or “racing kayak.” Note that recreational kayaks, recreational canoes and SUPs are not eligible for this exemption.*

(b) In circumstances which do not meet the exemption outlined above, competitors may wear an ISO 12402-5 Level 50 PFD provided they also have a USCG Approved PFD in their possession which fulfills the Federal Inventory Requirement, and that state/local law has not mandated that a USCG PFD must be worn.

2. Propulsion: Handheld paddles shall be the sole source of propulsion for USCA class boats. Exceptions may be made for paddlers with physical disabilities and/or injuries. Paddle requirements for each class of boat are included in the relevant boat specifications.

3. **Water Removal:** The competitors will be allowed to turn their canoe or kayak upside down to remove water from it. Non-mechanical bailers (i.e. scoop bailers or sponges) or any type of person-powered (passive) bailer, pump, or siphon may be used in all USCA class boats.
4. **Outside Assistance:** Food, drink, clothing, paddles, and equipment other than canoes may be given to the competitors by spectators (or other competitors) as long as there is no physical help (in the way of forward motion) or interference with the other paddlers. Medical help, in case of sickness or injury, may be given to the competitors but interference with other paddlers should be kept to a minimum.
5. **One peapless USCG compliant signal whistle** must be carried in each boat, either securely affixed to a life jacket or the boat in a manner which allows quick access in a personal emergency.
6. **Quick-Release Leash:** If the racecourse takes the boats further than 100 meters from the shore at least one paddler in a surfski, OC1, or SUP, must wear a quick-release ankle/calf/ waist leash which is connected to the boat. In strong winds, a lightweight craft can blow away from the paddler than the paddler can swim.

C. Classifications of Competitors:

1. Youth (5-7): Any paddler 5 to 7 years of age on January 1 of the current calendar year.
2. Youth (8-10): Any paddler 8 to 10 years of age on January 1 of the current calendar year.
3. Youth (11-12): Any paddler 11 or 12 years of age on January 1 of the current calendar year.
4. Youth (13-14): Any paddler 13 or 14 years of age on January 1 of the current calendar year.
5. Junior: Any paddler who has not reached age 18 on January 1 of the current calendar year. Recommend a shorter course for this class.
6. Adult 18-39: Man or woman at least 18 years of age and under 40 as of race day.
7. Master: Man or woman at least 40 years of age and under 50 as of race day.

8. Senior: Man or woman at least 50 years of age and under 60 as of race day.
9. Veteran 1: Man or woman at least 60 years of age and under 65 as of race day.
10. Veteran 2: Man or woman at least 65 years of age and under 70 as of race day.
11. Grand Veteran 1: Man or woman at least 70 years of age and under 75 as of race day.
12. Grand Veteran 2: Man or woman at least 75 years of age and under 80 as of race day.
13. Grandmaster Veteran: Man or woman at least 80 years of age as of race day.
14. Adult/Youth: (This class will be offered for Man/Youth and Woman/Youth.)
 - a) *One paddler is at least 18 years old as of race date.*
 - b) *One paddler at least 5 years old who has not reached 15 years on January 1 of the current calendar year.*
 - c) *This class will be a shorter distance than the regular course.*
15. Adult/Junior: (This class will be offered for Man/Junior and Woman/Junior.)
 - a) *One paddler is at least 18 years old as of race date.*
 - b) *One paddler who qualifies as a junior on January 1 of the current calendar year.*
 - c) *The C2 Man/Junior or C2 Woman/Junior class will be the same length as the men's Adult 18-39 class.*
16. Foreign National Competitors: Persons who are not citizens of the United States and have not resided in the United States for the two years immediately prior to the National Championships.
17. Juniors may race in Adult 18-39 class in Marathon races, but not as an Adult in the Adult Sprint Championships.
18. Women may race in men's or mixed events, if they wish. Mixed teams may race in the men's events.
19. In events for ages over 18 the younger paddler determines the classification.

20. In youth events, age classification is determined by age of the older youth.

D. Settling Disputes:

1. Protests:

a) *All protests must be in writing and filed no later than 30 minutes after the finish of the race in question. The written protest must be made by a competitor in the contested event and be accompanied by a \$10 fee. If the protest is disallowed, the fee becomes the property of the general fund of the USCA. If the protest is allowed, the fee is returned to the protestor, and the proper action will be taken against the violator. Protests can be lodged against irregularities in canoes or kayaks in reference to USCA Competition Rules and Canoe Specifications. Protests can also be lodged against instances of unsportsmanlike conduct by any competitor.*

b) *Protests made on canoes that have passed the jigging prior to the race and bear an approved sticker may be made only if there is a question of change or alterations to the hull.*

c) *Boats of questionable design or in possible violation of specifications may have jigging postponed until other committee members are consulted.*

d) *Protests on non-championship events will be decided by the Race Sponsor.*

2. Arbitration Committee:

a) *The Arbitration Committee is composed of eleven (11) members: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Chairman, Competition Chairman, Kayak Chairman, Sprint Chairman, International Competition Chairman, Safety Chairman and Technical Inspection Director. There shall be at least six (6) members present and together to handle the arbitration. The race sponsor is not allowed to vote or arbitrate on USCA matters.*

b) *The Competition Chairman shall serve as the Chairman of the Arbitration Committee. In the absence of this Chairman, the Vice President shall act as Chairman. The Chair shall serve as facilitator in coordinating the meetings of the committee*

c) *The Competition Chairman votes only in case of a tie.*

d) *This committee shall function during the entirety of the Association's National Championships.*

e) *In emergencies, a vacancy may be filled by a committee chairman by Executive Committee approval.*

f) *The committee oversees the measurements of hulls and any other specifications relating to the craft used in national sanctioned events.*

- g) *The committee rules on the acceptability and required use of safety devices for boats and paddlers.*
- h) *The committee determines the acceptability of the competitor's equipment.*
- i) *All protests for National sanctioned events must be filed with the Competition Chairman of the Association.*
- j) *The Committee shall provide final ruling for all competition matters relating to National Championship events.*
- k) *The committee shall permit any principal in a dispute the right to attend Arbitration Committee meetings to present his/her views. The final decision may be made in a private meeting of the committee.*
- l) *A committee member may not participate in an arbitration of a protest in which they are one of the principals in the dispute.*
- m) *All arbitration meetings must submit a meeting report to the USCA's magazine, CANOE NEWS.*
- n) *In cases of un-sportsmanlike conduct or paddlers not following the prescribed course, the arbitration committee may impose a time penalty, place penalty, or disqualification. No penalty may be enforced if no significant infraction has occurred in the judgment of the Arbitration Committee.*
- o) *Arbitration Committee will use the following guidelines in evaluating protests/ infractions: Determine the paddlers' intent when possible. Consider the effect of an infraction on the outcome of the race. Based on the above considerations, education will be the preference where appropriate, followed by reasonable time/place penalties, and disqualification as a last resort.*

III. USCA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENTS

A. USCA National Marathon Championships

1. A National Race Sponsor must include all of the events listed below at the USCA National Marathon Canoe and Kayak Championships. Other unofficial race classes may be added at the discretion of the race sponsor.
2. Official abbreviations of the race event will be as they appear following the listed event.
3. USCA National Marathon Canoe and Kayak Championship Events. Schedule rotated annually. (Day 1 to day 3, day 2 to day 1, and day 3 to day 2.)

4. The Grasse River Concept C-1 and similar designs may compete in the USCA Nationals on a trial basis with no overall or age group awards.
5. Recommended naming convention: Craft Type (e.g. C, K, OC)/ # of Paddlers/Boat Type/ Governing Spec (if not USCA) /Gender/Age Class (Classes are listed below but need not run in this order.) All Adult Events have National Championship Age Classes as follows: Adult (18-39), Master (40-49), Senior (50-59), Veteran 1 (60-64), Veteran 2 (65-69), Grand Veteran 1 (70-74), Grand Veteran 2 (75-79), and Grandmaster Veteran (80+).
6. Awards:
 - a) *Racers will race within their appropriate age group with medals awarded to the top three finishers in each group.*
 - b) *The fastest time in each boat class will be deemed as the National Champion in that class. Trophies will be awarded as available.*
 - c) *The National Champion in each boat class is also first place in their respective age group.*
 - d) *The Barton Youth Award: Any youth 9-17 years old as of January 1 of the current year, is a current USCA member and competes in the Junior C1 or Junior K1 Marathon event at the USCA National Marathon Championships is eligible for this award. No prequalification is required. The Youth Activities Committee administers this award. Zaveral canoe paddles will be awarded to the fastest girl and boy in the C1 Junior Championship event, and an Epic kayak paddle will be awarded to the fastest girl and boy in the K1 Junior Championship events.*
7. National Marathon Championship Race Schedule: For 2026 & 2029, Day 3 will run on Friday, Day 1 on Saturday, and Day 2 on Sunday. For 2027 & 2030, Day 1 will run on Friday, Day 2 on Saturday, and Day 3 on Sunday. For 2028 & 2031, Day 2 will run on Friday, Day 3 on Saturday, and Day 1 on Sunday.

| <u>Day 1</u> | <u>Day 2</u> | <u>Day 3</u> |
|--|--|----------------------------|
| C1 Woman | C2 Women | C2 Mixed |
| C1 Stock Woman | C2 Standard Women | C2 Standard Mixed |
| OC1 Woman | OC2 Woman | C2 Man/Junior (C2 M/Jr) |
| C2 Men Open | C1 Man | C2 Woman/Junior (C2W/Jr) |
| C2 Standard Men | C1 Stock Man | OC2 Mixed |
| OC2 Men | OC1 Man | K1 Touring Woman |
| K1 Unlimited Woman | K1 Unlimited Man | K1 Sea Kayak Man |
| K1 Touring Men | K1 Sea Kayak Woman | K2 Mixed |
| K2 Men | K2 Women | |
| | | |
| <u>Short Course</u> | <u>Short Course</u> | <u>Short Course</u> |
| C1 Woman Junior & Barton Youth Award | K1 Unlimited Man Junior & Barton Youth Award | C2 Man/Youth (C2 M/Y) |
| K1 Woman Junior Unlimited & Barton Youth Award | C1 Man Junior & Barton Youth Award | C2 Woman/Youth (C2W/Y) |
| C2 Men Junior | C2 Women Junior | C2 Mixed Junior (C2 Mx Jr) |
| SUP 14 Men | SUP 14 Woman | |

8. Race Eligibility for Competitors

a) *All competitors in USCA canoeing and kayaking events must be USCA members before they enter a USCA National Championship or trial events.*

b) *Foreign Competitors: any foreign competitor may participate in and place in any event in the USCA National Championships and receive the appropriate awards in the place that they finish. Should they place first, they will be considered the USCA National Champion and be recorded on a National trophy (if available). The trophy will be awarded to a non-US citizen at the discretion of the Awards Chairperson.*

9. Nationals Race Management and Conduct

a) Race Changes: Race sponsors cannot change a rule after a race has started. Race sponsors cannot change the racecourse after a race has started unless all the competitors can be notified.

b) Race Starts: All starting, whether mass or heats will be by a reaction start. There will be no count down given prior to the start. To start a race the starter will say to the competitors, "Paddlers be ready." Sometime following this command, when the starter is satisfied that no competitor has an unfair advantage, he will signal the start by using a prearranged device. This device could use sight, sound or both to signal the start.

c) Heat Starts: If possible, race sponsors shall have all boats of a given USCA class start in a single heat. If multiple heats are required for a single boat class, the competitor's position in the various heats will be determined by the order the entry form is received by the race sponsor. Sponsors may combine various boat classes into a one heat if desired. There will be a minimum of five minutes between each heat.

d) Portages and Routes: Only officially designated portages and routes may be used. Emergency obstacle situations may occur, in which case the boat can be moved over or around said obstacle, returning to the water immediately after clearing this obstruction safely. Other than emergency situations, boats should remain in the water.

e) Technical Inspection Area: The race sponsor shall set aside a dedicated area for the technical inspection of boats as they exit the water following the marathon races.

f) Boat Measurement: At Marathon Nationals, C1, C1 Stock, C2, C2 Standard, SUP 14, K1 Sea Kayak and K1 Touring class boats are subject to hull measurement to ensure that they are in compliance with USCA Specifications. Competitors who will be racing those boat classes are strongly encouraged to have their boat measured ("jigged") prior to the race. If the craft passes inspection, the competitor will be given an official sticker to be affixed to his or her boat. If the boat fails the inspection, the competitor will be given time to make the necessary repairs or alterations so that the boat will pass inspection. The USCA Technical Inspection Station is generally open to pre-jig boats on Thursday during the youth events.

g) Post Race Technical Inspection: Upon exiting the water after National Marathon Championship races, all competitors/boats are required to pass through the technical inspection area, where the presence of required safety gear will be verified. Boats that are subject to boat measurement and finished in the top five of their age group will be jugged to ensure that they meet specifications. Boats that had been pre-jugged and have a sticker will generally not need to be remeasured unless it appears that changes have been made. Any boat that fails inspection and was not measured prior to the event will be disqualified immediately. If a stickered boat is found to have problems in passing inspection after the race, the matter will be referred to the Arbitration Committee. Failure to pass through technical inspection following the race will result in disqualification.

10. Competition between the States:

a) States shall be awarded points in all USCA National Marathon Championship events as follows: 50 points for each paddler in first; 45 points for each paddler in second; and on down through tenth place in each Championship class. (No points for demo classes or trial events.) National Stock Aluminum Marathon points will be added only when this Nationals occurs prior to the regular National Marathon event.

b) The points will be awarded to the state in which the paddler has residence.

c) Points for the State award will not be scored by a foreign competitor; however, the U.S. partner will be awarded state points of their placing.

d) The state with the greatest number of points accumulated during the marathon championships shall be awarded the Top State Award, having their state's name engraved on the trophy and keeping possession for one year until the next Nationals. At that time, the trophy will be brought to the site of the Nationals and to be presented to the new winning state.

11. Race Class Additions and Deletions:

a) Race Class Additions:

(1) There shall be an equivalent Women/Girls class where there is a Men/Boys class. If the class is a trial class, the gender equivalent shall be a trial class as well. This applies to additions and deletions of classes.

(2) Either at the Annual or Semi-Annual Meetings, a race class can be suggested to be included as a National Championship event by a positive vote of at least 40% of the delegates present.

(3) At the following Nationals, this new race class is to be presented on a trial (non-championship) basis.

(4) If seven (7) or more boats compete, then it will be added to the following Nationals as a Championship class.

(5) If less than 7 boats compete in a trial class in both men and women, then the race class is dropped from consideration.

(6) At any given time, there cannot be more than two new race classes in the process of approval.

b) Race Class Deletions: If the Competition Committee recommends that an event be deleted from the Championship list and the Delegates approve, the class will be deleted immediately effective with the next National Championship.

B. USCA National Adult Sprint Championships

1. The USCA Adult National Sprint Championships is an optional event which may be held before the Marathon National Championships.

2. Registration: There will be no day of race registration for adult sprints to insure adequate time to process registration forms and build sprint heats.

3. Membership: All competitors must be USCA members, either as an individual or as a family member.

4. Rules: All sprint events are governed by the same rules as the Marathon Championships. Additional Rules and Regulations governing Sprint Nationals follow:

5. The course will be either 250 or 500 meters.

6. Competitors select from one age category per class of C1, C2, C2 Mixed, Kayak and SUP for a total of five (5) events. Adults may also race any or all Man or Woman/Youth and Man or Woman/Junior classes.

7. Boat Specifications for USCA Adult Sprint Nationals:

a) C1 – Competition Cruiser (4x32)

b) C2 – Competition Cruiser (4x32) canoes or Pro-Boat (3x27)

c) K1 – K1 Unlimited

d) SUP – SUP Unlimited

8. Awards: USCA Championship Medals to top three positions for adults. Youth, Junior, Adult/ Youth, and Adult/ Junior classes will be awarded to five positions.

9. The order of registrant entry will determine heat designation and lane assignment, (where applicable).

10. To race in a sprint event, the adult must be 18 years of age or older on race day. For C2 events, age is determined by the younger of the two paddlers. Age groupings for sprint nationals are as follows:

a) *Adult 18-39: Man or woman at least 18 years of age and under 40 as of race day.*

b) *Master: Man or woman at least 40 years of age and under 60 as of race day.*

c) *Veteran: Man or woman at least 60 years of age as of race day.*

11. Quantities of 12 or fewer boats per class will automatically determine that class as a final.

12. Any event in excess of 12 boats will be broken down into heats of equal quantities. In the event of an odd number of boats, the greater number will constitute the first heat. i.e. 17 boats - heat 1 with 9 boats, heat 2 with 8 boats.

13. Advancement to finals procedures as follows: Winner from each heat is guaranteed to advance to the final round. Balance of remaining positions in the final round will be based upon fastest heat times of remaining boats, with a maximum of 12 boats in the final round. i.e. 2 heats - 2 winners advance, plus next 10 fastest times.

14. Any blatant obstruction of other competitors may result in disqualification of the offending boat.

15. In the event of severe, inclement weather or circumstances beyond the control of the Event Organizer, the decision to cancel, postpone or delay will be decided by the following committee: Event Organizer (host), Competition Chairman, Safety Chairman and USCA President. If the decision is made to cancel the event, awards will be given on fastest heat times to all completed classes.

16. Adult Events: The Adult Sprint divisions and suggested sequence order follows:

| <u>Sequence</u> | <u>Division</u> | <u>Abbreviation</u> |
|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1-3 | C1 Woman Adult 18-39 | C1 W |
| | C1 Woman Master | C1 WMa |
| | C1 Woman Veteran | C1 WV |
| 4-6 | K1 Man Adult 18-39 | K1 M |
| | K1 Man Master | K1 MMa |
| | K1 Man Veteran | K1 MV |

| | | |
|-------|---|----------------------------|
| 7-9 | C1 Man Adult 18-39 C1 Man Master C1 Man Veteran | C1 M C1 MMa C1 MV |
| 10-11 | SUP Woman SUP Man | SUP W SUP M |
| 12-14 | C2 Mixed Adult 18-39 C2 Mixed Master C2 Mixed Veteran | C2 Mx C2 MxMa C2 MxV |
| 15-17 | K1 Woman Adult 18-39 K1 Woman Master K1 Woman Veteran | K1 W K1 WMa K1 WV |
| 18-20 | C2 Men Adult 18-39 C2 Men Master C2 Man Veteran | C2 M C2 MMa C2 MV |
| 21-23 | C2 Women Adult 18-39 C2 Women Master C2 Women Veteran | C2 W C2 W Ma C2 WV |

C. USCA Youth Sprint Championships

1. The race sponsor hosting the USCA National Marathon Canoe and Kayak Championships is required to hold the Youth Sprint Championships.
2. Registration: Youth sprints permit day of race registration; however, pre-registration is preferred.
3. Membership: All competitors in the youth races must be USCA members, either as an individual or as a family member.
4. Rules: All sprint events are governed by the same rules as the Marathon Championships. Additional Rules and Regulations governing Sprint Nationals follow:
5. Race Hosts, USCA Officials, and the Guardians of the competitors shall ensure that all minor participants comply with the safety equipment requirements outlined in section II.B of this document. In locations where state/local regulations are more stringent, the local regulations shall take precedence.
6. USCA requires that a safety boat or boats of some description be provided by the Nationals host and be on the water during the entire Youth Sprint event.
7. Boat Specifications for USCA Youth Sprint Nationals:
 - a) *C1 – Competition Cruiser (4x32)*
 - b) *C2 – Competition Cruiser (4x32) canoes or Pro-Boat (3x27)*
 - c) *K1 – K1 Unlimited*
 - d) *SUP – SUP Unlimited*
 - e) *Exception for young paddlers – In events with Youth ages 5-7, 8-10, and 11-12, any boat may be used. The sole requirement is that the boat is propelled by a USCA – legal canoe paddle in canoe events and a USCA – legal kayak paddle in kayak events. Rudders, outriggers and multi-hull designs are allowed.*
8. Course length will be 250 meters.
9. Age requirements
 - a) *For Youth and Junior paddlers, age is determined by their age on the December 31st preceding the event.*

b) For Youth/Junior C2 and K2 events, age is determined by the oldest paddler if both are not in same age group. A younger paddler can paddle in an older age group, but an older paddler cannot paddle in a younger age group.

c) Adult paddlers in the Adult/Youth/Junior sprints must be at least 18 on the day of the event.

d) Youth/Junior paddlers may enter one each of C1, C2, C2 Mixed, K1 and SUP events for a total of five (5). Additionally, they may enter one Adult/Youth Junior event. Adult paddlers in the Adult/Youth/Junior events may enter in multiple events.

10. Youth Championship Sprint Divisions as follows:

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>C1 Youth (5-7)</i> | <i>K1 Girl Youth (13-14)</i> |
| <i>C2 Youth (11-12)</i> | <i>C1 Boy Youth (13-14)</i> |
| <i>C1 Youth (8-10)</i> | <i>K1 Woman Junior (15-17)</i> |
| <i>K1 Youth (11-12)</i> | <i>C2 Men Junior (15-17)</i> |
| <i>C2 Youth (5-7)</i> | <i>C1 Woman Junior (15-17)</i> |
| <i>K1 Youth (8-10)</i> | <i>C2 Boys Youth (13-14)</i> |
| <i>C1 Youth (11-12)</i> | <i>K1 Boy Youth (13-14)</i> |
| <i>C2 Youth (8-10)</i> | <i>C1 Man Junior (15-17)</i> |
| <i>K1 Youth (5-7)</i> | <i>C2 Girls Youth (13-14)</i> |
| <i>C1 Girl Youth (13-14)</i> | <i>C2 Mixed Open (5-17)</i> |
| <i>K1 Man Junior (15-17)</i> | <i>SUP Man Junior</i> |
| <i>C2 Women Junior (15-17)</i> | <i>SUP Woman Junior</i> |

11. Adult/Youth/Junior Championship Sprint Divisions as Follows:

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>C2 Man/Youth (5-7)</i> | <i>C2 Woman/Youth (5-7)</i> |
| <i>C2 Man/Youth (8-10)</i> | <i>C2 Woman/Youth (8-10)</i> |
| <i>C2 Man/Youth (11-12)</i> | <i>C2 Woman/Youth (11-12)</i> |
| <i>C2 Man/Youth (13-14)</i> | <i>C2 Woman/Youth (13-14)</i> |
| <i>K2 Man/ Youth (13-14)</i> | <i>K2 Man/Youth (13-14)</i> |
| <i>C2 Man/Junior (15-17)</i> | <i>C2 Woman/Junior (15-17)</i> |
| <i>K2 Man/Junior (15-17)</i> | <i>K2 Man/Junior (15-17)</i> |

12. Top Division Award – Division or group of divisions (see groupings below) with greatest number of points accumulated during these Sprint races shall be awarded the Revolving trophy at the Sunday awards ceremony. Points for the Revolving Trophy are awarded as follows: 50 points for each paddler in first place, 45 points for second and so forth to tenth place. Paddlers earn points for the division in which their state has been grouped.

13. The Chairperson of the Youth Activity Committee shall be responsible for monitoring, coordination and the facilitation of this event. Duties include:

- a) *Calculate or designate the calculation of the state points in order to determine which group will be awarded the Revolving Trophy.*
- b) *Select a responsible person from the winning division to:*
- c) *Have the appropriate engraving completed on the trophy plate.*
- d) *Take the award home and have it displayed in an appropriate manner.*
- e) *Make provisions for its return to the next USCA Marathon Nationals.*

14. Grouping of the USCA Divisions are the following:

- a) *South Atlantic - DE, DC, MD, VA, WV, NC, SC, GA, PR, VI*
- b) *East South Central - KY, TN, AL, MS West South Central – AR, OK, TX, LA*
- c) *Mountain – ID, WY, UT, CO, NV, NM, AZ, MT*
- d) *Pacific – WA, OR, CA, AK, HI, GU, AS*
- e) *West North Central – MN, IA, MO, ND, SD, NE, KS*
- f) *East North Central – MI, IL, WI*
- g) *New York Organized Division*
- h) *New England - ME, VT, NH, MA, CT, RI*
- i) *Combined Organized Divisions of Florida, Indiana, Ohio and Penn-Jersey*
- j) *NOTE: The above Division groupings may vary from year to year in order to make the participant numbers in each group more equal. This is a decision that is to be made by the Youth Activities Committee/Chair after the participant list is established.*

D. USCA National Orienteering Championships

1. Orienteering is an Optional event held on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday Nationals week. The course is set up by the Orienteering Chairman, and the special materials (maps and punches) are provided. This is an event that pits the skills of map reading as well as paddling. The competition is a race for both accuracy and time.

2. The classes offered include the following: C1 Man, C2 Women, C1 Woman, C2 Men, K1 Man (any kayak), C2 Mixed, K1 Woman (any kayak), C2 Mixed Master (50+), C2 Woman/Youth (5-14), C2 Man/Youth (5-14), SUP Unlimited Woman, C2 Woman/Junior (15-17), SUP Unlimited Man, C2 Man/Junior (15-17).

E. USCA National Stock Aluminum Canoe Marathon Championships

1. The National Stock Aluminum Canoe Marathon Championships are a separate event specifically for canoes that meet the Stock Aluminum Specification. Other non-championship boat classes may be added to this event at the discretion of the race sponsor.

2. This may be a one- or two-day event. If a one-day event, men's and women's events will be held in the morning and the mixed events will be held in the afternoon.

3. Age Classifications are:

- a) *Adult 18-39*
- b) *Masters 40-59*
- c) *Veteran 60+*
- d) *Jr 15-18 (Note – 18-year-olds that turned 18 prior to the preceding January 1st are ineligible and should race in Adult Class)*

4. Required Classes are:

- a) *Men's Adult, Masters & Veteran*
- b) *Women's Adult, Masters & Veteran*
- c) *Jr Men's and Junior Women's*
- d) *Mixed Adult, Masters & Veteran*

5. Awards – Awards are given to the top three in each adult Jr class. Regardless of age, the first teams to finish in each division (Men's, Women's and Mixed) will be considered the National Champions.

IV. **USCA BOAT SPECIFICATIONS**

A. Canoes

1. Rules applicable to all canoes:

- a) *Paddles: Canoes shall be propelled by single bladed paddles only. Any number of single blade paddles of any material and size may be onboard, but each competitor may use only one paddle at a time.*

b) *Hull Modifications/Repairs – Temporary hull modifications/repairs for the purpose of modifying hull measurements are prohibited. Examples include the use of tape, or any other material temporarily attached to the hull. Permanent hull modifications designed to bring a boat into specification are permitted provided they flow smoothly into the hull shape with no concave areas. NEW*

c) *At USCA sanctioned events:*

(1) *Either Pro Boat (3x27 Spec) or Competition Cruiser (4X32 Spec) boats may compete in the C2 Class events.*

(2) *Either Competition Cruisers (4X32 Spec) or C2 Standard boats may compete in the C2 Standard Class events.*

2. Competition Cruiser (4X32 Spec)

a) *Maximum length is 18 feet 6 inches (18'6"). Minimum width shall be 14 3/8% of the length (.14375 times the length) at the 4 inch water line, measured within 12 inches fore and aft of the center of the canoe.*

(1) *Length Method of Measurement (MOM): The length shall be measured between the plumb of the bow and the plumb of the stern and shall include bang plates. The length measurement shall not include seats extending beyond the stern end of the canoe.*

(2) *Canoe Stem: The overall length of the boat is taken from a projected perpendicular, imaginary line. This method accommodates unusual stems. The stem or stern may come back toward the bow 1/2 the height of the stern. Example: Shock wave layout for old Sawyer Champion.*

(3) *Width MOM: The width shall be measured horizontally on the exterior of the hull. It shall also be measured perpendicularly thwartship on the exterior of the hull. No sponson, keel, bilge keel, fin, end cap or other attachment shall be included in any measurement whether built in or added to the hull.*

b) *The exterior surface of the transverse cross section below the 7-inch water line shall be convex, not concave, except at transitions to built-in keels.*

c) *The minimum height at the bow shall be 15 1/2 inches. The minimum depth for the rest of the canoe shall be 11 1/2 inches.*

(1) *Height MOM: The bow height will be measured from the bottom of the canoe and shall not include any projection of any stem or gunwale beyond the hull. The minimum depth shall be measured from the bottom of the canoe.*

d) *The sheer of the gunwale shall have a minimum radius of 30 inches and shall be an integral part of the boat with a continuous curve.*

e) *Outwales: Any additions to outwales must be made on the gunwales and cannot extend more than 1 1/2 inches outward and downward from the hull.*

(1) *Outwales MOM - Seats shall not be included in measurements of outwales.*

f) *Water Removal: Any type of person-powered (or passive) bailer, pump or siphon may be used in any USCA boat.*

g) *Rudders: There shall be no mechanical steering devices in any USCA canoe classes. This does not include fixed keel or skegs as deemed allowable under present keel and concavity rules.*

h) *Materials: Canoes may be made of any material or combination of materials.*

i) *Reverse Rocker Specification: The limit of negative rocker (hog) at the 4 inch water line jig point shall be limited to 1/8 inch at the center of a six (6) foot straight line along the longitudinal center of the canoe.*

(1) *Reverse Rocker MOM: A six foot straight edge shall be placed on the hull longitudinally in the midline with a 1/8 inch projection at its center. The projection shall be placed at the intersection of the 4 inch water line jig point. If the projection touches the canoe, the canoe will pass inspection.*

3. **Standard:** All rules for the Competition Cruiser class will apply except for the below:

a) *The minimum depth amidships shall be 12 inches.*

b) *The minimum bow and stern height shall be 16 1/2".*

c) *The minimum width at the 4 inch water line shall be 15% of the length (length x 0.15).*

d) *Standard canoes may be made of any material or combination of materials with no weight minimum.*

4. **Stock Aluminum:**

a) *While the class was created for stock-manufactured aluminum canoes, other stock recreational manufactured canoes are legal (wood, Rolex [ABS], plastic, etc.), but no Kevlar, carbon fiber, or racing hulls are allowed. No beaver canoes are legal.*

b) *Maximum length is 17 feet 4 inches. Minimum width is 34.5" at the gunwales.*

- c) *No modifications can be made to the exterior of the canoe, or internally that will affect the hull shape of the canoe. Because many Alumacraft aluminum canoes have been modified to race the Texas Water Safari and other southern races, contestants must ensure that the external hull of their canoe has not been modified or pulled in. Modifications to seats, interior bulkheads or endcaps, and footbraces are allowed. To facilitate a change of seat type and placement, original factory seats may be removed.*
- d) *Sufficient flotation must be permanently affixed to the canoe to support a 25-pound weight when boat is full of water.*
- e) *The Race Chairman, Competition Chairman and/or the Technical Director of Inspection will be observing canoes and make the final determination as to the legality of Stock Aluminum canoes.*

5. Stock Canoe: To race in the C-1 Stock Canoe Class, the boat must be listed as an approved Stock Canoe by the New York Paddlesports Racing Association (<https://www.nypra.org/boat-specs>). When a stock canoe passes through the technical inspection station, USCA officials will use manufacturer applied markings to determine if the boat is on the NYPRA list. For boats with insufficient manufacturer applied markings, ownership documents such as a bill of sale or vessel registration may be used as proof of make/model. Boats not listed in the NYPRA list may race as a Stock Canoe provided that they meet the following specifications: All rules for the Competition Cruiser class apply except for the below.

- a) *C-1 & C-2 Bow height will be at least 17" high. The Stern must be at least 16"*
- b) *C-1 & C-2 must be built symmetrically. No hard line transitions in the hull of the boat. Curve of chine must be equal to at least the radius of a softball.*
- c) *C-1 & C-2 width must be at least 15% of the length at the 4" waterline. Minimum at the 4" waterline and 18" fore and aft of the widest point of the boat is 14% of the length*
- d) *C-1 & C-2 minimum depth amidships shall be 12.5".*
- e) *Maximum allowable tumblehome for the C-2 is 1", for the C-1 it is 3.5"*
- f) *Maximum length of the Stock C-2 is 18'6". The Max length of the Stock C-1 is 17'0"*

6. Pro Boat (3x27 Spec):

- a) *Maximum length of the hull shall be 18'6" (18 ft 6 in.).*
- b) *Minimum heights, measured from the 0" waterline:*

- (1) 15" Bow
- (2) 10" Center
- (3) 10" Stern

c) *The minimum-height gunwale line shall form a continuous, smooth arch-curve.*

d) *Minimum Width:*

- (1) 33" on the top, at the gunwale line
- (2) 27" wide at the 3" waterline or 3" of draft

e) *The points at which the 33" minimum top-width measurement and the 27" minimum waterline-width measurement are taken may be divided by up to 14" maximum.*

f) *The 33" minimum top-width and the 27" minimum waterline-width, may be measured a maximum of 14" fore or aft of the center of the canoe.*

g) *The cross-section(s) of the hull at the location(s) of the 33" minimum top-width and the 27" minimum waterline-width shall have no more than 1/4" (one-quarter inch) concavity between the 3" waterline and the gunwale line of the hull.*

h) *No concave curve(s) are allowed under the 3" waterline. The imperfections from repairs will be tolerated but will have to be very minimal to conform to the regulations.*

i) *All of the measurements will be verified on the exterior of the hull. Gunwales, sponsons and keels shall not be included in the measurement whether added to the hull or built into the hull.*

7. Outrigger Canoe

- a) *Single paddler for OC1 and two paddlers for OC2.*
- b) *Must have at least two Hulls – one main hull and one or two amas (outrigger floats)*
- c) *Any length, width or weight.*
- d) *Sit-on-top or sit-inside outrigger canoe allowed.*
- e) *Skegs and/or rudders may be used, if desired.*

B. Kayaks

1. Rules applicable to all kayaks:

- a) *May be sit inside, sit on top or surfski configuration.*
- b) *Paddles: Kayaks will be propelled by double bladed paddles only. Any number of double-bladed paddles may be onboard, but each competitor may only use one paddle at a time. In the event that a double-bladed paddle is broken, a competitor may finish with the broken paddle.*

c) *Over-stern mounted flip-up rudders that do not contribute to the waterline length of the boat shall not count in the boat's overall length. For boats that do not have an identifiable break between the hull and rudder, the rudder may be added to the length of the boat.*

d) *Hull Modifications/Repairs – Temporary hull modifications for the purpose of modifying hull measurements are prohibited. Examples include the use of tape, or any other material temporarily attached to the hull. Permanent hull modifications designed to bring a boat into specification are permitted provided they flow smoothly into the hull shape with no concave areas.*

e) *Boats with multiple hulls may participate in Kayak class events provided they meet all requirements for that class. For boats with multiple identical hulls, the measurements for a single hull shall be used for class determination. Otherwise, measurements for the main hull shall be used.*

2. Recreational Kayak: Maximum overall length of 16' and a 4" waterline beam of at least 22".

3. Sea Kayak: Maximum overall length of 18' and a 4" waterline beam of at least 8.5% of length.

4. Touring: Maximum overall length of 20' and a 4" waterline beam of at least 17".

5. Unlimited: No length or width limitations.

6. K2: Any double kayak paddled by two people. No length or width limitations.

C. Solo Outrigger & Kayaks for Adaptive Paddling

1. Any single kayak/surfski propelled with a double-bladed paddle (may have stabilizing floats and may have a rudder)

2. Any single Va'a/outrigger canoe propelled with a single blade paddle (may have stabilizing floats, may have a rudder.)

3. Any number of paddles of any material and size may be onboard, but each competitor may use only one paddle at a time.

D. Stand-Up Paddleboard (SUP)

1. General Rules Applicable to all SUP:

a) *All boards must be paddled standing up with a single blade paddle. Any number of single blade paddles of any material and size may be onboard, but each competitor may use only one paddle at a time.*

- b) *Boards may be either rigid construction or inflatable.*
- c) *Skegs/fins may be used provided they are mounted on the rear third of the board.*
- d) *Rudders are not permitted.*
- e) *No part of the board may have moving parts which can be used to help propel the board.*
- f) *The length of the board shall be measured from the extremes of the nose to tail. Fins extending beyond the transom of the board will be counted as length.*

2. SUP Classes

- a) *SUP 12'6": Any SUP with a length of 12'6" or less.*
- b) *SUP 14': Any SUP with a length of 14' or less.*
- c) *SUP Unlimited: Any SUP of any length.*

V. POINTS OF CONTACT

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