

Tips on Avoiding Penalties:

Passing/Yielding

Interference (IN) Non-Yield Penalties

If the Passer moves to within one length (and closing) of open water on the boat being overtaken (and ahead), it is the responsibility of the slower crew to yield the line chosen by the Passer in a timely manner

Interference (IS) Severe Collision

The Passer has the right of way to pass on the side of its choice if a safe pass can be accomplished. If a pass is attempted, the Passer shall not press the right to pass creating a situation in which there is a collision or in which the boat being overtaken is forced off the racecourse.

Strategic Advice

1. Remember that you do not have unlimited time to complete a pass. There has to be adequate space and time to permit a safe pass
2. Be very cautious when passing, especially in sight of bridges.
3. Plan ahead. Successful passing is a critical racing skill.

Beginning of the Pass (when the boat being passed is required to begin the act of yielding): If the Passer moves to within one length (and closing) of open water of the boat being passed, it is the responsibility of the slower crew to yield the line chosen by the Passer in a timely manner.

Completion of the Pass: When there is open water (any length) between stern of the passing boat and the bow of the passed boat, the pass is considered complete.

Responsibilities of the boat being passed

In passing situations, the boat about to be passed must yield and give suitable room to the passing boat on the side chosen by the passing boat.

Movement to yield must begin when the passing boat is within 1 length of open water (and closing) of the boat directly ahead.

Failure of the boat ahead to yield the line selected by the passing boat is interference, resulting in a 60-second penalty (IN) for Non- Yield (per infraction, witnessed by an Umpire).

If the boat being passed causes a collision during passing resulting in damage, interlocking boats or injury, the boat being passed will be "severely penalized or excluded" The standard penalty is 60 sec. (IS) for Severe Collisions.

Responsibilities of the overtaking boat (Passer)

In passing situations, the overtaking boat has right of way (on the side of its choice) if a safe pass can be accomplished. If a pass is attempted, and there is not adequate room and time to perform the pass, the overtaking boat must delay the act of passing until it is safe to do so.

The Passer must allow time for the boat being passed to yield safely.

If a Passer causes a collision during passing resulting in damage , interlocking boats or injury, the Passer will be "severely penalized or excluded" The standard penalty is 60 sec. (IS) for Severe Collision.

Tips on Avoiding Penalties:

Contact between boats, oars and competitors

On a narrow river course, with many boats competing for space, there are many opportunities for physical contact between boats, people, equipment or combinations thereof.
Some contact, such as clashing of oars is expected. Passing situations and multiple boats abreast in tight circumstances (e.g. going under bridge arches together) often result in incidental blade to blade contact which is not penalized.
Umpires observing "blade on hull", "blade on competitor" or "hull to hull" contact will award a penalty for interference to the responsible party.
Competitors should do everything in their power to avoid collisions, which may result in boat stoppage, material damage, injury and penalties (IS = Severe Collision – 60 sec.)
Aggressive, intentional contact between crews, may be more severely penalized (e.g. UC = Unsportsmanlike Conduct, or SV = Safety Violation, either of which can result in penalties ranging from 60 sec to exclusion).

How to stay out of trouble in the Travel Lane

Proceed in Single File – This is the best way to avoid leaving the lane- no stopping, row by pairs or 4s in larger boats
Watch Your Speed – Movement in the Travel Lane should be continuous, deliberate and moderate.
Stay in the lane. Though oars may cross over the buoy line, you should keep your hull in the clearly marked Travel Lane. Buoy violations (hull over the line) may be penalized at 30 seconds per buoy, and any interference with racing crews (hull or blades over the line) can result in a penalties ranging from 60 seconds to disqualification..
Racing lane Buoys - Every competitor to stay on the correct side of the buoys, while racing, in transit to the start, returning or anywhere else on the racecourse. Each buoy violation adds 30 seconds to your time.

There should be no reason for a boat to cross the course at the 2009 Head of Colorado

How to have a great experience at the start

Review the rules – You should arrive on the day of your event knowing the traffic pattern entering and within the starting area.
Listen to the marshals – When they try to organize boats in the starting area, they will be asking you to position your boat in the correct order of start (by bow number). In addition, they will be working with the start to help crews maintain "racing separation" allowing crews to proceed through the gate at a set starting interval. If you have a question for the marshal, raise your hand, and they will be there as soon as safely possible. There is a 30 second penalty for lining up in the incorrect order. Be patient, and allow boats ahead of you room to line up.
Listen to the starter – When your boat is called into the chute, follow the directions of the starter (who is in communication with the marshals).
Don't rush the start –Maintain a minimum of 2-3 length spacing.
Remember, penalties at the Start can be severe – Failure to follow the directions of the starter or marshals can result in a major penalty even before you've begun your race. This should be avoided at all costs.

Have a great race!

Know the Course – The situations where interference penalties are most likely to occur are well known. (at each of the bridges) In planning for your event, assess the risks of being involved in passing situations at these locations.
Be Aware of Traffic Patterns – Especially which arches to go through at each bridge.
Communicate – In coxed boats, the stroke will see a passing situation develop before the coxswain. Decide how you will communicate with one another to avoid "failure to yield" penalties.
Think Through a Passing Move from Beginning to End – Determine whether you can safely complete any pass you start.