

2025 – 2026 Polar Bear Series
Vancouver Rowing Club
October 26, 2025 – March 1, 2026
Vancouver, BC CANADA

Event Rules (ER)

(Incorporating the Notice of Race and Sailing Instructions)
Including **Amendment #1** (Nov 2, 2025) and **Amendment #2** (Jan 12, 2026)

The notation ‘[NP]’ in a rule means that a boat may not protest another boat for breaking that rule. This changes RRS 60.1(a).

1 RULES

- 1.1** The event is governed by the rules as defined in *The Racing Rules of Sailing*.
- 1.2** The World Sailing Offshore Special Regulations Category 4 with Sail Canada prescriptions applies as amended by ER Addendum A. For reference, the WS OSR Cat 4 document is available at <https://vrcracing.ca/polarbear/>.
- 1.3** [DP] The Rules of PHRF BC, dated January 29, 2024 will be the class rules for Divisions 1-4. These rules shall also apply to boats requesting a club rating. For reference, this document is available at <https://vrcracing.ca/polarbear/>.
- 1.4** [DP] The 2025 IMS Rule and ORC Rating Systems Rule are included under the ORC class rules for Division 0. For reference, these documents are available at <https://vrcracing.ca/polarbear/>.
- 1.5** The Racing Rules of Sailing will be changed as follows:
 - 1.5.1 [DP] RRS 40.1 applies to all boats with two or fewer crew. This changes RRS 40.1.
 - 1.5.2 Boats competing singlehanded are permitted the use of autopilot and/or wind powered self-steering gear. This changes RRS 52.
- 1.6** All boats must comply with Transport Canada regulations.
- 1.7** Per RRS 42.3(i), a boat is allowed to use her engine to get clear of a danger of collision with commercial traffic, to rescue any person overboard, or aid another boat in distress. After using her engine for propulsion, a boat shall return to a position that is no further advanced along the race course than the position where she started using her engine. A boat shall then report the engine use and duration to the race committee as soon as practicable.
- 1.8** Rule 60.4(a)(2) is changed as follows: (2) if it alleges a breach of a rule of Part 2 or rule 31 and is from a boat that was not involved in, and did not see, the incident, or

2 CHANGES TO EVENT RULES

- 2.1** Any change to the Event Rules prior to 2000 hours on Saturday October 25, 2025 will be a complete replacement of the revised document, available online at the event website: <https://vrcracing.ca/polarbear/>.
- 2.2** Any change to the Event Rules after 2000 hours on Saturday October 25, 2025 will be posted before 0900 hours on the day it will take effect, except that any change to the schedule of races will be posted by 2000 hours on the day before it will take effect.

3 COMMUNICATIONS WITH COMPETITORS

- 3.1** Notices to competitors will be posted on the official notice board located at <https://vrcracing.ca/polarbear/>.
- 3.2** The race committee may be reached at raceofficer@vrcracing.ca.
- 3.3** [DP] All boats shall carry a VHF radio capable of communicating on 12, 16, 68, 69, 71, 72 and 73.
- 3.4** On the water, the race committee will monitor and communicate with competitors on VHF radio 68 (called the “Series VHF” hereafter). Boats may ask questions of the race committee by Series VHF for course clarification only prior to their warning signal.
- 3.5** The race committee may attempt to hail the fleet by the Series VHF. Failure to do so will not be grounds for redress. Failure to note a shortened course or other race instruction due to not monitoring your radio will not be grounds for redress. This changes RRS 41 and ~~62.1(a)~~ **61.1(a)**.
- 3.6** All boats shall notify the race committee of their intention to race prior to 1045 hours each race date by providing their boat name and sail number to the Series VHF, or by approaching the signal vessel and hailing. Failure to comply with this instruction may result in the boat being scored “Did Not Start” (DNS) without a hearing. This changes RRS A4 and A5.
- 3.7** [DP] While racing, except in an emergency, a boat shall not make voice or data transmissions and shall not receive voice or data communication that is not available to all boats.

4 ELIGIBILITY AND ENTRY

- 4.1** The event is open to all keelboats that qualify under one of the following classes:

Division 0:	ORC APH less than 530.0
Division 1:	PHRF BC rating between 60 and 99
Division 2:	PHRF BC rating between 100 and 173
Division 3:	PHRF BC rating between 174 and 275

Cruising Division: PHRF BC rating open: white sails only

- 4.2** Before the start of the series, a division may be split into two if it has more than 15 entries and a request from the division. After which, division numbers will increment accordingly and the new divisions will be announced to competitors.
- 4.3** Eligible boats may enter by completing the entry online and submitting payment for the full series fee, or applicable single race entry fee.
- 4.4** Registration and payment: <https://vrc.jotform.com/232705956205255>
- 4.5** To be considered an entry in the event, a boat shall complete all registration requirements and pay all fees. Boats that fail to register and pay the applicable fee will not be scored.
- 4.6** All boats are reminded that full compliance with the rules and prescriptions of their rating system are required.
- 4.7** For boats racing under a PHRF handicap:
- 4.7.1 All boats must have a valid PHRF certificate unless provided a Club rating for this series. PHRF BC ratings will be verified against the public BC Sailing PHRF BC ratings database.
 - 4.7.2 A boat sailing in Divisions 1 to 3 that does not have a valid rating will be provided a club rating by the race committee. These boats are encouraged to seek a valid certificate reflecting the as-sailed condition of the boat from PHRF BC before the end of the series. Boats that do not receive a valid certificate before the conclusion of the series will not be eligible for prizes or trophies. Boats that receive a valid certificate will have their series rescored using the valid rating. Alternately, boats may alternately request to be included in the Cruising Division with a club rating with no further requirement for a valid rating. Club ratings shall not be subject to appeal.
 - 4.7.3 A boat with a valid PHRF rating from jurisdictions outside of PHRF BC will be provided a PHRF BC equivalent rating by the club measurer that will be considered valid for the purposes of the series. This rating shall not be subject to appeal.
 - 4.7.4 A boat within three points of the edge of a division rating band may request a switch of division at the start of the series with the permission of the race committee. If the new division is 'faster' than her rated division, she will adopt and race under the rating at the closest edge of the adopted band with no award/prize penalties if her rating certificate is otherwise valid. If the division is 'slower' than her rated division, her rating will remain unchanged from her certificate rating.
- 4.8** For boats racing under an ORC handicap:
- 4.8.1 Only valid 2025 ORC certificates will be used for the entire series and will be considered valid for the duration of the series. 2026 certificates will be

considered invalid due to the anticipated VPP model differences between 2025 and 2026. 2025 ratings will be verified against the ORC database.

4.8.2 Club-provided ratings will not be available for boats entering Division 0.

Boats may enter the series if they intend to receive a 2025 certificate prior to the end of 2025. Boats will receive finish times, but will be scored at the bottom of the division until their certificate is issued and valid.

5 FEES

5.1 Entry fees for racing are as follows:

Full Series Entry	Individual Race Entry
<i>\$75.00 for all races in the series</i>	<i>\$25.00 for one individual race day</i>

6 EVENT SCHEDULE

6.1 Registration will be open until 2000 hours February 27, 2026:

6.2 Dates of racing:

Day #1: October 26, 2025	Day #5: January 4, 2026
Day #2: November 9, 2025	Day #6: January 18, 2026
Day #3: November 23, 2025	Day #7: February 1, 2026
Day #4: December 7, 2025	Day #8: February 15, 2026
	Day #9: March 1, 2026

7 RISK STATEMENT

7.1 RRS 3 states: ‘The responsibility for a boat’s decision to participate in a race or to continue to race is hers alone.’ By participating in this event each competitor agrees and acknowledges that sailing is a potentially dangerous activity with inherent risks. These risks include strong winds and rough seas, sudden changes in weather, failure of equipment, boat handling errors, poor seamanship by other boats, loss of balance on an unstable platform and fatigue resulting in increased risk of injury. **Inherent in the sport of sailing is the risk of permanent, catastrophic injury or death by drowning, trauma, hypothermia or other causes.**

8 DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY

8.1 Competitors participate in the series entirely at their own risk. See RRS 3, Decision to Race. The Organizing Authority will not accept any liability for material damage or personal injury or death sustained in conjunction with or prior to, during, or after the series.

9 [DP] CODE OF CONDUCT

- 9.1** Competitors and support persons shall comply with reasonable requests from race officials.

10 INSURANCE

- 10.1** Each participating boat shall be insured with valid third-party liability insurance with a minimum cover of CA\$2,000,000 per incident or the equivalent.

11 SIGNALS MADE ASHORE

- 11.1** Signals made ashore will be delivered to the fleet via email to the address supplied to the Vancouver Rowing Club during registration.
- 11.2** When an email message is delivered to the fleet signalling a postponement in lieu of raising flag AP, '1 minute' is replaced with 'not less than 45 minutes' in Race Signals AP.

12 SCHEDULE OF RACES

- 12.1** The scheduled time of the warning signal for each day is 1055 hours. No warning signals will be made after 1400 hours.
- 12.2** Multiple races may be sailed in a day.
- 12.3** No finishes will be recorded after 1500 hours, unless rule ER 21.1 is active.

13 CLASS FLAGS

- 13.1** Boats will be assigned to divisions with the following class flags based on handicap ratings or classification specified in ER 4.1.

Division 0: Numeral Pennant 0

Division 1: Numeral Pennant 1

Division 2: Numeral Pennant 2

Division 3: Numeral Pennant 3

Cruising Division: Numeral Pennant 5

14 EVENT VENUE AND RACING AREA

- 14.1** The racing area is Howe Sound and English Bay extending west to a line formed by linking Starboard Hand Beacon Pac432 on Popham Island to the permanent mark QA west of Point Grey. Start lines will be near the QC buoy.

15 COURSES

- 15.1** Marks are identified by letters and are to be rounded in the sequence they appear on the course board, which will be displayed for each division on the race committee signal vessel.
- 15.2** When a green flag is displayed on the signal vessel, all non-gate marks shall be rounded to starboard. When a green flag is not displayed, all non-gate marks shall be rounded to port.
- 15.3** The race committee may fly signal flag “TANGO” (T) indicating the course to be sailed shall require:
- (i) Rounding the marks in the order displayed, then;
 - (ii) **From the direction of the previously rounded mark**: passing through (and then rounding one end if required) a gate formed between the signal vessel and Start line pin-end mark, before;
 - (iii) **Again** rounding the marks in the order displayed
- 15.4** **GATE REMINDER:** See RRS Definition “Sail the Course” part (c).
- 15.5** Legs of the course will not be changed after the preparatory signal. This changes RRS 33.

16 MARKS

- 16.1** The letters/marks are identified and described in ER Addendum B.

17 OBSTRUCTIONS

- 17.1** A line beginning at the northwest corner of the Royal Vancouver YC Jericho breakwater, through a series of orange and white can buoys ending with the north end of the most westerly pier at Jericho Sailing Centre, delimits an obstruction. Boats may not pass south of this line.
- 17.2** Boats may not enter City of Vancouver swim areas off Jericho Beach, Kitsilano and Spanish Banks. These are designated as an obstruction.

18 THE START

- 18.1** Races will be started using RRS 26 with the warning signal made 5 minutes before the starting signal.
- 18.2** The starting line is between staffs displaying orange flags on the starting marks, unless an inflatable mark is used for a pin mark—in which case the starting line is between a staff displaying an orange flag on the signal vessel and the course side of the inflatable starting mark on the opposite end of the line.
- 18.3** [NP] [DP] Boats whose warning signal has not been made shall avoid the starting area during the starting sequence for other races.

- 18.4** If any part of a boat’s hull is on the course side of the starting line during the two minutes before her starting signal and she is identified, the race committee will attempt to broadcast her sail number on Series VHF. Failure to make a broadcast or to time it accurately will not be grounds for a request for redress. This changes RRS ~~62.1(a)~~ **61.1(a)**.
- 18.5** If any part of a boat’s hull is on the course side of the starting line at her starting signal and she is identified, the race committee will attempt to hail her sail number. Failure to hail her number, failure of her to hear such a hail, or the order in which boats are hailed will not be grounds for a redress for request. This changes RRS ~~62.1(a)~~ **61.1(a)**.
- 18.6** A boat that does not start within 15 minutes after her starting signal will be scored Did Not Start (DNS) without a hearing. This changes RRS A5.1 and A5.2.
- 19** **CHANGE OF THE NEXT LEG OF THE COURSE**
- 19.1** To change the next leg of the course, the race committee will move the original mark or the finishing line to a new position.
- 20** **THE FINISH**
- 20.1** The finish line is between a staff displaying an orange flag on the race committee signal vessel and a nearby floating pin displaying an orange flag or inflatable mark (start line) unless the use of a separate Finish line is declared in the course, designated by the letter “F” (See ER 20.2).
- 20.2** If a course concludes with the letter “F”: This course will utilize a separate finish line between a staff displaying a blue flag on the race committee signal vessel and a nearby Finish pin displaying a blue flag.
- 20.3** If the race committee is absent when a boat finishes, she shall report her finishing time, and her position in relation to nearby boats, to the race committee at the first reasonable opportunity.
- 21** **TIME LIMIT(S)**
- 21.1** No finishes will be recorded after 1500 hours unless at least one boat in a division finishes the current race before 1500 hours, whereafter the deadline for that division will be extended to 1530. Boats failing to finish in that division (but still racing) after 1530 hours will be scored ‘Did Not Finish’ (DNF). This changes RRS 35.
- 22** **PENALTY SYSTEM**
- 22.1** 1.3.2 The Scoring Penalty, RRS 44.3 will not apply. This changes RRS 44.3.
- 23** **HEARING REQUESTS**
- 23.1** The protest time limit is 1700 hours on the date of the race.
- 23.2** Hearing request forms shall be completed online using the RRS.org website:

https://www.racingrulesofsailing.org/protests/new?event_id=12592.

- 23.3** Questions regarding hearings may be sent to the race officer at racing@vancouverrowingclub.ca.
- 23.4** Notices of hearings will be posted on the Racing Rules of Sailing event page at <https://www.racingrulesofsailing.org/schedules/12592/event> to inform competitors of hearings. Parties to a hearing will be informed by telephone or email at least 24 hours before the hearing. Parties are responsible for informing their own witnesses and ensuring their witnesses' attendance.
- 23.5** Hearings will be heard in the week following racing, when possible, either in person at Vancouver Rowing Club or online using Zoom at the discretion of the Chief Judge. Hearings will be heard in the approximate order in which they were received.
- 23.6** Hearing decisions will be posted on the Racing Rules of Sailing event page at: <https://www.racingrulesofsailing.org/decisions/12592/event>.
- ~~**23.7** RRS 62.2(a) and 66.2(a) do not apply.~~

24 SCORING

- 24.1** One race shall be required to be completed to constitute a series.
- 24.2** If no boat in a division finishes a course, scoring may be based on rounding times recorded at a mark or gate. This may be done after boats have rounded or passed through and may occur without a shortened course signal. This changes RRS 32.
- 24.3** RRS A5.3 applies.
- 24.4** Races will be scored using Time on Time handicap calculations
- 24.5** Depending on the course orientation, Division 0 races will be scored using either ORC "All Purpose" or "Windward/Leeward" Triple Number ratings:
- "Low" (9 knots or less)
 - "Medium" (between 9 and 14 knots)
 - "High" (14 knots or greater)
- The race committee will attempt to convey the wind strength to be used for ORC scoring via Series VHF prior to the start of each race.
- 24.6**
- a) When fewer than five (5) races have been completed, a boat's series score will be the total of her race scores.
 - (b) When from five (5) to nine (9) races have been completed, a boat's series score will be the total of her race scores excluding her worst score.
 - (c) When ten (10) or more races have been completed, a boat's series score will be the total of her race scores excluding her two worst scores.

- 24.7** A boat (and crew) that volunteer as race officer and committee on a race date will receive their average score for the series for that date. A boat may only volunteer a maximum of two times.

25 SAFETY REGULATIONS

- 25.1** [DP] During the event, boats shall not impede or obstruct commercial traffic. The penalty may be up to disqualification from the series and/or a Rule 69 hearing. This changes RRS 64.2.

- 25.2** [DP] A boat that retires from a race shall notify the race committee at the first reasonable opportunity.

26 MEDIA RIGHTS

- 26.1** By participating in the series, boats automatically grant to the organizing authority and its sponsors the right in perpetuity to make, use and show, from time to time at their discretion, any still or motion pictures and live, taped or filmed television and other reproductions of the boat during the period of the series without compensation.

27 EQUIPMENT AND MEASUREMENT CHECKS

- 27.1** A boats or equipment may be inspected at any time for compliance with the class rules or event rules.

28 OFFICIAL VESSELS

- 28.1** The signal vessel will be a volunteer club member boat that will fly the orange flag as soon as it is on station.

29 PRIZES

- 29.1** Series prize giving will be held during the 2026 Vancouver Rowing Club Awards and Volunteer Appreciation dinner.

- 29.2** Boats are invited to return to Vancouver Rowing Club following racing for the reading of the day's results and door prize draw.

30 FURTHER INFORMATION

- 30.1** For further information please contact:

Vancouver Rowing Club	
Telephone	604.687.3400
Fax	604.687.6812
Email	office@vancouverrowingclub.ca
Racing Officer	
Email	racing@vancouverrowingclub.ca

2025–2026 Polar Bear Event Rules

Addendum A

Amendments to Offshore Special Regulations Category 4 w/Sail Canada Prescriptions

- Section 3* Add “3.30 Boats designated as One Design by World Sailing or any MNA, whose one design class rule conflicts with Section 3 requirements (Structural Features, Stability, Fixed Equipment):
- (i) shall not be penalized for non-compliance with Section 3 that is a result of conflict with their one design class rule,
 - (ii) shall have all crew wearing lifejackets or PFDs while racing,
 - (iii) shall carry at least two thermal protective aids or other devices for treating crew following a crew overboard incident,
 - (iv) in the absence of class rule compliance with OSR 3.14 (Pulpit, Stanchion and Lifelines), shall carry at least one harness and safety line (tether) and have attachment point(s) to reduce crew overboard risk when working forward of the mast.”
- 3.18.2 Delete word “Permanently.”
- 3.19 Delete word “Permanently.”
- 3.28.1 Add “f) A boat shall have a mechanical propulsion system that is ready for immediate use. While racing, a boat shall also carry sufficient fuel for safety purposes such as crew-overboard recovery and to motor from the farthest point on the course to the host venue docks, the boat's home port, or a safe harbour, whichever is closer, in the forecasted conditions.”
- 4.01.1 Append “unless entered in Division 5, Cruising Division.”
- 4.05.1 Append “is highly recommended.”
- 4.05.2 Replace with “Fire extinguishers that meet Coast Guard/National Safety Authority requirements for the size of boat.”
- 4.10.1 c) Append “; or”; Add “d) A tubular radar reflector is acceptable if permanently mounted within 15 degrees of vertical.”
- 4.13.2 Append “is highly recommended.”
- 4.17 Append “is highly recommended.”
- 4.23 Replace with “A boat shall carry Coast Guard/National Safety Authority of the OA approved flares meeting day-night requirements at a minimum, not older than the expiration date, or if no stamped expiration date, not older than 4 years. SOLAS flares are recommended, but not required.”
- 4.26.2(a)(ii) Append “is recommended but shall not be required.”
- 4.26.2(a) Add “(iii) A roller furling headsail or smaller jib, suitable for heavy weather shall be considered compliant with OSR 4.26.2.”
- 5.01.1(a) Insert “or Lifejackets or PFDs meeting Canadian government requirements” after “UL 1180”; Append “or other measures to ensure the device does not ride up.” after “(ride up prevention system (RUPS))”
- 6.05.3 Append “is highly recommended.”

2025–2026 Polar Bear Event Rules
Addendum B
Course Marks

“A”	Point Grey Bell Buoy N 49°17.3’ W 123°15.9’
“B”	Kits Barge Buoy N 49°16.9’ W 123°09.8’
“C”	QC Buoy N 49°18.2’ W 123°10.0’
“D”	QB Buoy — N 49°19.0’ W 123°12.1’
“E”	Anchored Inflatable: RC will communicate position & colour by Series VHF
“F”	This course utilizes a separate Finish line between two staffs flying a blue flag (ER 20.2)
“G”	Race Start Pin: Floating staff w/orange flag in proximity to signal vessel, OR Orange or yellow inflatable mark in proximity to signal vessel
“H”	Start Line Gate: A gate is formed between signal vessel and Start pin.
“K”	Windward Inflatable: RC will communicate position & colour by Series VHF
“L”	"English Bay 46304" weather buoy N 49°18.0’ W 123°21.36’
“P”	Passage Island
“W”	Windward Inflatable: RC will communicate position & colour by Series VHF
“Y”	Leeward Inflatable: RC will communicate position & colour by Series VHF
“X”	Anchored Freighter: RC will communicate details by Series VHF
“Z”	Anchored Freighter: RC will communicate details by Series VHF