

3.6 INFLATABLE RESCUE BOAT (IRB) COMPETITION

Introduction

The aims of Inflatable Rescue Boat (hereafter referred to as 'IRB') competition are to:

- ✓ Improve the prowess of IRB drivers and crewpersons (hereafter collectively referred to as 'crew').
- ✓ Encourage crews to correctly equip and maintain their IRB and motors for optimum safe performance and reliability for both lifesaving patrol duties and competition.
- ✓ Allow crews to demonstrate their techniques and their abilities to perform a rescue.
- ✓ Bring crews together to discuss and improve IRB techniques and operations.
- ✓ Promote safety awareness techniques for the crew and patients in simulated rescue scenarios.

All IRB competition participants acknowledge and agree that:

(a) They each release and will release SLSA from all claims that they have or may have had but for this release arising from or in connection with their membership of SLSA and/or participation in any SLSA authorised or recognised competition or activity whether conducted under this Manual or otherwise.

(b) They each indemnify and will keep indemnified SLSA to the extent permitted by law in respect of any claims arising as a result of or in connection with their membership of SLSA and/or participation in any SLSA authorised or recognised competition or activity (whether conducted under this Manual or otherwise).

(c) In paragraphs (a) and (b) above the word "claims" means and includes any action, suit, proceeding, claim, demand, damage, penalty, cost or expense however arising but does not include a claim in respect of any action, suit, etc made by any person entitled to make a claim under a relevant SLSA insurance policy or under the SLSA constitution or regulations.

(d) The rules contained in this manual are made for the purpose of ensuring a safe and fair system or framework within which surf lifesaving competitions are to be regulated and conducted.

3.6.1 General Conditions

3.6.1.1 Safety essentials

(a) **WARNING:** IRB competition can be inherently dangerous. IRB competition participants acknowledge that they are exposed to certain risks during IRB competition including but not limited to leg, spinal and neck injuries, physical exertion, contact with the IRB, temperature, weather and water conditions and even drowning. IRB competition participants acknowledge that accidents can and often do happen which may result in IRB competition participants being injured or even killed. All members through their participation in IRB events agree with, acknowledge and understand this warning and accept and assume the inherent risks in IRB competition.

(b) Safety procedures - Course Judges will monitor and observe all driving, operating, safety practices and techniques. Should such practices and techniques be considered to be unsafe, dangerous or contrary to the rules or procedures of the event the Course Judges have the authority to immediately disqualify the offending competitor/s from the event and/or issue a safety infringement. Recommendation for further penalties and/or referral to the carnival disciplinary committee may also be considered.

(c) Signs or banners shall be displayed to provide a 50-metre buffer zone on either side of the competition area. These may be the same signs used to indicate IRB training and shall be a minimum of 1 metre x 1 metre.

For example:

‘CAUTION - KEEP CLEAR - POWER RESCUE BOAT TRAINING’
or
‘CAUTION - KEEP CLEAR’
or
‘INFLATABLE RESCUE BOAT - RESCUE EVENTS’

3.6.1.2 IRB Competition pre carnival safety briefing

A pre carnival safety briefing may be conducted in conjunction with the officials, coaches and team managers briefing before the commencement of IRB competition. The following items may be included:

- (a) An explanation of all the safety procedures that shall be observed by all competitors.
- (b) Patient care and indicative water temperature.
- (c) Identification of the location of emergency and first aid areas during the competition
- (d) Forecast of surf and weather conditions for the competition period, and any inherent dangers.
- (e) Safety and rescue plan and, contingency relocation plan.
- (f) Attention shall be drawn to the *Section 1 Competition Safety* in the Surf Sports Manual.

3.6.1.3 Safety infringements

A strong emphasis will be placed on safe driving, crewing and patient practices. All competitors must complete each event in a safe and controlled speed and manner or will face immediate disqualification from the event, and/or issue of a safety infringement and consideration for further penalties.

- (a) A safety infringement shall be issued to any competitor deemed to have committed an unsafe practice. This will result in immediate disqualification of the competitor and their entire team (i.e. crew and patient/s) from the event the infringement occurred in. The name of the competitor and the details of the infringement shall be logged through the safety infringement register of the relevant state and national office.
- (b) If a competitor receives more than one safety infringement in any one competition they shall be disqualified from the entire competition.
- (c) Should a history of safety infringements be identified by a SLSA office or official in a twelve month period, the matter shall be referred to the relevant state or national officer/s for consideration of further penalties or disciplinary action.

3.6.1.4 Competitor pre-requisites

At the date of entry closure for the competition to be contested:

(a) Drivers are required to:

- (i) Have held the IRB drivers award for a minimum of six months, be currently proficient as required by SLSA and have logged twenty IRB driving hours within the previous twelve months.
- (ii) Be endorsed by a current licensed Surf Coach as being competent for IRB competition.

(b) Crewpersons are required to:

- (i) Be a minimum of sixteen years of age.
- (ii) Have held the IRB crewpersons award for a minimum of six months, be currently proficient as required by SLSA and have logged a minimum of twenty IRB crewing hours within the previous twelve months.
- (iii) Be endorsed by a current licensed Surf Coach as being competent for IRB competition.

(c) Patients are required to:

- (i) Be a minimum of fifteen years of age.
- (ii) Have held the IRB crewpersons award for a minimum of three months, be currently proficient as required by SLSA and have logged twenty IRB crewing hours within the previous twelve months, **or**, hold the IRB crewpersons award, be currently proficient as required by SLSA and have logged twenty competition specific IRB training hours under the tuition of a current licensed Surf Coach.
- (iii) Be endorsed by a current licensed Surf Coach as being competent for IRB competition.

(d) Handlers, at the date of competition, are required to:

- (i) Hold the IRB crewpersons certificate and be currently proficient as required by SLSA.
- (ii) Be entered in the competition contested and wear a competition cap whilst handling the IRB.

Note: Exemption may be given by the Referee for a competitor to be an IRB handler for a club other than their own.

- (e) Competitors should be conversant with all current specifications, competition rules and event conditions etc pertaining to IRB competition and comply accordingly. Attention is also drawn to other relevant sections of the Surf Sports Manual including *Section 2- General Competitive Conditions* and any other relevant circulars or bulletins which must also be complied with.

3.6.1.5 Entry limitations

- (a) IRB Competition may be conducted in different categories of age, grade and gender.
- (b) A competitor may not compete or nominate to compete in more than eight events at any one competition.
- (c) If eligible to compete in multiple grades or age categories drivers and crewpersons may do so but may only compete in a particular event once, e.g. open male rescue is a different event to the under 23 male rescue.
- (d) IRB patients are to be considered as gender neutral with respect to their participation in male and female IRB events.
- (e) Patients may compete in any grade, age or gender category events but may only compete in a particular event once.
- (f) Attention is also drawn to other relevant sections of the Surf Sports Manual including *Section 2- General Competitive Conditions* and any other relevant circulars or bulletins which must also be complied with.

3.6.1.6 Equipment requirements, scrutineering and compliance

- (a) IRB competition equipment must be either club owned or provided on a pooled basis by SLSA.
- (b) All IRBs and equipment shall comply with the specifications of SLSA, scrutineering conditions and rules as specified by SLSA through circulars and bulletins.
- (c) All IRBs must have an 'Approved Surf Rescue Craft' plate affixed.

3.6.1.7 The Course

- (a) The course for IRB competition shall be set at the discretion of the Referee.
- (b) A 'lane' is defined as an area centred on a line of sight from the 'beach position marker', located on the 'start / finish line', and the relative 'turning buoy'.
- (c) Lanes are bounded by 'lane marker' poles (typically red or orange in colour) that are placed in a line parallel to the waters edge which subsequently forms the 'changeover line'.
- (d) The turning buoy shall normally be set at a minimum measured distance of 120 metres from the end of knee depth water at the low tide mark and taking into account varying conditions such as sandbars, exclusion of holes and rips, surf conditions, prevailing winds and safety factors.
- (e) The 'patient pick-up buoy' for the rescue, mass rescue and teams rescue events is positioned approximately 10 metres directly behind the turning buoy.
- (f) The 'rescue tube patient buoy' for the rescue tube event is positioned approximately 25 metres directly behind the turning buoy.

3.6.1.8 Course variations

- (a) Water finish- The team is deemed to have finished once any part of the hull of the IRB crosses the finish line from the seaward side between the two finishing flags / poles.
- (b) Curved beach start- Crews are positioned to take into account the curved nature of the beach.
- (c) Curved beach finish - The driver shall be required to run up to the start / finish line and raise the team's beach position flag above their head whilst remaining on their feet.
- (d) Electronic finish - The driver shall activate an electronic device at the start / finish line to register the finish, and be on their feet when the device is activated.

3.6.1.9 Administration and Officials

- (a) Events may be held separately or as part of a surf competition and, as such, will come under the overall control of the Referee / Sectional Referee. The Referee shall have knowledge of SLSA competition, surf sports manual, relevant bulletins and circulars regarding the competition and IRB operations.
- (b) Other officials shall be appointed to assist the conduct of the competition. In addition, specialist advisers (e.g. hull and motor experts etc) may be appointed to assist SLSA.

3.6.2 Procedure

3.6.2.1 Placing of Patients

- (a) Patients shall be taken to sea by either the duty boats or their own crews.
- (b) If crews take out their patients they may be transferred to the duty boats.
- (c) Patients shall be placed in the water at their allocated patient pick-up buoy. For the rescue tube event the patient shall be placed at the allocated rescue tube patient buoy.
- (d) Patients may hold onto their buoy until the patient pick-up. For the pick-up they shall release all contact with the buoy and position themselves clear of and behind their pick-buoy on the seaward side.
- (e) In the mass rescue and teams events the second patient will wait on the beach side of the pick-up buoy and move to the seaward side of the buoy after the first patient has been picked up and the IRB has crossed back to the shoreward side of the pick-up buoy.

3.6.2.2 The Start

- (a) Competitors in IRB events shall be assembled in the marshalling area. When entries are checked the Marshall shall inform each team of their allocated lane.
- (b) On command from the Marshall, the crew and IRB shall proceed to the waters edge of their allocated lane. Check Starter/s may be utilised to guide crews to their starting position.
- (c) Crews are able to claim bonus time. This is an optional concession, provided at the discretion of the Referee, for crews at the start of events. Each club is allowed a maximum of five minutes bonus time per competition, which may be claimed in a minimum of one-minute increments.
- (d) The driver shall be positioned adjacent to their respective beach position marker in readiness for a race start with their toes on or behind the start / finish line. If a lane coloured vest is supplied it must be worn by the driver/s as directed by the Referee.
- (e) The crewperson shall stand outside the IRB and hold it in the 'set' position until the driver makes visible contact with the boat after the start of the event. The 'set' position is defined as the IRB being held stationary, wholly within the lane, square to the wave and with its bow facing out to sea.
- (f) At the discretion of the Referee, a maximum of two handlers may be permitted to assist the crewperson to hold the IRB in the set position. The handlers must visibly release all contact with the boat once the driver touches the IRB after the start of the event and may not assist the crew further.
- (g) On the Starter's signal the driver shall cross the start / finish line and proceed to the IRB. A break shall be adjudicated as defined in 2.19- 'Starting of Events' in the Surf Sports Manual.
- (h) The driver and crewperson, at their own discretion, shall board the IRB. This decision is ultimately the responsibility of the driver and crewperson and as such IRB crews cannot protest the start.
- (i) The driver starts the motor whilst inside the IRB with both feet on the floor. Only the driver may start the motor and the crewman must be in contact with the IRB at the time the motor is started.
- (j) If starting the motor in gear and using one hand to start, the driver must maintain control of the motor throttle grip with their other hand. If a two handed start is used the motor must be in neutral.
- (k) During and immediately after starting the motor, the IRB must not move in an uncontrolled or unsafe fashion.

3.6.2.3 Proceed To and From Buoys

- (a) The decision to proceed to sea is ultimately the responsibility of the driver and crewperson.
- (b) After entering the IRB the driver and crewperson must maintain their 'normal position' as described below with three secure points of contact.
 - (i) Normal driver position is defined as right foot in the foot strap, left hand holding the driver pontoon handle, right hand holding motor throttle grip, and seated on the pontoon.
 - (ii) Normal crewperson position is defined as left foot in the foot strap (right foot in foot strap is optional), left hand holding the bow rope handle, right hand holding the inner pontoon (boarding) handle or lifeline rope, and seated on the pontoon. The crewperson may rise from the seated position to absorb the impact of negotiating a wave or swell. When 'punching' a wave the crewperson shall move forward and lay on the spray dodger, resting on their right shoulder, maintain a short grip at the attached end of the bow rope with their right hand and brace themselves against the handle of the bow rope with their left hand using a straight arm. The crewperson may move their weight for turning or negotiating shallow water providing it is done so in a safe manner.

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- (iii) Normal patient position is defined as crouched inside the IRB and holding onto the pontoon lifeline rope. The patient must not be seated on the floor or pontoon of the IRB.
- (c) The only exceptions to the normal positions detailed above are:
 - (i) The driver and / or crewperson may leave their normal position to drag the IRB over a sand bar if the motor is electrically dead, or in the neutral position if left running.
 - (ii) The crewperson in all patient pickups and the driver in the rescue tube pick-up.
- (d) The driver and crewperson must maintain control of the IRB at all times during the competition to ensure it moves in a safe and controlled manner.
- (e) The leading IRB, whilst proceeding to the buoys, shall have right-of-way and the trailing IRB must take evasive action by turning or giving way to prevent collision.

3.6.2.4 The Turn and Patient Pickup

The turn and patient pick-up process shall be as follows for the rescue, mass rescue and teams event:

- (a) Crews must not steer a wide course or delay a turn which impedes the progress of another crew or forces them from their true course.
- (b) All buoys shall be turned anti clockwise and be maintained on the port (left hand) side of the IRB throughout turns. The buoy must not be forced under the pontoon during any part of the turn.
- (c) The IRB shall turn the allocated turning buoy and proceed to the allocated patient pick-up buoy aligning the patient to the port side.
- (d) The patient will face towards the IRB in preparation for the patient pick-up. The patients hands must be clasped together or one hand held to the opposite wrist during the pick-up.
- (e) The patient pick-up shall be completed in a safe manner, on the port side of the IRB and on the seaward side of the pick-up buoy. The driver and crewperson may both assist with the patient lift.
- (f) Once the patient is completely out of the water, i.e. when no part of the patient's body is in the water, the IRB shall complete the turn, passing back to the beach side of the patient pick-up buoy and return to shore keeping their turning buoy on their left hand side. In the mass rescue this procedure is repeated for the second patient pick-up.
- (g) The IRB shall not turn around any buoy other than the allocated turning buoy and the allocated patient pick-up buoy.
- (h) If an IRB crew misses the patient pick-up they may continue to their respective turning buoy a second time, round it and re-attempt the patient pick-up as described above.

3.6.2.5 The Finish / Changeover

- (a) The IRB shall beach and remain inside the allocated lane until the driver has exited the IRB.
- (b) When beaching the IRB, the driver must throttle the motor back to idle and stop the motor, i.e. render it electrically dead by activation of motor kill switch, prior to the IRB being grounded on the shore edge. If a motor kill switch safety lanyard is used it must remain attached to the motor.
- (c) The driver, crewperson or patient must not be dislodged from their normal positions by grounding the IRB with excessive speed or beaching at an awkward angle.
- (d) The motor must be stopped, i.e. electrically dead by activation of the motor kill switch, prior to the driver or patient alighting from the IRB. The crewperson may alight prematurely, in a safe manner, to steady the IRB.
- (e) When exiting the IRB, the driver must keep both feet on the IRB floor until the motor is electrically dead by activation of the motor kill switch.
- (f) The driver must remain seated until both feet are swung outside the IRB. The definition of 'outside' is past the centreline of the port side pontoon.
- (g) The driver must have completed their exit aft of the IRB front lift handles and must not step off any part of the IRB or floorboard when exiting.
- (h) The driver must exit in a safe and controlled manner and must not fall during the exit process as a result of poor technique or the IRB being grounded with excessive speed.
- (i) The crewperson shall remain in control of the IRB while the driver runs to the start / finish line. The patient may assist the crewperson in the control of the IRB (the first patient in mass rescue and teams is the exception).
- (j) The finish is judged on the chest of the driver when they cross the start / finish line. The driver must cross the start / finish line on their feet.

3.6.3 IRB Events-Description

3.6.3.1 Event No 1: Rescue Tube

- (a) Each team shall comprise one driver, one crewperson and one patient.
- (b) The patient is positioned as described in *Procedure 3.6.2.1*.
- (c) For the purpose of this event only, the rescue tube may be either in the normal stowage position or under the spray dodger with the harness looped over the crewpersons bow rope.
- (d) The start shall be as described in *Procedure 3.6.2.2*.
- (e) After the break has been negotiated the crewperson, whilst maintaining a secure position, shall don the rescue tube harness in a safe manner prior to rounding the turning buoy.
- (f) The IRB shall round the turning buoy anti-clockwise and then must remain wholly, i.e. all parts of the IRB, on the beach side of the turning buoy until the patient pick-up has commenced [refer 3.6.3.1 (k)].
- (g) After the IRB has rounded the turning buoy the crewperson shall enter the water from the port side maintaining the turning buoy on their left. The rescue tube shall be unclipped and held in a secure grip. It must be ensured that no part of the rescue tube, lanyard or harness snags the IRB or driver.
- (h) The crewperson shall then swim to their respective patient keeping their allocated turning, patient pick-up and rescue tube patient buoys on their left hand side.
- (i) The crewperson and / or the patient secure the rescue tube around the patient's body and under both arms and clipped to an o-ring. The patient must remain on the seaward side of the rescue tube patient buoy until the clip is secured to an o-ring.
- (j) The crewperson continues anti-clockwise around the buoy and tows the patient to the IRB maintaining the patient pick-up buoy and turning buoy on their left hand side. The patient is permitted to assist by kicking, and sculling with arms under the surface, but must not swim with an out-of-water arm recovery. The patient must not be towed on their stomach. The use of swim fins, hand fins or other non approved aids is not permitted.
- (k) Once the driver makes visible physical contact with the patient (not the tube or harness) the patient pickup is deemed to have commenced and the IRB may cross to the seaward side of the turning buoy.
- (l) The crewperson and patient shall board the IRB on the port side with or without assistance from the driver. The driver may release the motor throttle grip and stand to assist the pick-up providing the motor is in neutral.
- (m) The IRB shall continue anti-clockwise around the turning buoy. The patient and crewperson must be completely out of the water prior to the IRB proceeding back to the beach side of the turning buoy.
- (n) The rescue tube shall remain around the patient and the crewperson shall remove the harness and pass it to the patient. The patient must keep a secure grip on the lanyard and harness and ensure that they do not snag anything within the IRB, extend past the transom or pass through either of the self-bailers.
- (o) The crew shall return to shore, as described in *Procedure 3.6.2.3*.
- (p) The finish shall be as described in *Procedure 3.6.2.5*.

3.6.3.2 Event No 2: Mass Rescue

- (a) Each team shall comprise one driver, one crewperson and two patients.
- (b) Both patients are positioned as described in *Procedure 3.6.2.1*.
- (c) The start shall be as described in *Procedure 3.6.2.2*.
- (d) The crew shall proceed out to sea, pick up their first patient and then return to shore, as described in *Procedure 3.6.2.3 and 3.6.2.4*.
- (e) The driver shall exit as described in *Procedure 3.6.2.5*. At the shore the crewperson, controls the IRB and may turn it around. The patient must exit the IRB, after the driver exits, and retire to the beach. The patient is not permitted to assist the crewperson.
- (f) The driver proceeds to the start / finish line, rounds their respective beach position marker and returns to the IRB. The driver may assist the crewperson to turn the IRB around.
- (g) The IRB shall be relaunched and restarted and the crew will proceed out to sea to pick up their second patient and then return to shore, as described in *Procedure 3.6.2.3 and 3.6.2.4*.
- (h) The finish shall be as described in *Procedure 3.6.2.5*.

3.6.3.3 Event No 3: Teams Rescue

- (a) Each team shall comprise of two drivers, two crewpersons and two patients.
- (b) The patients are positioned as described in *Procedure 3.6.2.1*.
- (c) The start shall be as described in *Procedure 3.6.2.2*.
- (d) The second driver and second crewperson shall position themselves at the changeover line.
- (e) The crew shall proceed out to sea, pick up their first patient and then return to shore, as described in *Procedure 3.6.2.3 and 3.6.2.4*.
- (f) The driver shall exit as described in *Procedure 3.6.2.5*. After the first driver has completed their exit the patient exits the IRB and the second crewperson crosses the changeover line and proceeds to the IRB.
- (g) The first crewperson turns and maintains control of the IRB until the second crewperson has made contact with it. The second crewperson may assist in this process. The patient is not permitted to assist the crewpersons.
- (h) The first crewperson and patient then retire, and remain behind, the start / finish line.
- (i) The driver proceeds to the start / finish line, rounds their respective beach position marker and visibly tags the second driver who is standing at the changeover line with their toes on or behind the line.
- (j) After the tag the second driver proceeds to the waters edge to relaunch and restart the IRB. The second driver must not start the motor until the first crewperson is on the beach side of the changeover line.
- (k) The second crew will proceed out to sea, pick up their second patient and then return to shore, as described in *Procedure 3.6.2.3 and 3.6.2.4*
- (l) The finish shall be as described in *Procedure 3.6.2.5*.

3.6.3.4 Event No 4: Rescue

- (a) Each team shall comprise one driver, one crewperson and one patient.
- (b) The patient is positioned as described in *Procedure 3.6.2.1*.
- (c) The start shall be as described in *Procedure 3.6.2.2*.
- (d) The crew shall proceed out to sea, pick up their patient and then return to shore, as described in *Procedure 3.6.2.3 and 3.6.2.4*.
- (e) The finish shall be as described in *Procedure 3.6.2.5*.

3.6.3.5 Event No 5: IRB Relay

- (a) This event is a continuous relay involving the four events detailed above. The four legs of this event shall be conducted in the order: *1- Rescue Tube, 2- Mass Rescue, 3- Teams Rescue and 4- Rescue*.
- (b) Six patients shall be taken to sea by the competing club's nominated 'patient boat'.
- (c) The patient for the first leg, i.e. the Rescue Tube is positioned as described in *Procedure 3.6.2.1*. The five other patients wait in the club's patient boat for their respective leg. The patient boat must remain clear and on the seaward side of the rescue tube patient buoy for the duration of the event.
- (d) The start shall be as described in *Procedure 3.6.2.2*.
- (e) Each leg shall be as per the individual event descriptions except for the start of legs two, three and four and the finish of legs one, two and three which shall be changeovers as detailed in the teams rescue event description *3.6.3.3 (i)*.
- (f) Patients for legs two, three and four shall swim to their respective pick-up position, as described in *Procedure 3.6.2.1*, after all patient pick-ups for the proceeding leg are completed as per *Procedure 3.6.2.4*.
- (g) The finish shall be as described in *Procedure 3.6.2.5*.

3.6.4 Disqualifications

Crews shall be disqualified if found to have:

- (a) Failed to comply with any matter contained in the Surf Sports Manual, bulletins or circulars relevant to the event.
- (b) Failed to comply with the event procedure, description and / or rules detailed in this document.
- (c) Interfered with, or used any components of the course to gain an unfair advantage.
- (d) Attempted to start an event or negotiate the surf in subsequent legs with the IRB not correctly assembled.