



# ERCU 2026 GENERAL RULES

*(Adopted, 1/5/2026)*

## **PROLOGUE**

The goal of Electric Radio Controlled Unlimiteds (ERCU) is to replicate the look and competition of real unlimited hydroplane racing. Boats are 1/10-scale and 1/7-scale replicas of the real boats that have attempted to qualify on the unlimited circuit. The club will emphasize scale appearance accuracy and quality workmanship as well as enjoyable competition on the water. As with the real boats, the races will be run counterclockwise on the course.

## **POLICY AND INTENT**

Guidelines offered in this rulebook are subject to the term “spirit and intent” and apply to the technical aspects of model boat racing as well as to the actions of drivers, crew members, owners, officials, and contest directors. It is expected that all participants will adhere to the spirit and intent of these rules.

These are guidelines for fair and equitable competition. They are not the basis to “read between the lines” to circumvent the intent. The “spirit and intent” clause allows the Referee to make decisions and resolve disputes in a timely manner. If you are contemplating a technical undertaking that is not directly addressed in these rules, please contact the Contest Board to make sure it is legal and will be allowed.

## **DISCLAIMER**

These rules shall govern all Electric Radio Controlled Unlimiteds (ERCU) sanctioned or promoted events and, by participation in these events, all entrants are deemed to have understood and complied with these rules. No express or implied warranty of safety shall result from publication of, or compliance with, these rules and regulations. They are intended as a guide for the conduct of the sport and are in no way a guarantee against injury or death to participants, spectators, or others.

## A. CLASSES

- I. There shall be two divisions within ERCU: 1/10-scale and 1/7-scale
- II. Each division will support three classes;
  - a. **Vintage:** The vintage class is defined as displacement, step, pre-1950 Ventnor 3-point, and all boats with a round nose, typical of the design of, but not limited to, boats in the 1950s and 1960s.
    - i. **INCLUDED** are the following roundnose boats that have been converted to a picklefork configuration (i.e. Hull #6544: 1968 Gales Roostertail, 1969 Miss Schweppes, 1971 Towne Club, 1973 Valu-Mart, 1973 My Cupiee; Hull #6404 Harrah's Club; Hull #6615: 1983 Miss Dobson, The Mover; Hull #6925 Pride of Pay 'n Pak Outrigger).
    - ii. **EXCLUDED** are any roundnose boat with an outboard skid fin, stepped sponsons and/or other modifications from the above vintage definition (i.e. Hull #6708: 1978-79 Miss Van's PX, 1980 U-80 (no name), 1980-82 Don Campbell's Food Service, 1982 Bob Patterson Special; 1983 Chet's Music Shop, Miss Crab Legs, Specialty Leasing, 1984 Modern Hard Chrome, Patterson Special, Kawaguchi Travel, Houston Gold Cup '85, 1986 Miss Bahia, 1987 Miss Crab Legs, Miss Bahia, Lighthouse Inn & Resort).
  - b. **Classic:** The classic class will be all picklefork boats that ran with piston or turbine power, typical of, but not limited to, the boats in the 1970s and 80s, including the four-point 1980 Miss Circus Circus.
    - i. **INCLUDED:** Any roundnose boat with an outboard skid fin, stepped sponsons, and/or other modifications from the above vintage definition (i.e. Hull #6514: 1965 Tomyann, and Hull #6708: 1978-79 Miss Van's PX, 1980 U-80 (no name), 1980-82 Don Campbell's Food Service, 1982 Bob Patterson Special; 1983 Chet's Music Shop, Miss Crab Legs, Specialty Leasing, 1984 Modern Hard Chrome, Patterson Special, Kawaguchi Travel, Houston Gold Cup '85, 1986 Miss Bahia, 1987 Miss Crab Legs, Miss Bahia, Lighthouse Inn & Resort).
  - c. **Modern:** The modern class will be all boats that incorporate a picklefork configuration running with turbine power or piston power (i.e. U-3 Cooper boat) and with enclosed cockpits, typical of most boats starting in the 1990s and running to the present, including the four-point 1994 Miss Elam.
- III. *Any class can be officially run with a minimum of two boats. If only two boats are present, the race will use an alternate format for that class consisting of three-lap preliminary heats and a five-lap final. When three or more boats are entered, the race will be run without restrictions on the number of laps in the preliminary heats (this rule will be re-evaluated by the Competition Committee after the 2026 season).*

## B. CLUB MEMBERSHIP

- I. Cost of membership will be \$25 annually. Membership, and the racing season, runs from November 1 through October 31 each year
  - a. Only registered club members will be allowed to register boats and to drive boats at club events. All ERCU racing members must be members in good standing of NAMBA International and be able to provide proof of NAMBA membership.
  - b. Boat registration will be \$5 per hull per year. Only registered boats are allowed to race at club events
    - i. The entry fee for each race will be \$10 for the first boat in each class and \$5 per boat for each additional boat per class per race based on registered ownership of that boat
- II. Fees collected by the club will be used to provide the following for the membership:
  - a. Securing racecourse sites; Website expenses; Media promotions; Banquet expenses; Awards; Equipment and maintenance; Club supplies
  - b. There are no paid positions in the club

- III. Visiting drivers from another club may attend and compete at one ERCU race. A visiting driver is required to pay the race entry fee and must provide proof of NAMBA membership.
  - a. Racing at a second event within the same racing season would require all club membership, boat registration forms and race day entry fees to be completed and paid before the second race begins.
  - b. Duplicate boats are allowed for one race only, after which time the newest registrant would have to resolve the issue by making necessary changes to his boat to eliminate the duplicity.
  - c. If duplicate boats attend the same race, they will be placed in different heats up to the final, where all qualified boats would be able to run.

**C. BOAT REGISTRATION**

- I. Members are allowed a total number of boat registrations equaling two times the number of classes of hull registrations across all divisions at any one time, and not to exceed three registrations in any one class. Registration can be made at any time by mail, online or in person to the club's registrar/treasurer.
  - a. Boat registration is on a first-come first served basis.
  - b. All registrations expire on October 31, regardless of the initial date of registration. Any member giving up a registration may re-register said boat if it has not been registered by another person.
- II. All boats not re-registered by January 2 shall be considered unregistered and available for registration after notification to the membership by the Registrar of all boats whose registrations have lapsed.
  - a. Registration requests for these boats shall be submitted to the registrar with a \$5 nonrefundable fee prior to the February members meeting, at which time a drawing will be held to award the registrations.
  - b. The fee collected is either the registration fee for the successful applicant or a donation to the club for the remainder.
- III. A boat registration shall be defined as inactive when the boat has earned no season points in two consecutive racing seasons. A one-time purchase of one additional year of registration may be purchased by payment of \$30 to the club's registrar/treasurer.
- IV. A racing season is defined as all sanctioned events occurring in a racing year (November 1 through October 31).
- V. The ERCU Treasurer/Registrar shall maintain an updated list of all registered boats, which will be public on the club website after January 2.

**D. CONTEST DIRECTOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

- I. The Contest Director (CD) shall be responsible for all planning and preparation connected with the event he or she is managing.
- II. The CD is the primary official of the regatta.
  - a. The CD is responsible for the smooth, efficient, and fair progression of the regatta.
  - b. The CD shall select regatta officials (chief referee(s), drivers representatives, pit bosses) and make certain that the regatta officials perform their duties.
  - c. Where scheduled regattas have no "Contest Director", the Board of Directors, at its discretion, may assign a volunteer, or volunteers, to execute the responsibilities of the position.
- III. Specific duties of the Contest Director are as follows:
  - a. Procurement of race officials and workers including referees, course judges, timers (when needed), one or more pit boss(es) and a driver's representative.
  - b. Acquisition of trophies, if desired to augment the club-supplied awards package.
  - c. Set up and tear down of race equipment.

- d. Furnish race results and race narrative to the club statistician and webmaster.
- e. In case of fewer than three boats in a heat, the CD will decide whether to run the heat.
- f. Ensure accurate scoring is captured and recorded on paper and/or the computer Excel file upon the completion of each heat and before the start of the next heat. CD may charge this duty to chief referees, but if so must ensure that results are indeed scored accurately prior to the next heat.

**E. PIT SAFETY**

- I. Charging of Lithium Polymer (LiPo) batteries at the race site shall only be done with the cells placed on a non-combustible surface or inside a LiPo charging bag.
  - a. Individuals charging LiPo batteries at a race site must have in their possession in the immediate area of the batteries under charge a fully charged fire extinguisher with a NFPA/UL rating that includes Class C.

**F. RACE POINTS**

- I. Points will be awarded per position of finish in a heat on the following basis:

Preliminary Heats & Finals		First Connie	Second Connie
First Place	400 points	200 points	100 points
Second Place	300 points	150 points	75 points
Third Place	225 points	113 points	56 points
Fourth Place	169 points	85 points	42 points
Fifth Place	127 points	64 points	32 points
Sixth Place	95 points	48 points	24 points
Seventh Place	71 points	36 points	18 points

- I. Season points do not transfer except to an identical replacement hull.
- II. Season points and perpetual trophies cannot be awarded to non-member visitors and/or guests.
- III. The total points scored by a driver and any one boat during a sanctioned regatta shall be added to the season driver points standings. If a driver pilots two or more different boats in a single regatta, they must choose, before the first heat, the boat from which they will receive driver points.
- IV. All sanctioned races count towards season points. Season high point trophies for boats and drivers shall be awarded based on the top 10 finishes of the racing season.
- V. Substitute drivers are allowed to compete, with notification given prior to the beginning of the pre-start countdown clock. If a substitute driver is named, the boat will receive season points, but the substitute driver will accumulate season points only if not registered in the same class at that race.
- VI. The number of heats in a section will be determined prior to the section draw.
  - a. A driver with more than one boat entered in a race will have his second boat placed automatically into the second following heat, where possible, within that section during the preliminary races.
  - b. If both boats qualify for the consolation or final heats, a substitute driver can be named for one of the boats, or one of the boats can be withdrawn, at the boat owner's discretion.
- VII. Race formats shall be limited to the Total Points Plan or Love Plan (see Appendix A) and are to be based on the number of entrants as follows:
  - a. **Two**-to-six boats will all race in together in each heat, with the overall event winner based on the race format selected by the contest director.

- b. Seven or more boats will run in multiple heats in each section, with the maximum number of boats not to exceed six in any preliminary heat.
    - i. The final will be the six boats with the highest accumulated points for the day, plus the winner of the first consolation race running as a trailer.
    - ii. The second-place boat in the consolation race will be the alternate to the final.
    - iii. One consolation heat will be run when less than 15 boats are entered in a race, and two consolation heats will be run with 15 or more boats if at least three boats are able to run in the second consolation heat.
    - iv. No alternate will be assigned to the second consolation heat.
    - v. The winner of the second consolation heat may be the trailer in the first consolation heat at the discretion of the race contest director.
- VIII. The trailer boat shall not cross the start line less than five seconds after the start gun.

**G. PROTESTS**

- I. In all sporting events, situations develop that require judgment calls or decisions on the part of contest officials and all such decisions made herein will be final and may not be protested.
- II. All protests for motors and hulls must be made in writing prior to the final heat of the class and must be accompanied by a \$25 protest fee.
  - a. If the protest is found to be invalid, \$10 will go to ERCU and \$15 will go to the owner of the protested boat.
  - b. If the protest is found to be valid, the fee is to be returned to the protester.
- II. A protested hull or motor will be measured by a committee made up of the Contest Director, the ERCU Technical Inspector or his authorized representative present at the event, and one other ERCU member other than the protester or owner of the protested motor or hull.
  - a. Measurements and inspections will be made in the presence of the owner and results thereof will be made known in writing and signed by each member of the three-person committee prior to leaving the event site and shall then be forwarded with their decision to the ERCU Secretary and the ERCU Chairman.
- III. A protested hull, battery, or motor will be allowed to run in the event(s) entered. However, any points, places, etc. won will be held pending the resolution of the protest.
- IV. A boater that has a motor under protest will be allowed to complete the racing for the day.

**H. SPORTSMANSHIP**

- I. The goal of the club is to encourage cordial competition; however, every boat owner, driver or crew member shall be subject to disciplinary action for unsportsmanlike conduct in connection with the regatta from the time of arrival at the race site until two hours after the completion of the contest.
- II. Unsportsmanlike conduct shall be defined as any act which either:
  - a. Tends to bring racing in disrepute; and/or
  - b. Endangers the person or property of others; and/or
  - c. Constitutes dangerous, careless, or reckless operation of boats or equipment.
  - d. Continued verbal protests, harangues and/or other abuse, either direct or indirect of any contest officials or other members will be considered unsportsmanlike conduct and will be just cause to bar that contestant or crew person from any further participation in that contest.
- III. The contest director and two board members shall have sole power to impose a penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct at a race and shall notify the offending party of the offense as soon as

possible.

**I. ROOKIE RULES**

- I. A driver is considered a rookie for an entire racing season if, prior to the first sanctioned ERCU competition of the racing season, the driver has accumulated less than 2,500 career points in sanctioned ERCU competition. This shall apply for both 1/10 and 1/7 scale.
- II. Rookie points are kept separately for each class.
- III. To qualify for racing, a rookie member must operate his boat in a controlled and consistent manner for five laps, successfully complete the Appendix B Drivers Test and secure the approval of the race official to participate.
  - a. Rookie drivers once qualified remain qualified for the remainder of the racing season in which they qualified.
  - b. Rookie drivers must start from the trailer position until they accumulate 1,200 career points in ERCU.
  - c. If a rookie driver is an experienced driver in other clubs, or in ERCU, but new to a certain class, that rookie must start from the trailer position for two consecutive heats, and
    - i. Complete five penalty-free laps in each before being allowed to start on the front line.
    - ii. Without accomplishing both requirements that rookie will be required to adhere to rule Q.3.2

**J. GOLD CUP RULES**

- I. The Gold Cup shall consist of four flights of preliminary heats instead of three, plus the consolation and final heats.

**K. APPEALS, WAIVERS & DEVIATIONS**

- I. Appeals of any decision made by the board of directors, or race officials, may be appealed through an appropriate and deliberate process.
- II. An appeal shall be brought forward to the chair of the board of directors who will initiate a process that educates the general membership of the basis of the appeal, then conduct a vote of the members to the appeal. A two-thirds (66.7 percent) majority of those who vote on the appeal is required to overturn a rules decision made by the board or officials.
- III. The same process shall exist to determine decisions on requests for deviation and waiver of these rules by members for unusual or exceptional circumstances.
- IV. Rulings by the appeals process, on all such requests, are final.