ROWING CANADA AVIRON SAFETY BULLETIN:
Use of Concept2 Foot Stretchers in Racing Shells

The Rowing Canada Aviron (RCA) Safety and Events Committee (SEC) has investigated the use of Concept2 foot stretchers in racing shells and determined that their use in boats is unsafe. The C2 foot stretcher is designed for use on the Concept2 indoor rower, and its use in rowing boats presents a risk to rowers if the boat was to capsize or sink. Even if the C2 foot stretcher heel is tethered to restrict its movement to 7 centimetres, the heel design is such that a running shoe can remain caught in the foot stretcher and the rower may not be able to extricate themselves quickly.

In consultation with the RCA Umpires Committee, it has been determined that the C2 foot stretcher does not fulfill the requirements set out in the RCA Rule of Racing 3.5:

In all boats, the foot stretchers, shoes, or other devices holding the feet of the rowers shall be a type which allows the rowers to get clear of the boat with no delay in an emergency.

3.5.1 Where shoes or other devices holding the feet are fixed and will remain in the boat, each shoe or device shall be independently restrained to limit heel lift to a maximum of 7 cm for each shoe or type of foot gear fitted to the boat. In addition, where Velcro or similar materials must be unfastened before the rower can remove their feet from the shoes or other device, all fastenings must be able to be released immediately by the rower with a single quick hand action of pulling on one easily accessible strap.

3.5.2 Where shoes or other devices holding the feet will not remain in the boat, each shoe or device must be able to be released by the rower without using their hands, or with a single quick hand action of pulling on one easily accessible strap or release device.

Accordingly, the SEC recommended to the RCA Board of Directors that the use of C2 foot stretchers be banned from being used at regattas and that they should not be used for training or general rowing.

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The Board of Directors supports the recommendation of the SEC and has mandated that **effective April 1, 2014, the Concept2 foot stretcher be banned from use at regattas**, **and clubs and rowers should not use C2 foot stretchers in boats.**

USRowing made a similar announcement in April of 2013 regarding the use of this type of foot stretcher. Concept2 has been informed of the RCA Board's decision.

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