Regrettably vs. Regretfully

Some words have very similar meanings but differ in the manner by which they are used in writing. Regrettably and regretfully are among these words. While both terms come from the same root word, regret, they each have their own way of expressing regret from an action. This post will help you distinguish the differences between the two words and demonstrate how to use them correctly in your sentences.

The word regrettably is used as an adverb meaning “unfortunately, used to express apology for or sadness at something.”

“Thanks to America’s regrettably litigious nature, the ‘Reasonable Person’ is always busy.”
Forbes

“Regrettably, nothing has changed; the U.S. continues to unilaterally alter the rules whenever it suits its commercial interests.”
Times Colonist

“The heat — when Hajj occurs in the summer — and the crowded conditions are sometimes no doubt difficult to bear and there have, regrettably, been fatalities in stampedes over the years.”
The National

On the other hand, the term regretfully is also used as an adverb which means “in a regretful manner.”

Wayne Rooney is an England great but regretfully a career with so many goals had so few tournament moments
The Independent

“If you get frustrated and regretfully throw an expensive server across the room,
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LogDevice will report exactly which records were lost.”
TechCrunch

“UFC overlord Dana White let slip about their upcoming nuptials last week and regretfully had to decline an invitation due to the Mayweather v McGregor finale.”
Fox Sports Asia

So there you have it. Now you know the difference between regrettably and regretfully and you can start using them in your writing. Remember that if you mean that something you did or happened unfortunately, you should choose regrettably. However, if you mean that you did something in a regretful manner or sadly, something happened, then you should opt for regretfully.