

Race Committee Duties and Responsibilities

Closed Gate

It shall be the policy of the Birmingham Sailing Club that no Race Committee conducting a race for the Club shall use a closed starting gate, except for the Ironman Regatta, and then only if necessary. A closed gate is where the start or finish line can not be crossed except when starting or finishing.

Scoring Races

Correct scoring of the races is critical. It blows the whole regatta if you do not get the scores correct. There are two parts to scoring: on the water recording and processing the races for posting.

On the water recording

What can seem quite obvious and simple is in fact quite difficult. Many a Race Committee has floundered on this task. Advance planning and preparation combined with giving the matter some thought is the solution.

First, to review the problem, which is that boats tend to finish in clusters. If too many people on the committee boat are talking at the same time, conflicting information is bound to be recorded. This can be compounded by a recorder who is trying to put the boats on the proper fleet list. The keep-it-simple principle really applies here.

The solution is composed of several simple things. First, only one person calls the boats as they finish. That person **must** talk loudly and clearly. Everyone else keeps quiet. It also is of enormous value if a tape recorder is running while the finishes are called.

There should be two persons recording, a primary recorder and a backup recorder. The primary recorder concentrates on hearing the person calling the finishes. The backup recorder's primary duty is to anticipate the finishes. They should be looking at the boats coming in and make notes of their class and sail numbers plus hull color and probable order of finish. There is a very good reason for this.

When a group of boats finish very close together, the line caller may not be able to call sail numbers. The line caller may hail the hull colors, such as red boat, then yellow boat. It may also happen that sail numbers are hidden and you have to wait for the boats to sail away before you can read the number. Another problem that may occur is that boats finish so close together that the primary recorder can not write fast enough. The backup recorder should anticipate the boats coming in and have the information ready. The backup recorder merely has to note within that bunch of boats their finishing order. Later that can be reconciled with the primary list.

The primary recorder must do things in the simplest possible way. It will be an absolute disaster if the recorder tries to look up a finisher on some list and record the boat on that list. It just doesn't work. The simplest way is to have a blank ruled form to record the finishes. Pencil or ball point is the mandatory recording instrument. Rain or water splashes on felt tip pens can ruin one's whole effort. Simply write the boats down as they finish.

The most complex recording is for multiple fleets with some sailing on a timed handicap basis. Record the following:

- 1) The sail number for all boats.
- 2) A class designator if there are more than one type of boat.
- 3) The time for all boats if some are sailing handicap.

The class designator should be as simple as possible, such as T for Thistle, W for Windmill, 5.2 for Nacra 5.2's. If some boats are sailing on a handicap basis, record the time for all boats. There are two reasons for this. It keeps it simple and avoids discussion about whether time will be needed on a boat coming up to finish. Secondly, if the time is missed or recorded incorrectly, you have times of the boats before and after to provide a clue as to the correct time. Do not, repeat do not, try to deduct an allowance for the starting sequence. The times can be adjusted later on shore in a more relaxed situation.

Processing the races for posting

A good Race Committee is able to compile the final regatta results very shortly after the finish of racing. This doesn't just happen. It is the result of pre-planning and preparation. Everything that can be done before hand should be.

The simplest recording procedure is to have a score card for each boat. That card will have space for the skipper's name, boat class and sail number, plus lines to record the finishes for each race, the total points and the overall final position. These cards can usually be prepared on the committee boat during breaks in the action. Often the finishing position from the previous race can be posted while the next race is underway.

To post finishing positions, have the cards in order by sail number for each fleet. That saves a lot of fumbling. Process one fleet at a time from the finishing log onto the cards. Doing one fleet at a time keeps things simple and you are able to remember what the next finishing number is.

At the end of the regatta you can total points and then sort the cards in order by ascending point scores. It is then simple to give the regatta order of 1, 2, 3, etc.

Computing Results using Portsmouth Numbers

In computing the results of handicap racing, we are only interested in the corrected order of finish rather than a correct elapsed time. For a single race,

determine the correct Portsmouth Handicap number to use. There are three numbers for each different type of boat. They are based on the wind velocity. The Race Committee must decide which category applied to the race. Now you can compute the race.

Take each boat's elapsed time and convert it to seconds. Divide that number by the boat's Portsmouth Handicap number to obtain a new number, computing to four significant digits. Rank the finishers in the race by that computed number from low to high. The lowest number is the winner.

Race Results

Sunday race results shall be sent to the official scorer, without computing corrected times. One Day Regattas, and other Regatta results shall be computed for the purpose of awarding trophies and results sent to the official scorer.

Conducting a Protest Hearing

1. The protest form should be scrutinized by the Protest Committee prior to the hearing to make sure that it has the necessary information about time and place it was filed, the information required by Rule 63.5, including how, where and when protest flag was flown (if necessary), the signature of the protesting party, and that Protestee was informed of intention to protest. Deficiencies should be called to the attention of protesting party so that he can furnish them if possible.
2. The hearing should be conducted as follows:
 - a. Representatives of each yacht are entitled to be present throughout the hearing.
 - b. The Chairman should state that the first function of the Committee is to ascertain the facts.
 - c. Chairman should read the protest and any other written statement submitted, such as a statement of the Protestee. If there are cross-protests concerning the same incident, they should be heard at one time.
 - d. First the Protestor and then the Protestee state their account of the incident. Questions of the Protest Committee should be deferred until all parties have concluded their statement.
 - e. Statements should be addressed to the Committee. Interruptions should be avoided. Questions that are rhetorical, abusive, or otherwise improper, should be curtailed by the Chairman with an expression of the reason and an invitation to the Questioner to restate the question properly.
 - f. The diagram on the protest form is indispensable as a permanent record and may be referred to in the hearing. It is usually helpful to have model boats and set them up to show the situation before, during and after the incident.

- g. First the Protestor and then the Protestee may call witnesses. The witnesses may be questioned by the party who called them first, then by the other party and then by the Committee. The Committee should be alerted to asking questions when necessary to bring out the whole story. The Chairman must control this phase of the hearing very strictly to avoid the hearing degenerating into an undisciplined confrontation.
 - h. First Protestor, then Protestee, may make a final statement, including any application or interpretation of the rules and appeals to the incident.
 - i. Any party may, of course, waive any part of the proceedings if he wishes, such as questioning of a witness, final statement, etc.
 - j. Chairman should avoid extreme redundancy on the part of the parties and the witnesses, but at the same time be sure that everyone has a full opportunity to say everything they deem important. It is important that all parties be treated fairly and that the Committee conduct itself so that all parties will feel that they were treated fairly.
3. The Decision:
- a. The Chairman should ask all but the Committee to leave the room so that the Committee can deliberate privately.
 - b. The Committee should review the evidence and decide what the relevant facts are. When the parties make dramatically opposite statements of fact, this can be a most laborious task. No matter how difficult, it is the duty and obligation of the Protest Committee to make a definite finding of what the facts were before proceeding to the next step of applying the rules to the factual situation.
 - c. In cases of direct conflict of the evidence, the Committee should consider where the burden of proof lies and whether it has been sustained by the party with the burden.
 - d. The Committee having reviewed the evidence should make a definite decision as to what the relevant facts were. It is important to distinguish between the findings of fact on the one hand and the conclusion reached by applying the rules to those facts on the other hand. A statement that *Yacht X violated Rule 10 is not a finding of fact*. The finding should be that *Yacht X, close hauled on Port Tack, sailed across the bow of Yacht Y who was then close hauled on starboard tack, so close that Yacht Y was forced to fall off to avoid a collision*. The result is that Yacht X violated Rule 10 and is disqualified. The findings of fact in sufficient detail so that a reviewing agency would have no difficulty in understanding the facts should then be recorded in writing, preferably on the place provided on the protest form. Although it is necessary to be clear, concise and detailed in writing up the findings of fact, those facts which do not describe or clarify the incident should be omitted.
 - e. Where the facts are so unclear that it is impossible to ascertain what the facts were, and there was no contact between yachts, the Committee would be justified in making a finding that no facts were found justifying a decision that would disqualify the Protestee.

- f. The applicable rules should then be applied to the facts as found and a decision reached as to who, if anyone, infringed a rule, and what rule or rules were infringed (Rule 64). The decision should clearly state the result such as *Yacht Doe is disqualified*. The decision should be recorded in writing and signed by the chairman of the protest committee.
 - g. If there is a conflict in the decision on the part of the members of the Committee, that may be recorded if it is the desire of the minority member to do so.
 - h. Chairman recalls the parties to the Committee room and reads the decision to them and the grounds for the decision. He may, if he wishes, add a statement that the decision is not subject to further argument at this time, but may be appealed if there are grounds for appeal.
 - i. Any party to the protest is entitled to a copy of the decision signed by the Chairman. The original should be filed with the regatta records.
4. Appeals:
- a. The decision of a protest committee may be appealed. (Appendix F) The appeal shall be made solely on a question of the interpretation of the rules. **The facts as found by the protest committee cannot be appealed.**
 - b. Appeals from decisions of Clubs belonging to U.S. Sailing go to The US Sailing Association.
 - c. Notice of Appeal must be mailed by the Appellant not later than fifteen (15) days from the receipt of the written decision of the Protest Committee.
 - d. The Protest Committee is required to put all of the papers involved in the appeal in order and forward them to the Appeals Committee.