

## **12. US Sailing JUDGES PROGRAM**

This section summarizes the responsibilities and functions of the Judges Committee (JC) and Regional Administrative Judges (RAJ), as well as qualifications for US Sailing and ISAF judges.

### **12.1 Judge Program History**

Before the US Sailing Judges Program began in 1977, a set of criteria was established for certification as a US Sailing Judge. These criteria included racing experience, race management experience, protest committee experience and a high standard of personal integrity. Application was by resume and supported by personal references. RAJs handled applications for those in their geographic area.

In 1995, the Executive Committee of US Sailing asked the JC to improve the quality of the Judges Program, to review the procedures used in appointing and reappointing judges and to consider training and testing. In 1998 a new process of testing began.

The JC developed a new set of standards for the US Sailing Judges Program. These standards require experience in racing, race management, and protest committee work as well as attending a workshop and passing a written open-book test. The seminar and test must be taken every four years.

Standards of personal behavior are more explicit than they have been in the past. Those seeking initial certification or renewal as a US Sailing Judge must meet the standards found in this manual. Certified or not, judges serving on protest committees should meet these standards.

When a protest committee is on duty afloat or ashore and the chair is a US Sailing Judge, they may display the US Sailing Judges Flag.

The standards also recognized that individuals might engage in different judging paths based on their experience and abilities. The Judges Program established qualifications and standards for Club Judges, Judges, National Judges, and the MNA nominations procedures ISAF International Judges. The following sections describe the qualifications required for certification for each of these different paths.

### **12.2 Judges Committee**

#### **12.2.1 Purpose and Functions**

The Judges Committee is authorized to conduct the Judges Program under Regulation 4.06(c) as a member of the Race Administration Division. The Judges Committee:

- a) Develops, supports, and certifies judges within the jurisdiction of US Sailing. It maintains oversight of the certification process for each level of certification,

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reviews reported incidents involving the conduct of judges and refers potential disciplinary matters to the Review Board.

- b) Recommends to the Board of Directors that US Sailing honor a retired judge who has provided long and distinguished service to the Judges Program with the designation of Judge Emeritus.
- c) Reviews the qualifications of all US Sailing judges requesting certification as International Judges by the ISAF and submits candidates for approval by the Board of Directors as nominees from US Sailing to ISAF as the Member National Authority (MNA) for the United States.
- d) Meets in person at the annual meeting of US Sailing. The JC will also meet as necessary throughout year by online video and audio conferences. Minutes of these meetings will be posted on the JC Website.

The Terms of Reference of the JC are posted on the Judges Website at US Sailing.

### **12.2.2 Composition**

The JC is comprised of a Chair, a Vice Chair (appointed at the discretion of the Chair), a RAJ representing each US Sailing Area, the Chair of the Umpires Committee (UC) (ex-officio), a Chair of the Judges Education Training and Testing Subcommittee (JETTS), and a Secretary (ex officio). Other members may be added to the committee at the discretion of the Chair to undertake additional responsibilities. The JC Chair also serves on the Race Administration Committee (ROC) and as an ex-officio member of the Umpires Committee.

### **12.2.3 Regional Administrative Judges**

The JC Chair nominates committee members for approval by the US Sailing Board of Directors. Some of these members represent the US Sailing Areas while others are appointed to other specific duties. They should be highly experienced judges with strong management capabilities who are appointed for a term of three years. Appointments are normally limited to two consecutive terms (the Board can allow exceptions for the number of terms) with a successor serving as an apprentice, if possible, for at least one year.

RAJs and the JC administer the judges' certification programs for all US Sailing Areas. This involves reviewing applications for certification and re-certification, making recommendations to the JC regarding applicants, reviewing annually the SOARS reports of judges, and recommending upgrades to higher levels of certification. The RAJ may also respond to informal requests in an Area on rules questions, assist Organizing Authorities (OAs) to obtain qualified judges for an event, or investigate reported misconduct of judges.

One increasingly important duty of an RAJ is the encouragement of capable sailors in their Area to become certified judges. This is done primarily in two ways:

- a) Sponsorship/mentoring of potential applicants by an RAJ.
- b) Scheduling well-advertised and well-run judges' seminars at various locations throughout an Area.

## **12.3 US Sailing Judge Program Qualifications**

The following judge Qualifications and procedures apply for all levels of US Sailing Judge Certification, both initial and renewal. Judge qualifications are also posted on the [Judges page](#) of the US Sailing Website.

### **12.3.1 General Qualifications**

- a) Be a member in good standing of US Sailing before and during their term of certification.
- b) Be willing to actively serve for a four (4) year term.
- c) Maintain an up-to-date Sailing Officials Automated Reporting Systems (SOARS) account.
- d) Understand that they are to make application to US Sailing for initial and renewal certifications.
- e) Agree to abide by US Sailing’s Code of Conduct, Bylaws, Regulations and its Conflict of Interest policies.

### **12.3.2 Experience**

- a) Have experience as an active racing sailor for at least three complete racing seasons in a position requiring on-the-water application of the racing rules (as skipper, tactician, watch captain, navigator or similar position).  
Attend a US Sailing Judges Seminar within the past four years applicable to the level of certification for which the applicant is applying. [Seminar schedules](#) are available on the Organize a Seminar section of the website.
- b) Have passed the US Sailing Judges Exam within four years of the date applicable to the level of certification the applicant is applying for.
- c) Possess the current publications of the Racing Rules (*RRS*), US Sailing Judges Manual, US Sailing Appeals Book and ISAF Case book.

Note: For renewal, the Judges Committee may approve attendance at a symposium, regional conference or other forum in lieu of attending a Judges Seminar. Such meetings and their approval shall be posted in advance of the approved alternative session on the judges’ web page at US Sailing.

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### **12.3.3 Personal Attributes**

A US Sailing Judge must possess:

a) Judicial temperament:

Be viewed by sailors and other judges as a person with judicial temperament (honest, fair, act with integrity, respect the rights of others);

- 1) Abstain from use of alcohol or other substances that may alter judgment until protest committee duties are complete;
- 2) Work cooperatively with the race committee and organizing authority;
- 3) Admit mistakes graciously and in a timely manner;
- 4) Be viewed by other protest committee members as contributing, cooperative and thoughtful;
- 5) Act as a strong and effective judge;
- 6) View the hearing of protests as a service by sailors for sailors;
- 7) Maintain the confidentiality of the deliberations of any protest committee;
- 8) Understand that protest committee work comes before social obligations;
- 9) Act completely free of favor or discrimination towards any sailors;
- 10) Obtain permission from the Chief Judge and the Organizing Authority prior to communicating via Social Media or any other communication medium, about an incident, an official's decision or any other action which took place at an event where they were or are acting in a capacity as a certified official.

b) A reputation for mature judgment:

Refrain from use of medications which might impair judgment or alertness;

- 1) Take good care of other people's property (boats, equipment, housing);
- 2) Be able to conduct a rational discussion with someone with whom you disagree;
- 3) Be considerate of and respect other people;
- 4) Accept the assignment of tasks willingly and cheerfully.

c) An outstanding reputation for integrity:

- 1) Do not expect extraordinary special treatment or privileges;
- 2) Document actions; take responsibility for follow through;
- 3) Seek advice from more experienced people when appropriate;
- 4) Honor commitments and don't exchange an event for a another event after committing;
- 5) Be a good role model and mentor for those interested in becoming judges;
- 6) Respond constructively to sailors and others under stress;

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- 7) When representing US Sailing as a race official be polite, respectful and have proper authorization when using social media.

### **12.3.4 Technical Attributes**

A judge must have thorough knowledge and understanding of the current *RRS*, US Sailing Appeals Decisions, ISAF Cases and the ability to use them appropriately. This is demonstrated by skills such as being able to:

- a) Interpret the *RRS* and other rules as they are written;
- b) Review the Notice of Regatta and Sailing Instructions so as to make constructive suggestions about them to the RC and OA;
- c) Observe racing on the water and record critical events accurately when necessary;
- d) Hear protests according to *RRS* Part 5, Appendix M (Recommendations for Protest Committees).
- e) When applicable, be able to apply Appendix P (Immediate Penalties for Breaking Rule 42).

### **12.3.5 Physical Attributes**

Judges should (where and when applicable):

- a) Be able to perform the job of being a judge through their physical abilities (natural or assisted);
- b) Be capable of going on the water in small boats for extended periods in a variety of weather conditions and then hear protests at the end of the day.
- c) Be able to operate small motorboats safely in proximity of racing sailboats.

### **12.3.6 Desirable Additional Certifications**

- a) CPR
- b) First Aid
- c) Senior Life Saving or Water Safety Instructor
- d) Powerboat operation

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### **12.4 Certification Levels**

To be considered for initial certification at a level listed below, a candidate must meet all the requirements for that level as well as those listed in 12.3.1 through 12.3.5.

To be renewed as a US Sailing judge the applicant must meet the requirements that are marked with an asterisk (\*).

#### **12.4.1 Club Judge**

- a) Protest Committee Service:
  - 1) Have served on at least three (3) juries or protest committees during the last four years where facts were found and a decision rendered.
  - 2) \*For renewal served on at least four protest committees within the last four (4) years. All shall have been fleet racing events.
  
- b) Be recommended by:
  - 1) A club or association flag officer from their local area,
  - 2) Their workshop leader (based on mock hearings) and
  - 3) At least one certified US Sailing Judge or National Judge. This reference shall be provided electronically.

#### **12.4.2 Judge**

- a) Be knowledgeable and experienced in the running of races. Have performed a major role with the on the water race management committees in at least four (4) U.S. events during the last four years.
  
- b) \*Be an active member of protest committees for at least the last two (2) years and:
  - 1) Served on at least eight (8) protest committees within the last four years of which the applicant shall have chaired at least three hearings;
  - 2) Served on protest committees in at least three events in the US at regional or national level (the majority fleet racing);
  - 3) At least six (6) of the protest committees in b)i. shall be at fleet racing events;
  
- c) Be highly recommended by three US Sailing Judges one of which shall be a US Sailing National Judge or a Canadian Yachting Association National Judge and the balance shall be US Sailing Judges or higher levels.
  
- d) \*Consideration will be given to service on an association appeals committee to meet the requirements for serving on protest committees.

**12.4.3 National Judge**

- a) \*Meet all of the requirements of 12.4.2 and have served on protest committees for at least four (4) years.
- b) \*Served on juries or protest committees in at least four (4) Class B or C protest committees or juries at the national or international level during the last four years. (See 12.5 below) At least two (2) of these events must be held at venues that are greater than 180 miles from the candidate’s home address. At the discretion of the JC, an exception can be made for a candidate who has served on six (6) or more Class B or C protest committees, of which fewer than two (2) meet the distance requirement.
- c) \*Served capably as chief judge in at least four (4) events during the last four years.
- d) \*The majority of the protest committees in 12.4.3(b) and 12.4.3(c) shall be at fleet racing events.
- e) \*Be experienced and qualified in on the water enforcement of Appendix P.
- f) \*Be qualified to be a Chief Judge of a national championship regatta anywhere in the U.S.
- g) For initial appointment, be highly recommended by:
  - 1) At least three (3) National Judges or ISAF International Judges;
  - 2) At least two of the judges in g(1) shall have served with the candidate on protest committees at events as described in 12.4.3(b).

**Note:** The requirements 12.4.3(b) and 12.4.3(c) shall be met at events that have national and international level exposure. Some events that include the words national or international in their title may not meet this requirement, while other events that do not contain these words in their title may be eligible. Please consult with your RAJ for guidance on which events meet the requirement.

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### **12.4.4 ISAF International Judge Appointment**

For an initial appointment as an International Judge (IJ) by the International Sailing Federation (ISAF) with a United States country designation, a candidate must be nominated by US Sailing through a recommendation of the Judges Committee, approved by the Board of Directors and:

- a) Be a US Sailing National Judge;
- b) Send a copy of their completed ISAF [International Judge application](#) to the Race Administration Director at US Sailing;
- c) Complete and submit an online US Sailing [International Judge application](#) form;
- d) Meet all of the requirements for an IJ as described in the ISAF Regulations 31 and 33;
- e) Obtain and submit at least three favorable references from the jury chairman of three (3) principal events as defined by the ISAF held within the last four years. The references must meet the following criteria:
  - 1) No reference shall be from a current member of the JC or the US Sailing Board of Directors;
  - 2) At least one of the references shall be from a principal event from a MNA other than US Sailing;
  - 3) At least one reference shall be from a non-US IJ and the balance from either a National Judge or IJ from our MNA;
  - 4) At least two of the principal events shall be International juries;
- f) Be domiciled in the United States;
- g) Have done a substantial portion of their judging in the United States;
- h) Apply and retain with ISAF their Member National Authority as the United States per ISAF regulation 33.

### **12.4.5 Procedures for Nomination as an International Judge**

- a) The Applications for Nomination along with all supporting documents must be sent to US Sailing to the attention the Race Administration Director no later than **June 1st** of the year in which the candidate will apply to ISAF. Applications received after June 1<sup>st</sup> may not be able to be processed in time for the ISAF deadline. An exception to this date may be granted at the discretion of the Judges Committee upon written request showing there is good reason to do so.
- b) The Judges Committee will review only applications that have all of the required documents, including all required reference forms.
- c) Applicants shall file electronically using the online application form found at the US Sailing judges website. Candidates should contact their RAJ with any questions.



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- d) Applicants shall have their references file an electronic [US Sailing reference form](#). While persons serving as references may choose to share their comments with the candidates directly, reference forms will be treated as confidential by the Judges Committee and US Sailing.
- e) The applicant has full responsibility to follow-up to ensure that all documents are submitted to the committee by the date required.
- f) The Judges Committee may seek independent confirmation of the candidate's capabilities and experience by contacting other judges and/or race officials known to have worked with the candidate. If such references are used, both the source and content, with the reference's approval, shall be disclosed to the candidate.
- g) The Judges Committee will forward their recommendations to the US Sailing Board of Directors for final approval.
- h) Applicants that have the approval of the Board of Directors shall have a letter of nomination sent by US Sailing to ISAF approving their nomination.

Note: At ISAF's request candidates for reappointment may be reviewed by the JC and forwarded to the US Sailing Board of Directors.

### **12.5 Protest Committee Classification**

In order to evaluate protest committee (PC) experience, the JC classifies the level of a Protest Committee as follows:

- a) Class A - a committee appointed by the race committee.
- b) Class B - a protest committee which is separate from and independent of the race committee.
- c) Class C - an international jury meeting the requirements of *RRS* Appendix N.

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### **12.6 Procedures and Policies**

#### **12.6.1 Procedures for Certification**

All candidates who are unsure of their qualifications and experience should consult with their RAJ prior to submitting an application. The RAJ can also suggest assistance in additional training and experience. The steps for certification are:

- a) Complete an [online application](#) for the certification level you are seeking and submit it to your RAJ.
- b) If a reference is required, the RAJ will obtain completed [reference forms](#) from the references cited by the applicant in their application.
- c) Once the references are received and all paperwork has been filed, the application process will continue. It is the responsibility of the applicant to make sure that each their references complete.
- d) All Club Judge applications will be reviewed and decided upon by the RAJ.
- e) The Judges Committee will review applications for all other levels of certification. The length of time to complete a review will not be more than 60 (sixty) days from receipt of a completed application and references. RAJs should be contacted should there be any questions.
- f) The RAJ will communicate the final status of an application to each applicant.

#### **12.6.2 Recertification**

- a) The certification term length for all judge levels is four (4) years. A judge's term ends at the end of the calendar year of that fourth year. For example, if a judge had been initially certified in May of 2013, their first term would end on December 31, 2017.
- b) Judges must apply for re-certification utilizing an electronic form found on the US Sailing Judges Website (also see 12.3.2(a)).
- c) During the last year of a judge's term, the RAJ will verify the judge has attended a workshop, passed the exam within the last four years and review the applicant's performance by examining the judge's reports and other pertinent information, such as complaints or praises regarding judicial temperament. If a judge meets all the requirements for re-certification, the RAJ will then forward that recommendation to the Judges Committee.
- d) If the RAJ believes that a judge is missing one or more of the requirements to re-certify, the RAJ will notify the judge during the last year of their term and will work with the judge to try to resolve the missing requirements.
- e) If the JC has determined that a certified judge has either committed a breach of conduct, or otherwise not met the standard required to renew, the JC shall make a report to the Review Board with its recommendation. The candidate shall have 30

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days to choose to either accept the determination of the JC, or be provided with a hearing by the Review Board.

- Note 1:
- a) For recertification only, a seminar is not required for a current ISAF International Judge.
  - b) The JC will exempt a National Judge or Lead Seminar Instructor from attending a seminar if he or she has served as an instructor at a US Sailing seminar within four years of the renewal date.

Note 2: For recertification only, passing the ISAF International Judges Test is an acceptable substitute for the US Sailing Judging Exam. The applicant must send to the Race Administration Director a copy of the letter from ISAF confirming that they have passed.

### **12.6.3 Procedures for Unsuccessful Applications**

- a) The RAJ is to advise a candidate why their application was unsuccessful and will encourage them to obtain the necessary qualifications. If the problem is based upon a reference evaluation of poor judicial temperament or reputation of the candidate, the source and the content (with the approval of the reference) shall be disclosed to the candidate.
- b) If US Sailing receives a request by a candidate to have their unsuccessful application reconsidered, the request is forwarded to the US Sailing Review Board.
- c) A candidate that does not pass the written exam must wait at least 6 months before retaking the test.
- d) A candidate who has not passed the written test in three attempts must have the approval of the JC before taking any further tests.

### **12.6.4 SOARs Reports**

- a) Certified judges are required to report on their judging activities through the Sailing Officials Automated Reporting System ([SOARS](#)) page on the US Sailing Website. Note you will need your US Sailing ID number and password. Judges are required to keep their SOARs information up to date throughout the year.
- b) The electronic SOARS reports are an important tool for each RAJ in the certification process. The RAJ will examine these reports to evaluate a judge's performance and be able to assist each applicant as they prepare for certification.
- c) If any judge's SOARs report is not current, they will be given the opportunity by the RAJ to bring it up to date. Failure to comply with the RAJ's request may lead to rejection of an applicant's request for certification by the JC.

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### **12.6.5 US Sailing Confidentiality Principles with Regard to Race Officials**

- a) The applications and references will be confidential within the appropriate committee.
- b) All discussions of the candidates/applications by any committee member with the candidate or their references are confidential.
- c) Only the committee member responsible for reviewing an application or the appropriate Committee Chair shall discuss the application with the candidate.
- d) With issues raised from references, the source of the comments will be kept confidential if the source so requests. The substance of the any issue will be shared with the candidate if found to be valid.
- e) References will be encouraged but not required to share their comments with the candidate directly.

### **12.7 Judge Emeritus Programs**

US Sailing has established a Judge Emeritus Program to recognize judges who have given many years of distinguished service to the sport and have shown themselves to be a leader in the judging community.

An RAJ may nominate retired National Judges or International Judges from their area whom the RAJ feels are deserving of the distinction. The JC will first review the nomination and, if approved, forward their recommendation to the US Sailing Board of Directors for final approval.

The designation is for life and includes a suitably inscribed certificate describing the honoree's contributions. Names of judges honored with Emeritus status are also published on the US Sailing Website.