

RRS 68

The Latest News from the Judges' Committee



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WELCOME TO THE JUDGES' NEWSLETTER

Sarah Ashton

I hope all had a great holiday season.

If you are up for renewal in 2023, now is the time to start reviewing the RRS and judging procedures. Dave Perry, National Judge and Chair of the US Sailing Appeals Committee, has two beneficial books on the rules published by US Sailing.

Understanding the Racing Rules of Sailing Through 2024 is a comprehensive and in-depth explanation of the racing rules, with fun diagrams from Brad Dellenbaugh and many references to US Sailing Appeals and World Sailing Cases.

Dave Perry's 100 Best Racing Rules Quizzes contains 100 quizzes that cover many common situations boats and sailors get into, including some more advanced ones. The book includes a chapter with some of the best insight and advice for preparing for a protest hearing, which is very helpful to judges. Many judges use Dave's 100 Quizzes book to prepare for the US Sailing certified judges test and the World Sailing international judges test.

Both books are available from the US Sailing Store, printed or digital, with a generous 25% US Sailing member discount.

Go to: <https://shop.ussailing.org/racing/racing-rules/>

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CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Wayne Balsiger

Exciting News for Race Officials

The Judges' Committee was instrumental in initiating the request for No Charge for training. That led to both of these "thank yous." US Sailing responded with No Charge for training for Certified Officials AND a discount for your membership fee. The Judge's Committee applauds The Board for hearing us. Thank you for your dedication to our sport and enjoy these new benefits.

You likely received an email from Judie McCann and Matt Hill about these two exciting developments.

From Judie and Matt December 21

25% discount on US Sailing membership for certified officials - We are pleased to offer a discounted membership for certified officials beginning in 2023. The reduced rate will apply to Individual memberships while you hold a Classifier, Judge, Race Officer, or Umpire certification at the Club, Regional or National level, and International Measurers.

We will have more details early in the new year. If your membership is due for renewal in January or February, we will reach out to you to renew it manually.

No charge for Continuing Education Events (CEEs) for certified officials - Beginning in January, Roundtables, Protest Days, Clinics and (future) Webinars will be free for officials who hold a current certification at the Club, Regional or National level in any race official discipline.

...If you have already registered for a 2023 offering, we will happily refund your fee in January. You can find CEEs on the [race official seminars calendar](#).

Matt also said that if you are certified in one discipline and take any CEE, including certification in another discipline, they are free for you.

Find a Race Official/Judge Please remember that to show up in the Find a Race Official list, you must be Certified (or Judge-In-Training), US Sailing Dues are current, SafeSport and Background check are current, and you have Reviewed your Annual Report page and checked the box that it is current. Background Checks are required for all Olympic NGBs by the USOPC, and SafeSport is mandated by federal law. Both are part of what it now takes to become and remain certified. It is not hard to pass those, so don't let them be obstacles to serving the sport you love. All of us appreciate it.

Please review your annual report in SOARS and see where you are on SafeSport and background check. SafeSport tends to sneak up on me and try to expire. You get another 12 months after your refresher course.

Race official Insurance The insurance issue is unchanged. US Sailing is talking with brokers and underwriters, but so far, no one is willing to write a policy. It is not an issue of how much it costs; they are unwilling to cover risks they can't quantify. Matt Hill is updating the infographic on the website to help officials know what questions to ask of clubs or Organizing Authorities on their insurance coverage. You should also talk to your insurance agent. If you have an umbrella policy, it likely does not cover your Judging activities. Note: I am not an insurance expert.

Seminars Take a look as we tend to offer more seminars in the off-season. You aren't the only one that wants to be out on the water.

Thank you. Let me know if you have ideas to improve what we do.

Thank you for what you do as a Judge. I hope you are looking forward to continuing your service to our sport. Sailboat racing can't happen as well without you.

Smooth Sailing, Wayne.

ONLINE SUPPORT FOR HEARINGS

Chris Luppens

While 2022 saw the return to live sailing events and hearings as before COVID, many lessons were learned during the pandemic, and hearings are increasingly conducted and supported by online technology.

In Area F, we have found adding a local judge to the hearing location helpful. A Club Judge or JIT who understands the process can ensure that the site is adequate, organize the equipment and manage the parties and witnesses during the hearing.

The proper equipment will make the experience as smooth as possible. While a smartphone or tablet may be adequate, limitations on video and sound in the hearing room detract significantly from the process, so smaller devices are not recommended. To provide good sound and video for the hearing room, a few pieces of relatively inexpensive equipment can make a big difference.

The following are not equipment endorsements but examples of what has worked for others – other equipment with similar specs may work just as well.

First, ensure that available wireless and internet services can support remote hearings. Other options include a standalone hotspot or a smartphone hotspot. Check with the service provider – some offer free several gigabytes of hotspot data.

A laptop or desktop computer is essential. The larger screen and the ability to attach a remote monitor, projector and other USB devices are necessary.

Because all parties and panel members must be seen and heard, most computer speakers and microphones are inadequate. A device like the Jabra Speak 510 UC Portable USB & Bluetooth Speakerphone is available on Amazon and eBay for about \$25 (and sometimes much less on sale). It plugs into and is powered by the computer, can pick up the sound in a large area, and is loud enough to be heard by everybody in the room.

Most built-in webcams can view only one person at a time. A separate camera, such as the NexiGo N930AF Webcam with Microphone and Autofocus (a 1080p HD USB web camera, compatible with Zoom/Skype/Teams/Webex), is a must. They are available on Amazon and other sources for \$50 or less. Note that the microphones on these cameras are often very limited and are not recommended.

Another device successfully used for video and sound is a NUROUM HD1080P Conference Webcam w/Microphone & Speaker – also found on Amazon for about \$100. A 25-ft (maximum) USB extension cord will allow the camera to be located so the remote judges can clearly see the parties and witnesses. Most cameras have a small tripod for positioning on a shelf or table. The camera can also be positioned to show model boats as they are moved to illustrate the situations involved.

A large monitor or projector is also helpful for everyone in the room to see the remote judges. Most new TVs have HDMI connections for a computer, and adapters and cables are widely available. Many clubs have large monitors or projectors. Monitors are relatively inexpensive; projectors range in cost from \$90 to over \$800.

ADVANCED JUDGES WORKSHOP

Bill Simon

The Advanced Judge Seminar (AJS) is the seminar you need to increase your certification to Regional Judge or National Judge. It has been around for many years, was updated in 2020, and was adapted to offer it in person (usually two consecutive weekend days) or via Zoom. Currently, a minimum of three programs annually are offered between November and March. Recently, the Zoom version has proved very popular as it reduces the need for travel and related expenses. It can be presented at various times (a four-session program) or as a full weekend program. The current version combines classroom PowerPoint with a focus on discussion-based learning and Protest Day. Please see the related [Protest Day article](#).

Topics that we cover broadly include the following:

- [How to be a Chief Judge \(CJ\) at an Event](#). This section focuses on the CJ's responsibilities, how judges can help the CJ meet those responsibilities, and what the CJ is looking for in jury members. This will help you understand what personality traits and performance will help you be invited back and to increasingly more important regattas.
- [How to be efficient in hearings](#). This section focuses on how to be efficient with your time while following the procedures that ensure a fair hearing. Topics include identifying key issues, what information is needed to make a decision, decision writing, and the roles of the Chair, Scribe and Procedural Judge.
- [Arbitration](#). In addition to discussing arbitration procedures and requirements, arbitration is conducted to familiarize judges with the process and help them be more comfortable in the role of arbitrator.
- [Misconduct](#). This section provides an overview of a rule 69 matter with some recommendations and tips for those who find themselves dealing with such a matter.
- [Homework](#). This section focuses on a review of Study Questions to help participants prepare for the Judge's Test, decision writing, and decision-making on such subjects as reopening a hearing and extending time limits.

A judge re-certifying at their current level can meet the educational requirement of 160 CEUs by taking the AJS and/or any combination of other educational offerings offered by JETTS (the Judges Educational Testing ...). This includes Protest Day as a stand-alone program, Roundtables where judges discuss critical current topics in judging, or clinics like Misconduct or Introduction to Rule 42. Thus, you do not need the AJS to re-certify if you take these other educational and fun offerings. Judges re-certifying without the AJS can take the online Judge's test any time in their final year of certification.

The AJS is jammed packed with tips for being a better judge, and hopefully, any judge thinking about increasing their certification level will take the seminar at least once. The classroom discussion-based learning and Protest Day hearing experience will make you more knowledgeable and comfortable in your performance as a judge.

Upcoming AJS; February 22, 24, 25 & 26



PROTEST DAY

Bruce Cook and Bill Simon

With fewer people protesting at events, judges have less work and experience. This makes it more difficult for judges to meet their certification requirements. Protest Day was developed in response to these issues and is a great way for judges to learn and improve in a supportive educational environment.

A typical Protest Day program includes some instruction about scribing and procedures for holding hearings efficiently, an arbitration, five hearings, and debriefs, all supervised by experienced judges. For arbitrations, the arbitrator and the parties are participants. For hearings, the goal is to have the participants each serve as panel chair, scribe, procedural judge, protestor, and protestee. The cases used are selected from a library presently consisting of 50 cases that vary in difficulty and have actually been heard and decided at “live” regattas.

Protest Day is, in fact, a live, real-life event known as Aquafest, the largest and most competitive regatta on the planet. As such, there is always work for the hearing panel. Participants must conduct themselves and hear cases exactly as they would do at any other regatta. They must review the hearing request documents, identify the actual issues of the case, take evidence, follow procedure, find facts, make conclusions, determine results, and write and present decisions to the parties. Those participants serving as parties experience what it is like to testify before a hearing panel and see how it functions from the other side of the table. This is all done within 45 minutes to keep everyone focused and to help everyone learn to be efficient.

Protest Day participants, therefore, gain the experience of participating in a hearing from different perspectives, working with others of varying experience, and receiving constructive input from the 15-minute post-hearing debriefs during which the participants assess each other and receive assessments from the supervising judges present during the hearings. Some time is also afforded between hearings to compare notes with other panels which have separately heard the same case. Participants will take these learning experiences with them as they go forth and judge in other events. These are experiences that participants will not necessarily have at other events.

Protest Day participants can request a reference for certification. Protest Day can count as one of the three required hearings towards certification for club judge. Two hearings can count for being regional and national judges, and one hearing can count for being the chair.

Whether attending Protest Day as a stand-alone seminar or as part of the Advanced Judge Seminar and whether you are a participant, a supervising judge, or the lead instructor, all attendees emerge as a better judge. It is a value-added program. An effort is made to use different cases at different programs, so attending multiple offerings is a great idea. We look forward to seeing you at Aquafest for a Protest Day between now and the start of the sailing season.

Upcoming Protest Days; January 5 & 19 and March 2& 16



Introducing Thursday Evening Judges

There will be virtual judge education opportunities starting January 5 and every alternate Thursday night through April 13. We will split the offerings for the initial year between Round Tables and Protest Days. Protest Days are 4 hours and require two nights, while Round Tables are 3 hours for single-night events. These should be fun, entertaining and educational for those available and interested in being better judges or re-certifying. There are no sign-up fees for certified judges. Sign up on [the US Sailing Judges Seminar Calendar](#) and scroll down to the night you want to attend. Those wishing to be topic leaders, supervising judges, or with relevant topic recommendations, don't hesitate to contact [Bill Simon](#) or [Nancy Glover](#).

WHAT ABOUT AREA G

Don Wieneke

For starters, US Sailing, Area G is a team of certified sailing judges serving the northern California and Nevada area. Our team consists of one international judge; eight National Judges; three regional judges; three Club Judges, and one Judge in training. Contact information is available here: <https://www.ussailing.org/competition/rulesofficiating/resources/find-a-race-official/>.

US Sailing Area G is also a large region encompassing northern California and Nevada. It stretches from Lake Tahoe and the lakes in Nevada to the Sacramento Delta and out to the Pacific Ocean.

The heart of Area G is San Francisco. The area is renowned for its racing, boasting more yacht clubs than any other area in the world within a ten-mile radius. These clubs offer various racing programs, two of the most prestigious being the San Francisco Yacht Club and the St. Francis Yacht Club.

San Francisco is also renowned for its world-class sailing events. From the prestigious America's Cup to small dinghy world-class events; and the Rolex Big Boat Series to the US Open hydrofoil board events, sailing enthusiasts of all levels can find a challenge.

This brings us to the rules. The rules make the game, as they say. They are what give the game its structure and purpose. Without clear and precise rules, the game will not be enjoyable, and players will quickly lose interest. It is essential to have rules that are easy to understand and follow and a fair and impartial process for deciding disputes. Judges help do that.

Judges play an essential role in sailing competitions, as they ensure that all rules and regulations are followed in case of any issues. They must have a thorough understanding of the rules and be able to apply them to the situation at hand and make decisions quickly and accurately. Furthermore, judges must remain impartial and fair to all competitors and stay composed and professional in difficult situations.

US Sailing's Area G team of certified judges is committed to meeting these needs. We strive to ensure that all regattas are judged fairly and accurately. We are also dedicated to providing support and guidance to all judges, certified or not, so they can move up and meet the standards necessary for judging and the judgment to enforce them if called upon. Clear rules and fair judgment ensure that the game is enjoyable and keep players engaged.

Please spread the word that there is plenty of help available from the team at US Sailing, whatever area you're in. And please visit US Sailing's main judge page at: <https://www.ussailing.org/competition/rules-officiating/judges> to learn more.

And/or email [Donald Wieneke](mailto:Donald.Wieneke@ussailing.org), RAJ Area G.

USEFUL LINKS

- [US Sailing Judges' Page](#)
- [The Racing Rules of Sailing 2021-2024 with the corrections and updates for Jan 1, 2022](#)
- [SOARS](#)
- [Safesport](#)
- [World Sailing](#)

RESOURCES

- [Find a Seminar](#)
- [US Sailing Judge Certification Requirements](#)
- [2021-2024 US Prescriptions to The Racing Rules of Sailing](#)
- [Appendices KG & LG - NoR and SI Guides & Templates](#)
- [The Judges' Manual for 2021-2024](#)
- [Guidelines for Online Hearings](#)
- [Continuing Education Events and CEUs Table](#)
- [Race Officials Certification Forms](#)

SafeSport Training Tip

When taking SafeSport training, please access it via the [USSailing.org](https://ussailing.org) site and not via the SafeSport site. This ensures you take the correct training and allows your results to flow back to US Sailing and SOARS automatically, saving you and the office time and headache.

