

RRS 68

The Latest News from the Judges' Committee

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WELCOME TO THE JUDGES' NEWSLETTER

Sarah Ashton

The February Annual Judges' Committee Meeting was jam-packed with information, lively discussions, and new ideas. Below is a photo of those in-person at Harken minus Tom Pochereva, Area H RAJ, who took the picture. He also won the long-distance award as he flew in from Hawaii!



CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Wayne Balsiger

The Judges' Committee just had our annual meeting. It was in-person (and Zoom) for the first time since 2020. It is great to have in-person as the networking and visiting of committee members is much better than on Zoom. We have a great committee of RAJs and At-Large members, most of them on the Judges Education Training and Testing Subcommittee (JETTS). Thanks to John Porter, RAJ Area K, for his excellent hosting skills in Pewaukee, WI. We enjoyed a tour of the Harken facilities and using them for our meeting.

Judges' Manual updated: The extra update to the Judges' Manual 2021-2024 is available on the website. It is always free to download the PDF, as that is how we distribute it. The document's first page will show the Version updated on February 7, 2024. There are several updates, including Misconduct Parameters to Consider, SafeSport, and Background checks. The revised Rule 14 decision tree, updated detailed protest procedures, and the Appeals chapter are refreshed. New links are added under resources, and the PC Chair is now referred to as the Chief Judge. Use The Judges' Manual for 2021-2024 for the latest version.

Education Season: As noted before, this is the best time of year to get judges' education CEUs. Whether Protest Days, Round Tables, Clinics or the Club Judge and Advance Judge Seminars. If your certification expires in 2024, now is the time to check how you meet recertification requirements and sign up for some Continuing Education Units. See the Seminar Calendar on the Judges page. Find a Seminar.

Number of Judges: This year, we have 322 judges. There are 26 new judges in 2023, 47 renewals, 80% male and 20% female. About 35 either retired or did not renew in 2023. We have 30 IJ, 70 NJ, 58 RJ, 108 Club Judges, and 56 Judge-In-Training.

In January 2022, as incoming Chair, I looked at our Judges. We had 307 Judges. The 307 comprises 26 International Judges (and who are NJs), plus an additional 84 National Judges, 53 Regional Judges, 98 Club Judges, and 60 Judges-In-Training.

Judge Level	2020	2024
IJ	30	26
NJ (not IJ)	70	84
RJ	58	53
CJ	108	98
JIT	56	60
Total	322	321

So we have had some shifts: Increasing the number of IJs, decreasing number of NJs, and increasing numbers of CJs and JIT.

We always look for racing sailors interested in the rules and possibly becoming a Judge. If you are or know someone who might be interested, make sure your RAJ knows about them.

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER *Cont.*

Your SOARS and Find a Race official: It is always a good idea to check your SOARS annual report to ensure accuracy. At the bottom of the page, click the I have reviewed and updated my information. All information is now current; then click Save & Exit to make it current. This is important and is one of the factors in your name showing up in Find a Race Official. The others are as follows: US Sailing Dues are paid, SafeSport and Background check are current, and your certification has not expired.

Annual Judges' Committee Meeting: We discussed several topics we discussed this year. One item is getting judges to work on their recertification items sooner than many do. Too many of us look at the requirements at 3.5 years into their 4-year term and scramble to meet education, testing and hearing requirements.

Each RAJ describes their area with judge counts, strengths/what is working well, and challenges/issues. This often generates ideas on improvements or using what others are doing in other Areas. One issue we continue to have is how to help certify judges in Areas with few judges and hearings. Zoom can help. As to getting enough hearings, the + 1 Program of adding an extra person to a hearing panel can help. Bruce Cook has had some success with this concept.

This year, we reviewed the product of the RRS 69 Misconduct Work party that we requested, and the Board of Directors appointed. This covers how US Sailing handles Complaints of Race Officials and RRS 69 filings sent to US Sailing, among others. Everyone is very pleased with the committee's work and looks forward to the Board of Directors approving the changes in Regulation 15.

We had conversations on how to handle conversations with judges related to performance issues. This may eventually become a guide to difficult conversations with race officials.

We enjoyed a visit from President Rich Jepsen, discussing several items related to judges. This includes the National Sailing Symposium, where our dues go, and the scheduled implementation plans for the new education software to which we will move our seminars. On insurance for race officials, we may have some good news in the next month or so.

We met with Jess Haverstock, Major Gifts Officer, as she gained more knowledge of what the Judges' Committee does and information that can help gain donor dollars.

Our JETTS Education Subcommittee reviewed what is happening. As noted above and in earlier RRS 68 newsletters, several new education offerings have been created, and this time of year is the education season. Check out the seminar calendar and sign up, especially if your certification expires at the end of 2024.

Check out the other great articles in this issue: Happenings in Area C and RAJ Don Wieneke's article on protest diagrams.

Remember, all issues of the RRS 68 newsletters are on the Judges' webpage.

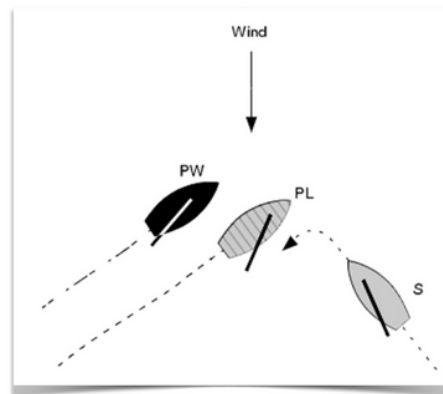
Smooth sailing always,

Wayne Balsiger, Judges' Committee Chair webalsiger@gmail.com

WHY DO A DIAGRAM?

Don Wieneke, RAJ Area G

FACTS: S was on a starboard tack and didn't alter course. PW and PL held course, kept clear and passed on port tack above S. No rule broken.



Is this a good diagram? The answer, of course, depends on what really happened and how that's portrayed, but in this example, there's an obvious conflict of facts. Yes, the diagram is considered a fact too.

So, when to use a diagram is the question. Diagrams translate complex written rules into clear visual representations, making them easier to comprehend and remember.

Sometimes diagrams are a must when responding to an appeals committee or questions from a party about the requested write-up. Sometimes, they don't help at all. So it depends. But in any case, the diagram has to reflect the facts as presented or written (and vice-versa). As the above illustrates, diagrams are facts, and our facts should not conflict.

Many judges don't use diagrams; instead, they paraphrase the RRS to explain their decisions. They point out that the absence of diagrams in the RRS may be attributed to the belief that the RRS provides sufficient guidance for judges to interpret and enforce the rules of sailing effectively, and the same goes for the writeup. They're also concerned that the diagram may conflict with the written facts. Also, hearing time constraints might make it impractical to provide diagrams, at least on the day of the hearings. Deliberations take long enough without extending the time parties must wait for the protest committee to draw diagrams.

To be sure, as easily as a diagram can explain why a hearing decision makes sense, it can also do the opposite. Diagrams rank as facts, and our facts should make sense and not point out the error of our conclusions. But if they point out an error, do we ditch the diagram or revisit our findings of facts? And yes, maybe do a more accurate diagram to give a better understanding of what the committee has decided.

Diagrams can provide a needed check on facts and conclusions, promoting fairness and integrity in the protest and redress process.

In some situations, photos and drone, videos are used as diagrams to explain the protest committee's decisions.

So, obviously, the answer is somewhere in the middle of all this.

What strategies can we employ to enhance the effectiveness of diagrams in the context of protest committee hearings?

One strategy is to look backward and be sure the diagram represents the conclusions and the conclusions have facts to support both.

Another option is to use digital pictures to capture the competitors' perspective on what happened, whether using plastic boats or drawings on a table. An even better approach is to create a final diagram using software like Sail Replay or TSS, which can be used in the write-up of the hearing. After reviewing it with the rest of the jury, this can be done the next day.

Competitor diagrams can be ideal for understanding the difference in opposing competitors' points of view in a hearing. The Committee can then choose which depiction of the incident is relevant or at least have guidance in creating their own diagram explaining what facts, conclusions, and decisions the committee came to. They can then diagram their version of the incident to help explain the protest committee's decisions to the parties at the end of the hearing. In some situations, photos and drone videos already in evidence can be used for that purpose.

Your insights and suggestions on this matter would be greatly appreciated.

Please let me know your thoughts, and sure, you can send me a diagram so that I understand what you're talking about (grin).

HAPPENINGS IN AREA C

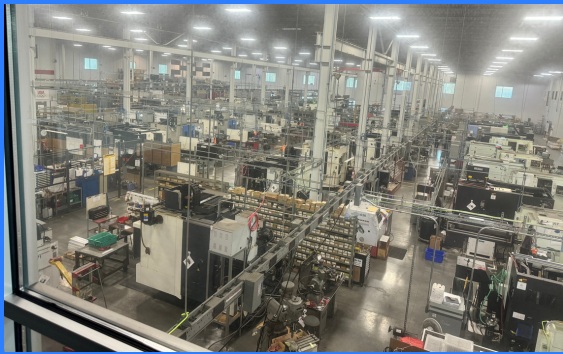
Harry Foote

Winter has arrived in Area C, certainly in the northernmost sections, as sadly, I watch my yacht Club and home become islands in the winter storms. Certainly not conducive to sailing in any form. (The bay has not frozen over yet, so ice boats are still in the sheds). That said, we have turned to education and training, and the most recent, as I pen this note, is the Protest Day held at Annapolis Yacht Club. Bill Simmons put together a masterful program that was very attended. It was an excellent full-day session that demonstrated the time and preparation that the attendees put into the program. As a supervising observer, I was impressed and look forward to working with the newly minted judges and helping others advance.

More training is being planned as Darryl Waskow, and myself are working on getting some in-person club judge sessions scheduled. Beyond that, there are online training sessions and many other avenues to learn and grow. I encourage everyone to look into these courses and get involved.

The happy news is that Sandy Grosvenor, an Area C IJ, has been selected to be a judge at the Olympics in Paris. Congratulations to her; it is an honor well deserved.

Thank you Harken



USEFUL LINKS

- [US Sailing Judges' Page](#)
- [The Racing Rules of Sailing 2021-2024 with the corrections and updates for Jan 1, 2023](#)
- [US Sailing Appeals](#)
- [World Sailing Cases](#)
- [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](#) **Latest version 02/2024**
- [Guidelines for Online Hearings](#)
- [Continuing Education Events and CEUs Table](#)
- [Race Officials Certification Forms](#)
- [Race Officials Insurance Information](#)
- [Race Official/Organizing Authority Connection Page](#)

