

RRS 68

The Latest News from
the Judges' Committee

In This Newsletter:

[Chairman's Corner](#)

Page 02

[Video and Tracker Evidence](#)

Page 03

[Video cont.](#)

[Hawaii Photos](#)

Page 04

[Happenings in Area H](#)

Page 05

[Useful Links](#)

Page 06

WELCOME TO THE JUDGES' NEWSLETTER 2025!

Sarah Ashton

Happy New Year to all!

This year brings new opportunities for sailing, including updated rules, a new Judges' Manual, and new appeals and cases to review. There's plenty to study!

Be sure to explore the exciting new offerings in judges' continuing education. The US Sailing Find a Seminar page lists the latest available seminars.

If you would like to hold a seminar, clinic, or roundtable in your area, contact your [RAJ](#), who will gladly help you arrange one.

Your feedback is valuable. If you have any suggestions for RRS 68, please share them with us. We're here to listen and improve. You can reach out to me at ashtonsh@bellsouth.net.



CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Wayne Balsiger

Winter is here and a new year as well.

Welcome our new RAJs: RAJs have a term of three years and can serve two terms. With three RAJs leaving after six years, we welcome three new RAJs to the Judges' Committee. Giff (George) Constable is Area B and American YC in Rye, NY, and replaces Bruce Cook, who will continue as Protest Days Coordinator on the JC. Clark Chapin is Area E and Portage YC in Michigan. He replaces Nancy Zangerle. Barbara Belt is Area L and Port Madison YC in Washington. She replaces Craig Daniels, who continues with Rule 42 clinics. We thank the New RAJs for stepping forward and the retiring RAJs for their fine work as RAJs.

Educational offerings: We now have several Judge Round Tables on the Seminar calendar, both in person and online. They are a great way to expand your knowledge of judging, as each session covers multiple topics. If your certification expires in 2025, this is a good way to get some CEUs.

Advance Judges Seminar and Club Judge Seminars: We are updating for the new 2025 Rules. Protest Days. Protest days are a great way to improve your knowledge and learn tips on doing your best in hearings.

New Racing Rules: The new rules have been published and are now available in several digital forms. The US Sailing app on your mobile devices now has new rules. Open it and move to the right to find the 2025 rules. The WS site has them as well (without US Prescriptions). As a Race Official, you will receive a free hardcopy book after they are printed. Rulebooks for other members and additional copies for officials will be available at cost.

We are updating the Judges' Manual. I understand the 2025 Appeals book will be out in January, and the WS 2025 Case Book will likely be in February.

Each revision of Dave Perry's 100 Best Racing Rules Quizzes always includes 25 new quizzes, which is another reason to update.

SOARS record form change: The Rule 42 question is now labeled "Appendix P Observer" when filling out the detail in SOARS when a Judge. This more accurately describes what Judges do with Rule 42. This question only appears on the Judge form.

Initial IJ Certification: Are you working on your IJ Certification? Last month, World Sailing announced that it will certify Race Officials twice a year. The old schedule was that you submitted your application to US Sailing by June 1, our September deadline for the WS November meeting.

The second opportunity is the WS May meeting and the November meeting. We don't know yet what the US Sailing deadlines will be, but I suspect it may be December 1. Each year, the WS certificate requirements are updated in February.

Let your RAJ and our IJ Candidate Mentor, Darryl Waskow, know if you are working on IJ certification. It helps you and us as well, so all the deadlines are met.

Smooth sailing always,

Wayne Balsiger, Chair
webalsiger@gmail.com

VIDEO AND TRACKER EVIDENCE

Mark Townsend

Video and GPS-based 'tracking' are increasingly being used at events for boats of all sizes. As a result, parties often seek to present video or tracking evidence.

Is the protest committee required to consider video and tracker evidence?

Yes. Video and trackers are all evidence, and rule 63.4(b) (Hearing Procedure) states that the protest committee shall take the evidence of the parties present at the hearing and their witnesses. Rule 63.4(b) (Hearing Procedure) allows the protest committee to exclude evidence that is irrelevant or unduly repetitive, but how do you determine that without viewing the evidence?

Additionally, if the protest committee reviews the video or tracker evidence before the hearing to assess its relevance, rule 63.1(a)(4) (Rights of Parties) requires the video to be shown during the hearing, giving each party the opportunity to comment on and question the evidence.

Rather than preview video and tracker evidence, allow the video and tracker evidence to be presented by the party. Under rule 63.5(a) (Decisions), the protest committee can then give the weight it feels appropriate to the evidence presented. High-quality video from the correct angle or precise tracking evidence can be given considerable weight. Conversely, a poor-quality video where you can barely tell if the boat is a monohull or a multihull might be given little weight.

Video and tracker evidence can sometimes provide useful evidence, but protest committees should recognize their limitations and note the points described in rule M8 (Photographic Evidence) and the Judges Manual.

Tracking evidence may be useful in an OCS redress when a boat claims they restarted by rounding the pin end of the line to return to the pre-start side of the starting line, but the race committee did not record the boat restarting.

Tracking evidence can also be confusing. At an offshore race, the race committee presented tracking data showing a boat crossing the corner of an exclusion zone. The boat presented data from its chart plotter showing it rounding outside the corner of the exclusion zone. The protest committee should understand where the camera was in relation to the boats. Was the camera's platform moving, and in what direction and how fast? Similarly, the protest committee should consider and use evidence from GPS devices with caution. GPS accuracy can vary depending on several factors, including open sky, obstructions, receiver quality, atmospheric conditions, and satellite geometry. GPS-enabled smartphones are typically accurate to within 16 ft (4.9 m). Consumer-grade devices are usually accurate to within 5–16 ft (1–5 m) in open sky conditions.

The protest committee can call witnesses to present video and tracker evidence under rule 63.4(b) (Hearing Procedure). The race committee may have video of the incident at the start or finish. The organizing authority may have drone footage of the race. Was there media coverage that might be relevant? Tracking data might provide information to resolve conflicting testimony. Use this option sparingly.

Continued on page 4

VIDEO AND TRACKER EVIDENCE *Cont.*

One final piece of advice: at the beginning of the hearing, before the parties enter, establish the information you need and the information you don't need. Hearings should take between 30 and 45 minutes, from admitting the parties to informing the parties. Rule 63.5(a) (Decisions) requires you to find the facts based on the balance of probabilities, NOT beyond a reasonable doubt. Watching videos can be time-consuming, and if they are not useful, move on quickly. Staring at a video of two dots on the horizon may not be adding value!

See you on the water,

Mark Townsend IJ, IU, IRO

Judge Education, Training and Testing Chair

HAWAII - DO YOU WISH YOU WERE THERE NOW?



HAPPENINGS IN AREA H

Tom Pochereva

2024 was a fabulous year for Area H - HAWAII !!! 🌴🏆

This year, our youth sailing around the state was busy producing great young sailors with inspiring programs taking skippers out in heavy air conditions to surf down swells and plane across our clear blue tropical waters from Maui and Oahu to Kauai, including Waikiki and Kaneohe Bay.

This year, we had guest instructors from US Sailing and beyond for our iQFoil and WASZP programs. The young sailors were very enthusiastic, and the events attracted additional youth from across the Pacific Basin. Some highlights were the iQFoil and WASZP regional/international championships, with guest Judge John Christiansen coming to lead our local judges with On-The-Water rule 42 judging and very interesting protests between competitors. Port vs. Starboard protests involving high-speed mark rounding with foiling craft make interesting and challenging decisions between competitors. Our judges got more experience in two weeks than we often get in a year!

Hawaii is blessed to have historic regattas racing for the unique Kalakaua Cup, originally raced for by King Kalakaua and our area's Sir Thomas Lipton Challenge Cup One 'YRA PHRF' Offshore regatta. The Kalakaua Cup is raced annually in the outer bay off Kaneohe Yacht Club, and this year, we had a large easterly Pacific swell that competitors were able to catch and surf down the face of. While some years we have lighter winds and calmer seas, this year was significantly more exciting for racers and viewers alike.

Area H, aka 'Hawaii Yacht Racing Association', locally referred to as 'HYRA', holds different series off each of the Islands... Maui has its Lahaina Light series over Labor Day, which includes a shoreside friendly softball competition between host and visiting clubs and the Lahaina Return race from Kaanapali to Waikiki. Kauai has its harbor and open ocean series off Nawiliwili. Oahu has coastal and around-the-island races and, of course, the Kaneohe Yacht Club Thursday Night reverse start races. Or the Friday Night Hawaii/Waikiki Yacht Club races. Narrow channels and coral reefs 'test' skipper and crew for rules and seamanship... not the least of which is the regular 'I found the bottom' as water depths can change from twenty feet to twenty inches in half a boat length in both events.

We are always grateful to the US Sailing instructors who make the trip across the Pacific to teach our local sailors. This year, Craig Daniels ran a Club Judge and Protest Day for our local sailors. We all appreciate the time and expertise Craig brought to our sailors. In return, we treated him to some one-person outrigger canoe (OC1) practice and a Mai Tai at a local club.

2025 brings the new RRS, and HYRA clubs are already signing up for primers on changes sailors will need to adapt to while safely guiding their crews around race courses.

From Hawaii, we wish Aloha to all sailors for the coming season and a big **Hau'oli Makahiki Hou**.

Tom Porchereva
Regional Administrative Judge for Area H

USEFUL LINKS

- [US Sailing Judges' Page](#)
- [The Racing Rules of Sailing 2021-2024 and 2025-2028](#)
- [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](#)

