



US Sailing Judges' Manual for 2025-2028

June 20, 2025

**NOTE: The Case Book references in this version
are still based on the 2021-2024 Case Book**

US Sailing is the national governing body for sailing. Our mission is to provide leadership, integrity and advancement for the sport. Founded in 1897 and headquartered in Bristol, RI, US Sailing is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

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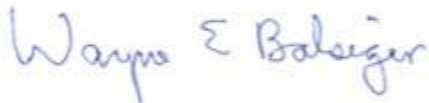
The *US Sailing Judges' Manual* was originally written by Jack H. Feller, Jr., and has been updated every four years in conjunction with the revision of *The Racing Rules of Sailing*. In addition to updating the manual for new and revised rules, we have endeavored to bring the manual up to date with the best practices in judging.

Over the years, some of our all-time best and most dedicated judges have made invaluable contributions. Just some of the key names that we will forever be indebted to include: Tony Jack, Ron Ward, John A. S. Brown, III, William Parks, Henry Chapman, John Drake Ross, Mark H. Baxter, Jim Beddow, Harry Anderson, Jr., F. Gregg Bemis and F. Gardner Cox. Also Tom Ehman, Jr., Evans Harrell, Harman Hawkins, Dave Lewis, George Rockwood, Glenn Russell, Donovan Smith, Theodore Tolson, Jr., Bill Bentsen, Mary Pera, Jim Capron and Joe Cochran. Also Brad Dellenbaugh, Art Engel, Barbara Farquhar, Tom Farquhar, Ann Newton, Mary Savage, Marty Ottenheimer, Burton Howell, Joe Krolak, John Siegel, and Bill Simon.

This 17th edition of the Judges' Manual was edited by these members of the US Sailing Judges' Committee: Wayne Balsiger, Bruce Cook, Craig Daniels, Harry Foote, Matt Hill, Steve Holmstrom, Chris Luppens, Mary Pierce, Tom Pochereva, John Porter, Jerry Thompson, Darryl Waskow, Don Wieneke, and Nancy Zangerle. Mark Townsend updated Hearing Procedures and the Rule 14 decision tree. Dave Perry kindly reviewed much more than just the Appeals chapter.

We are again able to provide an electronic copy of this edition to any US Sailing member without additional charge.

We trust that you will find this manual informative and a valuable source for answers to your questions on judging and Judges' Committee procedures.



Wayne Balsiger

Chair, US Sailing Judges' Committee
June 2025

Editors' Note

The *Judges' Manual for 2025-2028* is produced by the US Sailing Judges' Committee. Its purpose is to serve as a reference guide for certified judges, judges in training, umpires and other individuals who serve on protest committees. There is valuable information for others, including race committee members, competitors and individuals who simply want to know more about the protest process. This manual serves as the official study guide and textbook for the US Sailing judge seminars given under the auspices of the Judges' Committee.

This 17th edition of the Judges' Manual incorporates rules changes in *The Racing Rules of Sailing for 2025-2028, Including US Sailing Prescriptions*.

Please note that throughout this document, particularly in Chapter 13 – Resources, you will find references to web-based information. Much of this information can be found on the Judges page on the US Sailing website.

You are encouraged to provide comments, criticisms and suggestions that will improve the functionality and usefulness of this book to the email address below. The US Sailing Judges' Committee regularly revises and updates this manual, adding guidance for all judges to ensure consistent procedures and rules application, and gratefully accepts suggestions for improvement. Please send suggestions for enhancements, proposed topics or attachments to the editors, care of the Race Administration Director (raceadmin@ussailing.org).

Wayne Balsiger
Seattle, Washington

Program History

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

In 1995, the US Sailing Board of Directors asked the Judge Committee 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 the Judge Committee introduced 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 high standards of integrity, fairness and judicial temperament found in *The Judges' Manual* and the US Sailing Personal Attributes Policy. Certified or not, all judges serving on protest committees should meet these standards.

When a protest committee is on duty afloat or ashore and the Chief Judge 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 US Sailing procedure for nominating World Sailing International Judges. The qualifications required for certification for each of these different paths are described in the **US Sailing Judge Certification Requirements** (see link under Chapter 13 - Resources).

US Sailing Judges' Committee Chairs

First year as Chair, Name

1978	First reference to "Committee on Judges" – Harman Hawkins, chair
1980	Richard Latham, chair
1986	Ron Ward, chair
1990	William Parks, chair
1994	Renamed "Judges Committee" – Barbara Farquhar, chair
1998	Jim Capron, chair
2002	Ted Everingham, chair
2006	Sandy Grosvenor, chair
2010	Don Becker, chair
2014	Steve Wrigley, chair
2018	Sarah Ashton, chair
2022	Wayne Balsiger, chair

Conventions Used in this Manual

- To be consistent with usage in the rulebook, the feminine gender is used when referring to a boat.
- In general, the term “rule” or “rules” refers to the racing rules in the *RRS*. When citing a rule, this manual will often provide the rule number or appendix letter, plus the title associated with the specific rule or appendix in parentheses. For example, “The... protest committee...shall be governed by the *rules* in the conduct and judging of the event.” as described in rule 5 (Rules Governing Organizing Authorities and Officials). When a rule is repeatedly referenced in a paragraph or section, the title is provided only with the first reference to the rule number. The reader should refer to the text of the applicable rule in the *RRS* when appropriate.
- US Sailing Appeals decisions are referred to as “Appeal” with the appropriate number. World Sailing Cases are referred to as “Case” with the appropriate number. Links to both the *US Sailing Appeals Book* and the *World Sailing Case Book* can be found on the US Sailing website under Appeals.
- The reader is referred to rules and US Sailing appeals and World Sailing cases throughout this manual and may find it useful to read the relevant rule and any applicable appeal or case in conjunction with the text of this manual.
- Words or phrases *in italicized type* are defined terms in the Definitions section of the *RRS*. For example, a sentence that includes “...is a *party* to...” should be interpreted to mean “...is a party (as defined in the *RRS*) to...” When the term is not italicized it has the meaning of common usage.
- In this manual we use the terms “protest committee” and “jury” interchangeably except where specifically noted. When the specific meaning is an International Jury as described in Appendix N (*International Juries*), we use the term “international jury.”
- Prior editions of this manual mostly used the term PC Chair. This edition replaces PC Chair with Chief Judge. Some events have multiple hearing panels. For these we use hearing chair or chair of the hearing.
- **Standard Abbreviations** – this manual regularly uses these abbreviations:

AAC..... association appeals committee	AC..... appeals committee
JC Judges’ Committee	NoR notice of race (per NoR and SI Guides)
OA..... organizing authority	PC protest committee
PRO..... principal race officer	RAJ..... Regional Administrative Judge
RC race committee	RRS <i>The Racing Rules of Sailing</i>
RSA regional sailing association	SI, SIs .. sailing instruction(s)
TC..... technical committee	WS..... World Sailing

1 – Introduction

Who is a Judge?

The term “judge” is generally applied to anyone who serves on a protest committee (PC). *The Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS)* define a PC. If the PC meets the requirements of Appendix N (International Juries) it is called an “international jury” or “jury.” These distinctions are described in rule 91 (Protest Committee).

For the most part, sailing is a self-policing sport, which means that competitors are expected to comply voluntarily with the rules and to protest when they think another competitor has broken the rules. The PC is the body designated under the RRS to resolve disputes between competitors, between a competitor and the RC, TC or PC and between a support person and the PC. It is also the body designated to resolve allegations that the RC or OA may have prejudiced a competitor’s results by failing to comply with the rules. The most important job that a judge has is to apply the rules fairly and consistently in making decisions. In general, the PC does not serve as a ‘policeman’ for an event; its job is mostly limited to resolving disputes brought before it.

Judges have other important functions to ensure that the event is fair to all competitors, such as reviewing the NoR and SIs or advising the RC on matters relating to the *RRS*.

Scope of Activities

The scope of a judge’s activities depends on the type and size of the event. The PC may be one or more judges appointed by the organizing authority (OA) or the RC to hear protests and redress requests and serve other functions.

For club races, the RC may appoint a PC after it has received a protest or request for redress. The PC may include RC members and other sailors from the club. Competitors who sailed in the same class as the boats involved in the protest or request for redress may have a conflict of interest and, if possible, should not serve on the PC considering the protest or request. However, rule 63.4 provides a procedure whereby the potential conflict can be disclosed and waived by the parties to the hearing.

At events where competitors come from outside the club or local area, the OA would be well advised to appoint a PC that is separate from and independent of the RC. This PC should generally not include any competitors from the event, although sailors may be part of the PC if they do not have a conflict of interest. It should include sailors and qualified judges from different clubs and, if possible, from outside the local area.

In events at higher levels, the OA may require that a majority be judges certified by US Sailing or international judges appointed by World Sailing. For large national and international events, the OA may appoint an international jury that has been properly constituted under Appendix N.

Part 5 (Protests, Redress, Hearings, Misconduct and Appeals) provides rules and procedures for conducting hearings and resolving protests, requests for redress, allegations of rule breaches by

support persons and allegations of misconduct. Advisory guidelines for PCs can be found in Appendix M (Recommendations for Protest Committees).

Terminology

Listed below are commonly used terms and phrases with a brief explanation of their meanings.

Appeal

Most PC decisions are subject to appeal under rule 70 (Appeals and Requests to a National Authority). In the United States, such appeals are submitted to US Sailing, which refers most appeals initially to an association appeals committee (AAC). If the decision of the AAC is appealed further, it is then sent to the US Sailing Appeals Committee. See Part 5, Section D (Appeals) and Appendix R (Procedures for Appeals and Requests) in the *RRS*.

Area

One of 11 regions in the US that conducts US Sailing qualification events and sends the winners to national championships. Area officials also certify club-level judges and race officers after they have met US Sailing certification requirements.

Association Appeals Committee (AAC)

These committees consider and decide appeals of PC decisions at the first level. AACs are appointed by US Sailing Regional Sailing Associations (RSAs). However, an appeal or request arising from an event conducted under the procedural rules of the Inter-collegiate Sailing Association (ICSA) or the Interscholastic Sailing Association (ISSA) will be forwarded to the appropriate AAC for the ICSA or the ISSA.

Appeals Committee (US Sailing)

The US Sailing Appeals Committee considers and decides appeals, answers questions regarding interpretations of the *RRS*, reviews decisions of the AACs when requested, publishes selected decisions of the Appeals Committee, recommends changes in the *RRS* to the Racing Rules Committee, and submits US Sailing appeals for adoption as Cases by World Sailing.

International Jury (IJ)

A PC appointed by the OA that meets the requirements of Appendix N.

Judge

A person who serves on a PC for an event. A US Sailing Judge has been certified by US Sailing, having met the qualifications described in Chapter 12 (US Sailing Judges Program) of this manual. An International Judge (IJ) is appointed by World Sailing.

Member National Authority (MNA)

An organization recognized by World Sailing that administers the sport of sailing in a country or political entity that has been granted status as an Olympic nation. US Sailing is the Member National Authority for the United States.

Organizing Authority (OA)

The entity that puts on an event. Under rule 89.1 (Organizing Authority), the OA may be World Sailing, an MNA, a club, a class association or other organization affiliated to a national authority, or another organization specified in the *rule*.

Principal Race Officer (PRO)

The PRO is the race official in charge of the activities of the RC on and off the water.

Protest

An allegation made under rule 60 by a boat or *committee* (RC, TC or PC) that a boat has broken a *rule*.

Protest Committee (PC)

A committee appointed by the OA or RC to hear protests and requests for redress. See rule 89.2 (Notice of Race; Appointment of Race Officials) and rule 91 (Protest Committee). All international juries (Appendix N) are also protest committees.

Race Committee (RC)

A committee appointed by the OA under rule 89.2(c) to run the event as provided in rule 90 and elsewhere in the RRS. As defined in Terminology in the Introduction, the RC includes any other person or committee performing a race committee function.

Regional Administrative Judge (RAJ)

A member of the Judges' Committee who administers the Judges Program for their US Sailing geographical area.

Request for Redress

A written request to the PC under rule 61 (Redress) from a boat, the RC or the TC to adjust the score(s) of one or more boats in a race or series. A PC may also call a hearing to consider redress for a boat. See rule 60 (Protests) and rule 61 (Redress).

Regional Sailing Association (RSA)

An association of sailing clubs within one of eleven geographical areas of the United States. There is usually more than one RSA per geographical area.

Technical Committee (TC)

A committee consisting of one or more persons appointed by the OA or RC under rule 92 or as prescribed in WS regulations to conduct equipment inspection and event measurement as directed by the organizing authority and as required by the *rules*. Event measurers and equipment inspectors are members of the technical committee. The technical committee may protest a boat, request redress for a boat, or make a report to the PC under rule 69 (Misconduct).

Umpire

An official who makes decisions and imposes penalties on the water during a match or team race when the umpiring system is specified in the NoR or SIs. Appendix C (Match Racing Rules), Appendix D (Team Racing Rules) and Appendix E (Radio Sailing Racing Rules) include descriptions of the functions of umpires. Umpires also may be used in certain fleet race events.

United States Sailing Association (US Sailing)

The Member National Authority for sailing in the United States. US Sailing has been recognized by the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) as the “national governing body” for sailing under the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act. US Sailing is responsible for selecting the members of the US Olympic Sailing Team and receives significant funding for Olympic-path sailing from the USOPC. The organization of US Sailing, including its

directors, staff and volunteers, is described in detail on the US Sailing website (www.ussailing.org).

World Sailing (WS)

World Sailing is the international authority that governs the sport of sailboat racing. WS produces The Racing Rules of Sailing and publishes the World Sailing Case Book, authoritative interpretations of the racing rules. It comprises the member national authorities, class associations and other affiliated organizations. Among its responsibilities and programs are the training and certification of International Race Officials including International Judges, Umpires, Race Officers, Measurers, Classifiers and Technical Delegates.

2 - Standards and Practices

On Being a Judge

US Sailing Judges are held to a high standard of behavior when they are judging and sailing, as well as in their daily lives. US Sailing expects that those who represent the Association will act with integrity at all times. Those who seek appointment as a US Sailing Judge should be aware of this expectation and be prepared to meet it.

Chapter 12 of this manual offers an overview of these standards and qualifications, which are regularly reviewed and updated by the Judges' Committee and may be found on the [Judges' Page](#) of the US Sailing website. The standards describe what is expected of a judge and give RAJs objective criteria on which to base recommendations for certification and recertification.

Technical Qualifications and Skills

A judge must possess a wide range of technical qualifications and skills. Racing experience is critical since the hardest part of any protest hearing is determining what happened on the water. Generally, such experience cannot be taught and must be learned first-hand. Excellent knowledge of the *RRS* is also essential. This skill can be learned through study, but it is also important to have experience applying the right-of-way rules in practice as a competitor. A judge should have a firm understanding that a *rule* must be applied as written, consistent with its obvious intent, and should not substitute his or her own ideas about what would be fairest in the circumstances.

Other important qualifications include experience running races, English language proficiency and good physical health. The ability to find and write facts, run a hearing properly, and communicate effectively are also essential skills for a competent judge, as is the ability to handle small power boats when judging on the water at an event.

Personal Attributes

Because race officials play an important role in ensuring the fairness and quality of competition, racing sailors and US Sailing expect a high level of personal integrity and judicial temperament of certified race officials.

The most important attribute that every judge should possess is judicial temperament: the ability to treat each situation and competitor with fairness and impartiality. This should be second nature. Other personal attributes that a judge should possess are listed below. While these qualities can be found in most people, not everyone will possess them to the same degree. Some of the most important are integrity, maturity, honesty, open-mindedness, ability to work with others, reliability and objectivity. Judges must also exemplify excellent personal behavior, show respect for competitors, display sound reasoning abilities, be adept at considering multiple points of view, be able to maintain confidentiality and be capable of making reasoned decisions while under pressure. Most important, judges must keep in mind that the sailors are our customers, and that we are there to serve them and our sport.

Judges abide by the **US Sailing Race Official Personal Attributes Requirements**, located on the [Judges' Page](#). Please refer to them for a detailed discussion of these requirements and the definitions of the italicized terms above.

A list of the personal attributes required for qualification as a US Sailing Club Judge, Regional Judge or National Judge is found in Chapter 12. All judges, certified or not, should strive to meet the highest standards in both personal and professional life.

Personal Conduct of Judges

The personal conduct of judges must be above reproach before, during and after an event. As highly visible representatives of US Sailing, judges must embody integrity and judicial temperament at all times. Judges are expected to be mature and temperate, moderate in their use of alcohol, judicious in their use of medications and in full control of their faculties. A judge must always defer drinking alcoholic beverages until all daily official duties are completed.

The Chief Judge must immediately dismiss a judge who engages in serious misconduct. If US Sailing receives a Complaint about a Race Officer alleging inappropriate conduct, it will be handled per the Race Official Reports and Complaints Policy. See [Give Feedback on a Race Official](#).

US Sailing Judges are subject to the US Sailing Code of Ethics described in section 14 of the US Sailing Regulations. In particular, section 14.05 of the regulations says:

14.05 Volunteers at US Sailing Events; Certified Officials at Any Event

Any individual involved in running an event organized or sanctioned by US Sailing; any individual selecting competitors to compete in an event organized by US Sailing or in the Olympic, Paralympic or Pan American Games; or any individual holding certification from US Sailing as a coach, instructor or race official, whether acting in the capacity for which they hold certification or otherwise, shall:

- A. avoid conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived;
- B. subordinate his or her personal and individual interests to the interests of the sport of sailing and the competitors therein;
- C. apply and enforce the rules in a fair and even-handed manner; and
- D. respect the right of all competitors in the sport of sailing to fair and equal treatment, free from discrimination or harassment of any kind.

Relationships with Competitors

Judges must not only be fair but must also be perceived to be fair in their relations with competitors. While PC members can and should mix with competitors during social events and should be seen frequently on the dock and at other event venues, relations with competitors must be generally reserved during an event. It is common for judges to have close personal friendships with some of

the competitors, but they must treat each competitor in a similar manner, regardless of their personal relationships.

Judges should never express an opinion concerning the relative abilities of competitors, speculate on the outcome of races or regattas, or participate in wagers of any kind (see WS Regulation 37, Betting and Anti-Corruption Code). Only the Chief Judge should make remarks concerning official business, and only on appropriate occasions. Deliberations of the PC are confidential and must be treated as such.

Competitors frequently ask judges for their opinions about rules situations. Judges must respond carefully to avoid being critical of an action or misleading about a situation for which they do not have all the facts. In response to a question from a competitor about a real or hypothetical question, a judge could say “I wasn’t there, so I don’t have both sides of the story, but if the facts are..., then the *rules* that apply are...” If possible, judges should answer the question in the presence of another judge on the protest committee.

3 – Organization and Authority

Authority and Responsibility

The PC derives its authority from the *RRS*. The OA may, in some cases, provide specific instructions extending the responsibilities and authority of the PC. The responsibility for conducting races rests with the RC. The PC and RC are expected to work together harmoniously to provide the best possible competition for the sailors.

Status of Protest Committees

- Rule 91(a) describes a committee appointed by the OA or the RC and grants national authorities the right to prescribe a minimum number of committee members for specified events.
- Rule 91(b) describes what requirements must be met for an international jury. These are prescribed in the World Sailing Regulations and in Appendix N of the *RRS*.
- The US Sailing Judges' Committee has subdivided the above categories into:
 - a PC Appointed by the RC and available for consultation at the request of the RC. This PC is normally limited to hearing *protests* and requests for redress.
 - a PC Separate from RC. Appointed by the OA and Separate from and independent of the RC. This committee, usually referred to as a jury, hears *protests*, requests for redress, *Support person* hearings, misconduct hearings, and may have additional responsibilities specified in the governing conditions or regulations or in the SIs.
 - International Jury. A properly constituted international jury appointed by the OA under Appendix N. It hears *protests* and requests for redress and accepts other responsibilities as directed by the OA under rule N2. See rule 91(b).

Either the RC or an OA may appoint the PC, but neither has the right to direct the PC or change the PC's decision.

The PC has the authority to interpret and apply the *RRS* and government regulations. This may include the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (IRPCAS; commonly known as COLREGS) when the sailing instructions state that those replace the *rules* of Part 2 (see the preamble to Part 2 of the *RRS*). SIs must be considered carefully and worded clearly when referring to government regulations because the PC may have to interpret the requirements.

Obligations of the Organizing Authority

The OA must decide who will appoint the PC for an event and whether it will have any responsibilities other than hearing *protests* and requests for redress. It is rarely wise to give the PC responsibility to supervise the RC. Unless the OA specifies otherwise in writing, all race management decisions are the responsibility of the RC.

Purpose of a Protest Committee

The function of a PC is to ensure the fairness of the competition and the proper application of the *rules*. The functions of the PC do not in any way replace the functions of the RC. The RC and PC should work together as a team. A good working relationship between the PC and RC will encourage the RC to seek desired input from the PC. The PC may also advise the RC if it sees or anticipates any situations that will impact the safety of the competitors or the fairness of the competition.

While a good relationship between the RC and the PC is of great importance, judges and race officers must take care to maintain a professional association with their counterparts in the view of the competitors. If the PC and RC are constantly seen to be close and casual, competitors may find it hard to believe that, in cases of requests for redress, the RC has not influenced the PC.

Composition of a Protest Committee

A PC usually consists of three to five members, but the *rules* do not prohibit a PC consisting of one judge (see Appeal 42). A minimum of three qualified judges is recommended. An international jury is composed of at least five members. The size and composition of an international jury is specified in Appendix N.

Protest committees holding a hearing under rule 69 (Misconduct) must consist of at least three judges. Because of the sensitive nature of such a hearing, all the judges in a rule 69 hearing should, if possible, be highly experienced and be US Sailing Judges. Chapter 10 (Misconduct Hearings) of this manual provides guidance for these hearings.

When more than one panel of judges is needed for an event, panels may be seated in groups of three or five. Although an odd number on the PC is desirable to avoid tied votes, the hearing may be given a second vote in the event of a tie vote in a panel with an even number of judges. A PC larger than five members tends to operate slowly.

At higher-level events, the Chief Judge should be a US Sailing Regional Judge or National Judge whenever possible. Other members of the PC should be a mix of certified and uncertified judges. Even when there is an ample supply of certified judges, every PC should try to include, if possible, at least one qualified but uncertified judge so that the trainee will have the opportunity to gain experience toward eventual certification. Every PC member should be qualified as to rules knowledge, racing and race management experience and personal characteristics. Unqualified persons should not serve on a PC but may be admitted to listen to the evidence phase of the hearing as observers, provided they will not be witnesses to the incident.

An ideal PC will have one member who is particularly familiar with the type of boat being raced and another with good local knowledge of weather and geography. To the extent possible, a PC should represent a breadth of geographic diversity similar to that of the competitors. In a hearing, it is useful to assign one juror responsibility for maintaining procedural integrity and another juror (generally referred to as the 'scribe') the task of writing the facts, conclusions and decisions.

Selection of the Protest Committee

Whether appointed by the OA or the RC, the Chief Judge (sometimes called the PC Chair) should be appointed well in advance of the event so that there is plenty of time to perform preliminary duties. For a youth event, a Chief Judge who has experience and is comfortable working with youth sailors should be appointed. Often the Chief Judge will be consulted about other qualified candidates. All should be qualified judges and the majority should be US Sailing Judges. The goal is to select judges who will get along well together and complement one another's skills.

A PC or jury secretary can improve the efficiency of the PC greatly, reduce the time that competitors have to wait to have *protests* heard and improve communication with all parties. The functions of the secretary are described in detail in Chapter 5.

An excellent source of advice for selecting and organizing PCs is the US Sailing RAJ whose region includes the host club of an event. Names and contact information of RAJs are available on the US Sailing website. RAJs will provide lists of certified and prospective judges in their regions. Information about certified judges is shown on the [Find a Race Official page](#) of the US Sailing website. The US Sailing Race Administration office can also help with judge selection.

US Sailing Championships

US Sailing is the OA and sponsor for a series of national championships. Most of these championships are sailed annually and are hosted by clubs in different areas of the country each year. Some have a series of qualifying events that qualify sailors for the national finals.

To ensure consistent quality in judging and race management for these championships, US Sailing's Regulations require minimum certification levels for the appointment of the race officials. Since these standards may change over time, the latest version should be reviewed when preparing for a US Sailing championship.

Additionally, US Sailing's prescription to rule 70.3(b) requires its approval if the right of appeal is to be denied in cases where "it is essential to determine promptly the result of a race that will qualify a boat to compete in a later stage of an event or a subsequent event." Under the prescription, these events must apply for a 'No-Appeal' status, which requires a certain level of certification for the PC. Other championships may use an area reopening procedure, which must be described in full in both the NoR and the SIs. Information on both can be found in the rules section of the website (rules.ussailing.org). Chapter 11 provides additional guidance.

General Policies

- No person may serve as a member of the PC at an event in which any competitor in the event is a close relative. See Conflict of Interest below.
- Volunteers in any capacity are expected to subordinate their personal and individual interests to the interests of the event and the sport of sailing. See US Sailing Regulation 14.04 and the summary in Chapter 2.
- Except in cases of illness or emergency, the PC should consist of a minimum of three judges.
- Whenever possible, the OA should try to appoint a majority of US Sailing Judges to the PC at fleet racing events.

- Whenever possible, the OA should try to appoint a majority of US Sailing Umpires to umpired events.

Qualifying Events – Local Level

- Recommend and encourage (but not require) the appointment of a US Sailing Judge of any level as Chief Judge.
- At match or team racing events, require the appointment of a US Sailing Umpire for chief umpire.

Qualifying Events – RSA or US Sailing Area Level

- Recommend and encourage the appointment of a US Sailing National Judge for Chief Judge but accept a US Sailing Regional Judge.
- At match or team racing events, require the appointment of a US Sailing Umpire for Chief Umpire.

Finals and National Championship Events

- Require the appointment of a US Sailing National Judge as Chief Judge.
- Require a majority of the PC to be US Sailing Judges.

The only possible exception is a reduction in certification level.

If the requirements for an appointment cannot be met after allowing for exceptions, the JC will make an appointment of certified judges.

Coordination

Appointing a PC for a US Sailing Championship involves coordination among several people: the US Sailing Adult Director or Youth Director, the Chair of the US Sailing committee responsible for the championship, the event chair of the host club and, sometimes, the RAJ or the Judges' Committee.

In the qualifying levels, the host club will usually appoint the PC. For fleet racing events, the RAJ for the host club's area should be consulted for recommendations of PC members. At national finals, the committee chair of the specific championship will execute the duties of the OA on behalf of US Sailing. Consequently, the committee chair has the lead responsibility to appoint the PC. The committee chair should consult with the host club event chair on the choice of Chief Judge. For national finals, the Judges' Committee recommends that the Chief Judge come from a different US Sailing Area than the host club.

Once the PC chair is appointed, the committee chair and Chief Judge work as a team to appoint the remaining certified judges to the PC. At the finals, it is imperative for the reputation of the championship to have a top-flight PC that has geographic distribution and expertise in the style of boats being used.

If on-the-water rule 42 enforcement is planned, all members of the PC should have experience in enforcing rule 42 and be knowledgeable on the latest interpretations for judging rule 42. Since these championships also provide excellent experience for a promising potential judge, the JC encourages Chief Judges to save a place on the PC for a judge-in-training.

Similarly, for match and team racing championships, the Umpires Committee (UC) should be involved well in advance to ensure a quality umpiring team. At the qualifying events, the UC and

the RAJ are excellent sources of recommendations for umpires, both certified and uncertified. At the national finals, the UC should approve uncertified umpires prior to invitations being made.

Conflict of Interest

The appointing authority and individual judges have a joint responsibility to scrupulously avoid not only *conflict of interest* (see definition), but also the appearance of conflict. As required by rule 63.3 (Conflict of Interest), judges may not serve on the PC if they may gain or lose because of the decision or are seen to have a close personal interest in the decision, and they must declare any possible conflict as soon as they are aware of it.

Rule 63.3 and the definition *Conflict of Interest* prohibit a judge from sitting on a PC when a family member is competing in any way against the *parties* to the hearing. It is not sufficient for the judge to step down for only those hearings where the family member is a *party* to the hearing. A judge should never be appointed when there is a potential for a *conflict of interest*. A judge must decline an invitation if having a *conflict of interest* is a possibility. If a *conflict of interest* is discovered at the time of the event, the judge must step down.

If a judge is in a situation in which there is a potential for *conflict of interest*, the judge must recuse themselves. For example, a judge who heard a *protest* would recuse themselves from sitting on any appeal committee's deliberation of that *protest*.

Conflict of interest exists if a judge has a close personal, business or family tie to a contestant, if there has been a significant adversarial relationship with a contestant, or if a judge has an interest in a competing boat. This includes contributions to a syndicate or campaign. No individual may ever judge and compete in the same race. When a PC cannot be formed without a *conflict of interest*, it is preferable to defer the hearing until the PC can be constituted without any of its members having a conflict.

The citizenship of a judge or a judge's membership in an OA or particular club is not by itself a *conflict of interest*. However, a *party* to a hearing may perceive it to be so. Some larger championships follow an approach used by international juries and select the Chief Judge from another club than the host.

The giving of testimony by a judge in a hearing is not a *conflict of interest*. However, as will be described later, the judge must be treated as a witness, including being questioned by *parties* and PC members.

Protest Committee Process

The primary function of the PC is to resolve disputes so that the *parties* feel that they have had a fair hearing and that the PC acted in strict compliance with the rules. The hearing should be conducted in a formal but friendly way. Each *party* to the hearing should feel his or her evidence has been considered seriously. It is extremely important to avoid situations where one *party* to a hearing is in the protest room while another is not. Do not invite *parties* into the protest room until all *parties* are present or it is certain that a *party* will not attend the hearing.

The Chief Judge is responsible for the PC as a whole, but the Chief Judge need not conduct every hearing. Conducting a hearing requires administrative and interpersonal skills, both of which take time to develop. Rotating responsibility for conducting hearings is an excellent way for other PC members to develop the skills required to chair a hearing. No PC member should be forced to conduct a hearing if they are not comfortable in that role. In general, a PC member should be willing to conduct a hearing when invited to do so if they understand that they can recess the hearing at any time and request the guidance of others who are more experienced.

A PC should strive to arrive at all decisions through consensus and should hear from each judge before making a difficult decision. The PC should try to construct a decision that is acceptable to every judge. Honest differences of opinion should be considered carefully. Each PC member should approach decision-making in a spirit of respect for other members of the PC and be willing to compromise.

A PC can expect questions about its decision. Defer to the Hearing Chair or Chief Judge for that explanation, and do not speak for the PC if you are not the Hearing Chair. The facts found should be explained in a non-confrontational manner. The facts found may not be what really happened, but they represent what the PC believes happened based on all the evidence brought to it.

A judge should not discuss or reveal the internal debates, disputes or deliberations to anyone outside the PC. Some deliberations result in a split decision, even after an extended period. Unanimity is desirable but not always possible. A judge with a minority view must never publicly criticize the majority decision.

4 - Preparing for an Event

“Resolved, That no Admiral presume to bring more than two dozen of wine to his treat, for it has always been deemed a breach of the ancient rules and constitutions of the Club, except when my Lords the Judges are invited.”

A rule of the Royal Cork Yacht Club, c. 1765

Expectations of Juries and Protest Committees

The style, composition, responsibilities and expectations of PCs can vary widely. At the grassroots level a PC may be recruited from among sailors at the time of the hearing; at the top levels of competition an international jury may be appointed a year or more in advance and have extensive pre-regatta responsibilities. At all levels, competitors expect the highest quality racing possible.

Except for a jury that meets the criteria for an international jury, the term "protest committee" and "jury" are often used interchangeably. In this chapter, we try to refer to a "jury" when it is established in advance of an event and has duties beyond simply conducting hearings. We use the term "protest committee" to refer to duties related to handling and preparing for protest and redress hearings.

Types of Events

Judges may experience diverse types of events and venues that involve competitors at all levels of the sport. The following sections describe unique features and expectations of several types of events.

Local and Club Level Events

Much sailboat racing is casual and involves little formal structure. The NoR and SIs are simple. A PC is frequently assembled only when a sailor files a protest or redress request. The PC is quite often composed of sailors or visitors on site at the time and few, if any, are US Sailing certified judges. Overall knowledge of the protest process and the racing rules may be inconsistent. As with the style of the regatta, the hearings are often quite informal.

This environment is excellent for potential judges to get experience in protest hearings, but the informality of the regatta may result in lax and improper protest procedures. Remember that interesting and challenging rules issues can occur at any level of racing, from a Tuesday night fun race to the Olympics. Sailors at all levels of competition deserve to have the protest and redress process handled in accordance with the *rules* and established procedures.

Judges recruited to serve with little advanced notice should at least have a current rulebook and quickly review Appendix M. The standard US Sailing or World Sailing Hearing Request form and Hearing Decision form are laid out to help judges and sailors follow good hearing procedure.

Championships and Major Events

As a rule, the higher the level and prestige of the championship, the greater the amount of preparation and expertise will be expected of the jury. Each judge should ensure that he or she is fully up-to-date with the racing rules, the relevant class rules, US Sailing Appeals and World Sailing Cases, World Sailing regulations and other documents that apply. Both US Sailing and World Sailing have extensive websites and are committed to ensuring that they contain the latest and most up-to-date information. For World Sailing recognized classes, the World Sailing website also has links to those classes' current rules.

Junior and Youth Events

Some judges consider events involving young people to be the hardest to judge. Very young competitors may be nervous and confused. Teenagers may be just the opposite. Often, instructors, coaches or parents have given them a “crash course” in the rules. While adults are expected to know their rights and be able to defend themselves effectively, young sailors can easily be intimidated by officious judges.

Judges must always remember that young sailors require patience, understanding and support, and that they deserve the same careful attention that adults expect. They should also be held to the same standards of conduct, rules administration and propriety as adults.

A PC may use youth event protest hearings as opportunities to teach and may give more complete explanations of decisions than they would at adult regattas. Open hearings, where all participants are welcome to observe, can be valuable for competitors and their parents and coaches at junior events (see Chapter 6 for a discussion of open hearings). All hearings offer an opportunity to emphasize the basic principles of fair sailing and sportsmanship.

Judges can help young sailors learn proper hearing procedures and appropriate behavior. At the competitors' meeting, a judge may welcome competitors on behalf of the PC and tell them that the PC is there to help them resolve differences of opinion after racing. The judge may explain the process and reassure the sailors that they are not expected to be rules experts.

After a hearing, members of the PC may be approached by parents, coaches or instructors who may know only one side of the story and question the PC's decision. Judges should defer to the Chief Judge or Hearing Chair, who should explain the facts found in a non-confrontational manner. The facts found may not be exactly what happened, but they represent what the PC thinks happened based on all the evidence brought to it. The judges should assist the coaches, parents and instructors in explaining the decision to the competitor. The Hearing Chair or Chief Judge may ask another member of the PC to accompany him or her (but remain silent) when having this conversation.

Interscholastic and Inter-collegiate Sailing

High school and college sailing offer different challenges for judges. The Interscholastic Sailing Association (ISSA) and the Inter-collegiate Sailing Association (ICSA) each have their own procedural rules that can be obtained through their websites.

Judges need to be very familiar with these procedural rules since they modify the *RRS* and the US Sailing prescriptions, particularly those pertaining to time limits, breakdowns, redress,

kinetics and recalls. The pace is rapid at high school and college events, and judges must hear protests quickly without compromising proper procedures. Expedited hearings, or “three-minute justice,” are often held on the water. The ability to ask pertinent questions to determine what happened and whether boats met their obligations under the rules is an important skill needed for ICSA and ISSA protest hearings. The parties must be kept on track and the testimony should never be allowed to digress.

Umpired Events

Match racing and team racing events use umpires to make on-the-water calls and decisions. The rules for both events also allow for protest committees in certain situations (see the Umpires section of the US Sailing website for more information). Chapter 8 provides some guidance for protest committees at umpired events.

Umpired fleet racing is used in some circumstances under World Sailing’s Addendum Q. See the World Sailing website to learn more. Using the procedures outlined in Addendum Q at events in the U.S. typically requires the approval of the US Sailing Racing Rules Committee.

Other Types of Events

There are several other types of racing events at all levels that require additional considerations. These considerations include changes to the racing rules, requirements for equipment and boats to be used by the judges and other considerations. The main examples of these types of racing are:

- Windsurfing (Appendix B of the Rule Book)
- Radio Sailing (Appendix E of the Rule Book)
- Kiteboarding (Appendix F of the Racing Rules)

Setting up the Jury

When the jury is appointed in advance, at least one member (usually the Chief Judge) will review and provide advice on all critical stages leading up to the event. The jury may also request or be asked to monitor the competition on the water.

Appointing a Chair

The OA should appoint a Chief Judge well in advance of the event and may seek his or her advice on other members. In some cases, the Chief Judge may be asked to appoint the other members. The goal is to assemble a strong jury with diverse strengths that will work collaboratively and serve the sailors well. When the Chief Judge is not from the host club, a local judge may be appointed as the coordinator between the club and the jury. As soon as the final appointments have been confirmed, the Chief Judge should be notified and furnished with contact information including names and contact information of the other judges.

Inviting the Judges – Guidelines for the OA

Judges serve without pay but not without cost to themselves. It is customary for the OA or host club to provide the following:

- An invitation. The invitation should be sent to all jury members inviting them to serve at the event. The invitation must include the dates and times the jury is expected to be on

site. It should explain what is expected of the jury member and what the OA will provide. The invitation should also describe the expected weather conditions and, if the jury is to be on the water, the kinds of boats that will be provided.

- Housing, meals and local transportation. Housing and transportation should be provided for judges who come from a distance. Meals should be provided for the entire jury. The standard practice in this country is for volunteer members of the host club to invite judges to stay in their homes and provide local transportation to and from the venue. If a judge prefers to stay at a hotel or have a private car, he or she should expect to absorb those costs.
- Travel to the venue. Reimbursement should be provided, when possible, for basic air transportation or mileage reimbursement if driving from outside the local area.
- Meals. When judges are on duty, the organizing authority should provide meals for the judges and invite them to the regatta's social events as guests of the OA.
- Note of thanks. A letter of thanks or other suitable recognition should be sent to each judge following the event, especially for judges who are not members of the host club.

The OA should not feel obligated to invite spouses. When spouses are welcome, they are generally invited to all social events to which the jury is invited. When spouses are invited, it is acceptable to ask that the judge/spouse cover the extra expenses that may be incurred when the jury budget is limited. The invitation should make clear what the host will provide for the spouses and what expenses the spouses are expected to incur.

An alternative to having all of the judges on location for the event is the use of remote judging and online hearings. The OA can reduce potential costs while engaging the services of a highly qualified official through the use of online hearings. Having just one or possibly two judges taking part remotely can be done with a minimum of equipment requirements. The use of online judging can also be used to provide an opportunity for less experienced judges to gain valuable experience at a minimal cost to all involved. The use of online hearings is further discussed in Chapter 6 of this document and more specific details are contained in the document [“Guidelines for Online Hearings”](#) on the Judges page under Judge Guidelines & Documents, Resources.

Accepting the Invitation

Both the OA and the prospective judge need to take the invitation to attend an event seriously. The OA must send the invitation well in advance, not only to allow the judge time to arrange his or her schedule, but also to allow time to find another judge if the invitation is declined. The invited judge should respond as promptly as possible in order to allow the OA time to find another judge in the event he or she declines.

Appointing a Jury Secretary

If the regatta is large, or if many protests are expected, the OA may appoint a jury secretary and assistants as necessary. The jury secretary could be a local Club Judge or someone aspiring to become a judge. The duties of the jury secretary are described in Chapter 5. Assistants help with copying forms, distributing copies to parties, locating parties and witnesses for hearings and performing other functions assigned by the jury secretary or Chief Judge.

Preliminary Responsibilities

Before the event, the OA is well advised to send the NoR and the draft SIs to the Chief Judge of the jury for comment. The NoR is a contract between the OA and the competitors and ranks as one of the rules governing the event. In it, the OA sets out the conditions under which it is prepared to run the event. By entering the regatta, each competitor agrees to compete in accordance with those conditions. [Notice of Race and Sailing Instructions Guides and Templates](#) are available on the US Sailing website.

It is important that the NoR contain any requirements necessary to enable a competitor to decide whether to compete in the event and how to prepare. When practicable, the NoR should be reviewed by the Chief Judge in advance of publication. The Chief Judge can suggest changes in wording or content to ensure that the NoR complies with the requirements of rules 89.2 and J1 (Notice of Race Contents). If the review occurs after the NoR has been published, rule 89.2(b) allows any deficiencies in the NoR to be amended provided adequate notice is given.

Since the jury will have to interpret the SIs, a careful review before publication can identify and correct flaws before racing begins. Rule J2 (Sailing Instruction Contents) describes the required elements of sailing instructions. Consult Sailing Instructions Guides and templates for guidance on standard language and contents of SIs. The SIs, the class rules and the NoR should be checked carefully for conflicts among them. Class rules apply, even if not mentioned in the NoR or SIs, provided there is no conflict with the other *rules* (Case 98).

All members of the jury should review the final SIs at the earliest opportunity so that any necessary changes can be issued prior to the first competitors' meeting. Jury members should normally provide feedback on the NoR and/or the SIs only to the Chief Judge and not directly to the OA or the RC.

In reviewing the NoR and the SIs, pay careful attention to the words ***shall***, ***will*** and ***may***. The SIs should state the intentions of the RC ("will") and the obligations of competitors ("shall"). "May" or "should" indicate that an action is not compulsory.

The use of the notation '[DP]' should be used as appropriate. For example, if there is a requirement to report to the race committee boat before racing begins and the [DP] notation is not used, failure to comply results in a disqualification.

Many SIs improperly attempt to make changes that are prohibited by rule 86 (Changes to the Racing Rules). Because the notice of race is a *rule* you cannot change it in the SI unless you refer specifically to the *rule* and state the change. Having a statement that "if there is a conflict between the NoR and the SIs, the SIs will prevail" changes rule 85.1. However, rule 85.1 is a rule of part 7 and cannot be changed.

Rule 85.1 requires that a change to a *rule* shall refer specifically to the *rule* and state the change. Make certain that there will be no misunderstanding in the change to the rule. Organizers and race officials must follow the principles on which sailing instructions are based (in the Sailing Instructions Guide). They should especially attend to the third principle: "They should not change the racing rules except when clearly desirable...."

The prescriptions of the national authority always apply unless the NoR or SIs state they do not apply. Rule 88 (National Prescriptions) allows the national authority to restrict changes to its prescriptions. *US Sailing prescribes that the notice of race or sailing instructions may change or delete any prescriptions except: this prescription, Appendix R, the prescription to the preamble to Part 5, and the prescriptions to rules 65.1, 70.3(b) and 76.1.*

- Appendix R – Procedures for Appeals and Requests.
- US Sailing prescription to Part 5: *US Sailing prescribes that no fees shall be charged for protests or requests for redress.*
- US Sailing prescription to rule 65.1 – Questions of legal liability arising from a breach of a *rule*.
- US Sailing prescription to rule 70.3(b) – Approval needed in denying the right of appeal.
- US Sailing prescription to rule 76.1 – Exclusion of boats or competitors.

When appropriate, for events where entries from other countries are expected, rule 90.2(b) requires that the SIs include, in English, the applicable national prescriptions. For such events, judges must check the SIs to ensure compliance.

Judges' Equipment

Each judge should have a judging briefcase, bag or kit containing:

- Current *RRS* with the US Sailing Prescriptions
- Current US Sailing Appeals and World Sailing Cases
- Event NoR and SIs and all amendments to them
- Copies of all official notices posted for the event
- Competitor entry sheets
- Notes from the judges, competitors and other official meetings
- Pad and pencil or pen for notes

The protest hearing chair, at least, should have an up-to-date copy of the class rules for the classes in the event, master forms (including a US Sailing Hearing Request Form and Hearing Decision Form) and a set of boat models for each protest room. Judges should also consider owning software or other templates to prepare neat, understandable diagrams to submit with the facts found in a *protest*.

Dress of jury members should be appropriate for the event. Judges should honor the dress code of the club and respect the level of formality of the event. The Chief Judge should determine in advance of the event what dress is appropriate and inform the other members of the jury.

Shore-side Jury Facilities

A room should be set aside for jury meetings and hearings. It must be private and quiet and, if possible, should be reserved for the exclusive use of the jury for the duration of the event. At a minimum, the jury room should be equipped with a conference table, sufficient chairs to seat at least four persons in addition to the members of the jury, and a set of boat models. If more than one panel will be hearing protests, a separate room must be provided for each panel. The jury room(s) should be near where competitors normally congregate and near the official notice board.

There should also be a desk or table outside the hearing room for use in distributing, collecting and logging in Hearing Request forms. There should be convenient access to a photocopier, printer and internet access and a satisfactory way to page or call the parties. A list of competitors is a convenient way to stay in contact with the parties and their witnesses.

Organizing authorities are increasingly using web-based regatta management software as a means of posting and notifying competitors of protest notices and status. While these platforms can be convenient, organizers must be very familiar with their operation. It is also essential to be clear about whether the online posting serves as the official notice board, or merely as a support for a more traditional physical notice board. For reviews of some online regatta management programs, see the Scoring Programs page of the US Sailing website (raceofficers.ussailing.org; Materials for Race Officers > Scoring programs).

On-the-Water Equipment

The jury is often expected to be on the water. The equipment needed will vary depending on the regatta and the role of the jury. Any boat provided by the OA for use by the judges and any boat that may be provided by the judges should be in full compliance with all local, state and federal requirements. Those requirements include most boats being used by judges to be equipped with a “kill switch” and knowing the proper use of the “Kill Switch”. The ECOS Engine/propulsion Cut-Off Switch is required on open boats under 26 feet in length (in case the boat driver falls off the vessel). A good tool to have is your own kill switch lanyard. These are often called “7 Key Kill Switch Universal Lanyard” and will likely work with the kill switch installed on the boat you are using.

Jury Boats

Jury boats must be able to operate safely in all weather conditions in which the sailors will race. If there is only one race course and one jury boat for observation on the water, the boat should be large enough to safely accommodate the entire jury, but not so large that it obstructs competitors. It should be high enough to give the jury a good view. Whalers and other small boats are often suitable at dinghy events.

Press, photographers and spectators should not be on board the jury boats. Generally, any guests should be judges-in-training or umpires-in-training.

For on-the-water judging rule 42 under Appendix P (Special Procedures for Rule 42), smaller boats that will accommodate two judges per boat are required. The boats need to be maneuverable in order for the judges to move within the fleet during the races with minimal effect to the competitors. Generally, rigid hull inflatable boats (RIBs) are preferred, and of the smallest size possible while still ensuring the safety and basic comfort of the judges. Special care should be taken to minimize the boat’s wind shadow and wake. Judges should wear Personal Flotation Devices while on the water in small boats. At US Sailing events, they are required to do so. The use of the “owner/skipper” on the boat when judging Rule 42 is strongly recommended against.

Jury Flags

The jury boats should be distinguished by a suitable signal, usually the US Sailing Judges flag or code flag J. The flag needs to be mounted high enough to be visible by the sailors and preferably in the stern of the boat so it does not block the judges' view.

For on-the-water judging rule 42, each judge on the jury boat will also need to be equipped with one yellow flag (code flag Q) mounted on a handheld pole.

Personal Equipment

Judges will develop their personal checklist of gear they bring to a regatta, but their equipment should include the following:

- Current *RRS* (with US Sailing prescriptions)
- Race documents (NoR, SIs, entry list, class rules)
- Watch suitable for timing
- VHF radio, mobile phone
- Tape or digital voice recorder
- Waterproof notebook (such as Wet Notes), pens and pencils
- Whistle, hand-bearing compass
- Binoculars
- Dry bag
- Foul weather gear
- Clothing suitable for the expected conditions
- Sunscreen, lip balm, hat, etc.
- PFD
- Kill Switch Lanyard for the ECOS Engine/propulsion Cut-Off Switch

A tape or digital voice recorder is valuable for judging rule 42 compliance under Appendix P. Judges are increasingly expected to have a portable VHF radio at events where they will be on the water. Countries outside of the U.S. often have more restrictive laws concerning use of VHF radios. Before taking your VHF outside the U.S., be sure you know if it's legal and check with the host club to see if it will be useful.

US Sailing Championships and virtually all junior events require the sailors to wear PFDs at all times while afloat. Many host organizations also strongly encourage or require all of their on-the-water personnel to wear PFD. Class rules can now turn on rule 40.1 about wearing PFDs. Rather than rely on whatever might be available onsite, judges are encouraged to take their own PFD where possible. The US Sailing Regulations 10.04 Use of Personal Floatation and 10.06 Race Management, Umpiring, and Judging has exact requirements for US Sailing Championships and other US Sailing Events.



Photos of Radio-Controlled boats at 2023 US Sailing Championship of Champions

5 – Regatta Operations

Protest Committee Organization

Each PC must have a Chief Judge to act as presiding officer and spokesperson. When it is necessary for the PC to speak to the RC, competitors, the OA, the press or others, the Chief Judge should speak for the PC. The Chief Judge should ensure that the opinions of each judge are considered and be willing to act as directed by the group's final decision, even when he or she may disagree. Whenever possible, the Chief Judge should be a US Sailing certified judge. When a prospective judge is serving as hearing chair to gain experience, the panel should contain at least one certified judge to guide and advise as necessary.

When the PC divides into more than one panel to hear and decide protests, the hearing chair of each panel should, if possible, be a US Sailing or international judge. For consistency, the Chief Judge may decide to have all requests for redress on the same subject heard by the same panel.

A jury that is on the water monitors race procedures and assists and advises the RC. They do not supervise or direct the RC. A good jury will note signals and timing on the water and tactfully alert the race officer if they observe problems. The jury representative should communicate with the RC only through the PRO or a designated representative. Communication with the race officer, particularly when there are rules or procedural issues, is best done in person or via cell phone rather than over the radio.

When racing is on a single course, the on-the-water jury will normally operate as a single unit. This permits them to make decisions that require input by the full jury on the spot. When racing is on more than one course, there are benefits to splitting the jury. When enforcing rule 42, the jury will usually be divided into pairs of judges in separate boats.

In addition to their general responsibilities, jury members may be asked by the Chief Judge to assume specific responsibilities. These may include recorder or "scribe," observer assigned to an area of the race course, or pilot to direct the operator of the jury boat when maneuvering close to competitors.

Online Notice Boards (Electronic Filings)

Official Notice boards can be online and knowing how to use them is useful when serving at an event. And if using, **don't forget to have access to post to the notice board**. Some hearings are online. Understanding of portable technology skills with phones and tablets for pre, during, and post regatta activities has become standard.

Also consider cell signals, WIFI access and speeds, do youth have access to devices. Later we talk about online hearings.

Jury Secretary

A competent and knowledgeable jury secretary can be an invaluable asset to the PC at a busy regatta. The secretary's duties are many and varied and may require the help of an assistant or

“runner,” depending on the number of protests filed and on the location of the notice board and copier. The primary responsibility of the secretary is logging in Hearing Request forms as they are delivered to the jury desk, noting the time and date received, sequentially numbering the filings, noting the protest time limit and initialing the form. It is also helpful if the secretary notes the cell phone number of the protestor on the Hearing Request form. The secretary will then complete a Protest Hearing Results form (on Judges’ page in Useful Protest Committee Documents) by writing in the protest filing number, the class, race number, and the bow or sail number (or other identifier) of the protestor and the protestee. Copies of each Hearing Request form must be made (one for each PC member and one for each party), and the Summary form must also be copied. The Summary form is posted on the official notice board from time to time as protests are submitted, but before posting, a copy of the form is made that will stay at the jury desk.

When a Hearing Request form is submitted, the secretary can help move the process along by requesting that the protestor try to find the protestee and any witnesses and stay near the hearing area.

When receiving a Hearing Request form, the secretary must understand that all protests delivered to the jury desk must be logged in, regardless of the time the form is delivered. The PC, not the secretary, will decide if a Hearing Request form was delivered in time.

When a hearing is finished, the secretary collects the completed Hearing Request form and Hearing Decision form, noting the jury’s decision on the Summary form. When all hearings are over for the day, the secretary notes all jury decisions on the Summary form, including penalties assessed and details of redress granted. After making copies of the completed Summary form, the secretary keeps one copy, gives one copy to the scorer and posts a copy on the notice board.

The foregoing is quite an exhaustive list of responsibilities for the secretary, but if the jury chair has additional expectations for the secretary, they should meet ahead of time to discuss how to deal with those expectations.

Jury and Race Committee Meetings

Before racing begins, the jury Chief Judge should meet with the jury secretary and review the procedures for accepting and handling protests. When no secretary is appointed, the Chief Judge should assign these responsibilities to a member of the jury.

Initial Race Committee Meeting

When the jury will be on the water during racing, it is extremely important for the jury and the RC to have a good working relationship. The jury Chief Judge and the Race Officer should meet to discuss their roles and responsibilities and the best way to work together. Unless the OA specifically requests otherwise, the RC is responsible for all race management decisions on the water. The role of the jury on the water is usually to observe the quality and fairness of the racing. Relations on the water will be most productive if the two Chairs have met beforehand to establish a good rapport, understand the scope of responsibility and know how to communicate any concerns.

Initial Jury Meeting

The entire jury should meet as soon as possible after all the judges arrive. During this meeting the Chief Judge should, at a minimum, cover the following issues:

- Introduce the members and provide the names and phone numbers of the relevant members of the OA and the RC. When there is no jury secretary, this is the time to assign the jury secretary duties to one or more members.
- Discuss and agree on protest scheduling and hearing procedures.
- Thoroughly review the SIs and the NoR. If the jury believes that changes are necessary, the jury Chief Judge should review the issues with the RC. (One test that can be used for potential changes is whether or not the change is needed to reduce the chance of redress.) Since the SIs are the responsibility of the RC, the jury may suggest but not mandate changes. When there is a good working relationship between the Chief Judge and the race officer, the jury's concerns can usually be resolved quickly.
- Review specific duties, proper dress, time of meetings, hearings and social functions.
- Review the jury's role on the water and, if applicable, allocate activities and jury boats.
- Decide on how proactive the jury will be for on-the-water rule compliance and jury protests. To ensure consistent rules application, the jury should discuss and agree when they would protest a boat on the water. It would be wise to understand the views of the class and/or the OA on this subject as well. Typically the jury doesn't protest on-the-water infractions. The next most likely scenario is to protest only if competitors couldn't have seen the infraction such as a mark touch when no competitor is appropriately positioned.
- Establish the tone, method and procedures for communications with the OA, RC, competitors, coaches and press.

Competitor Communications

Competitor meetings are not required by the rules, but having one is desirable at most events. The RC conducts this meeting but, as with all briefings, the Chief Judge, at least, should attend. The *US Sailing Race Management Handbook* contains guidance on the conduct of competitor meetings. For PC issues, the Chief Judge should:

- Introduce the committee members.
- Describe where protests will be heard and where Hearing Request forms can be obtained and submitted.
- When applicable, state that open hearings, on-the-water judging or other non-standard judging will be used and give a brief description of the process.

Verbal instructions or rule interpretations should never be given during a competitor meeting. When a question is asked in a competitor meeting, the Chief Judge should ask that the question be submitted in writing and tell the competitors that the answers to any questions will be posted. When posted on the official notice board, both the competitor's question and the jury's answer should be included.

All official communications with competitors should be in writing to avoid the possibility of conflicting instructions and subsequent requests for redress.

On the Water

If the OA arranges for the jury to be on the water, the jury's role may include:

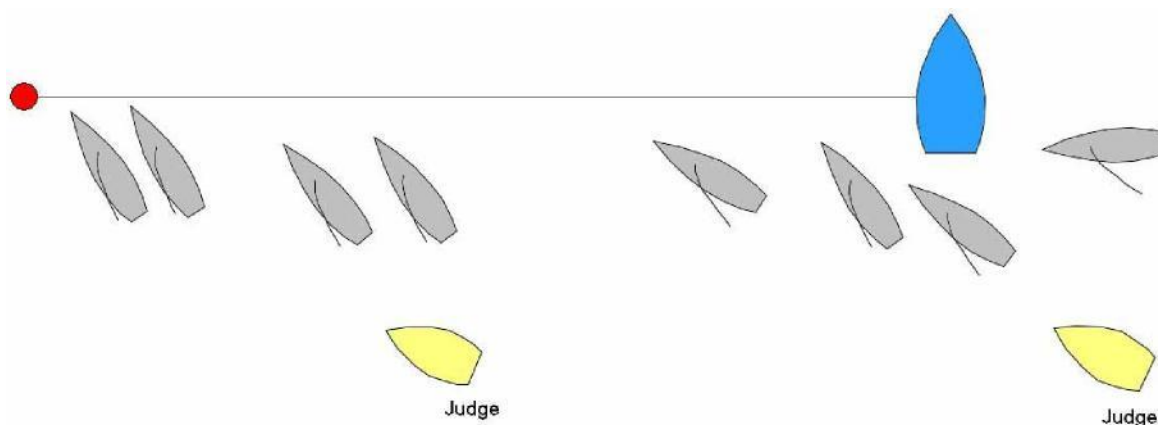
- Responding to questions from the RC.
- Positioning the jury boat(s) to observe fairness of competition and compliance with the rules. This is rare.
- Judging rule 42 as provided in Appendix P.

Positioning

The jury boat(s) should be placed so judges can observe areas where incidents are likely to occur. Being close to the boats is helpful for observing the action, but judges should err on the side of caution to avoid interfering with the racing boats if not enforcing propulsion. The jury boat(s) should avoid creating a wake or blocking the wind for boats racing. Good boat positioning helps ensure that the jury can be effective in observing the fleet. Incidents are often observed at the start, mark roundings, clusters of tacking boats, legs with potential for boats to use kinetics and the finish. Judges should note boats that do penalty turns (and the number of tacks and gybes in those turns), protest flags and hails.

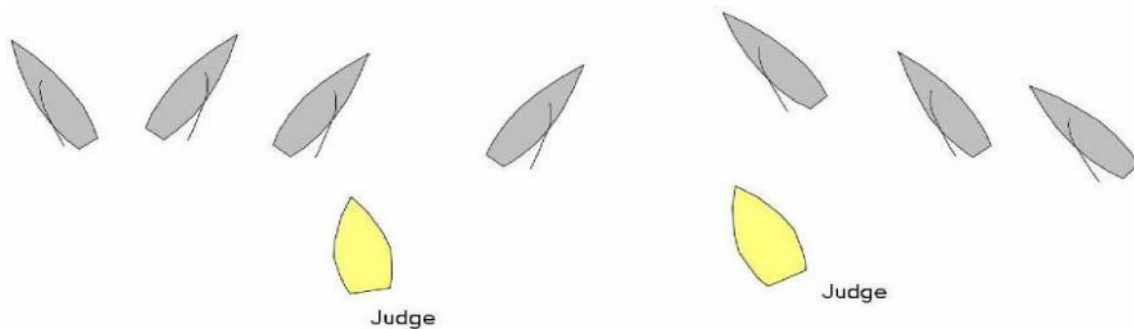
During the pre-start, the jury boat(s) will generally position below the line as shown below, favoring the starboard end of the line. If the starting boats cluster, gravitate towards the cluster, but strive to remain in line with the stern of the starboard tack boats, giving a good position to observe tacking and windward/leeward incidents. The boat farthest to the right will also watch for barging at the start.

Jury boat position at the start:



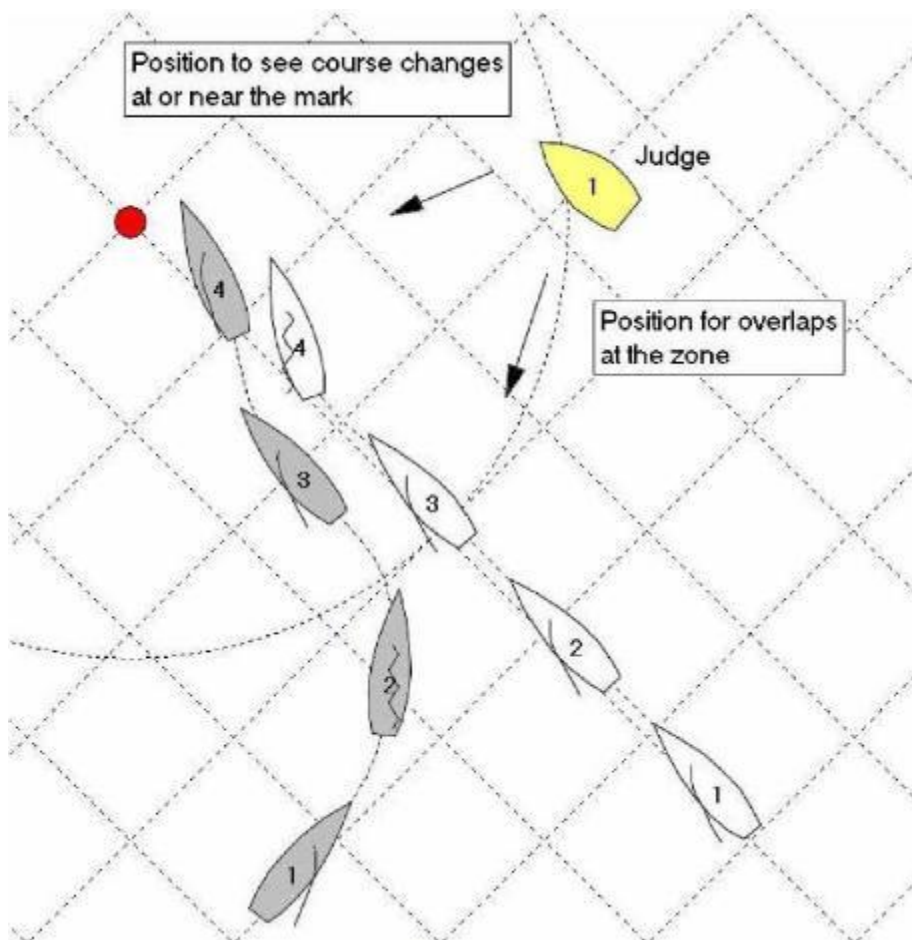
Working up the beat, stay below the fleet and watch for converging port-starboard situations as shown below. If there are two or more boats, spread left to right across the course. One jury boat should be designated to stay with leaders and observe the weather mark rounding. At the weather mark, the most common incidents involve tacking too close, luffing sharply or tacking inside the zone.

Jury boat position on the beat:



Positioning to the right (looking upwind) of the mark as shown below allows the judges to observe both the *zone* and the boats approaching on port tack.

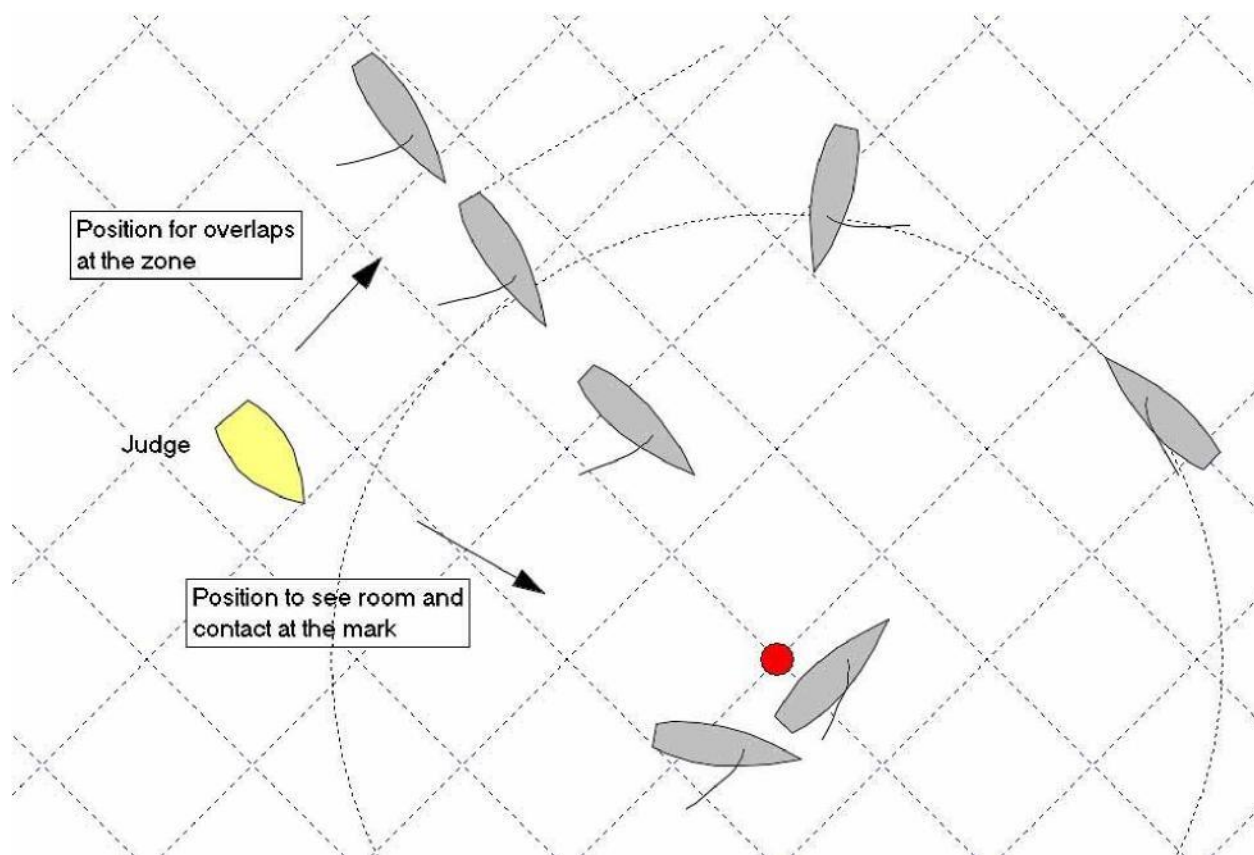
Jury boat position at the windward mark:



At the leeward mark, witnessing overlaps at the zone is often key. A good position for this is below the port-tack lay line at the zone as shown below. Be alert for boats on the outside of a

cluster approaching the mark that may track well below the layline. At a gybe mark, the best position to confirm overlaps is above the mark to observe boats as they approach the zone.

Jury boat positioning at the leeward mark:



Recording

A voice recorder and a note pad are useful for recording the details of incidents on the course. When using a tape recorder, two approaches can be effective. The most common is to observe the action and then, just after an incident that might lead to a protest has been observed, use the recorder to quickly record the relevant details such as the boats involved, distances between them and position of the jury boat.

The second approach is a process that umpires use to describe on-the-water situations. As a judge, you will "role play" a specific boat. As boats converge before an incident occurs, you speak into the recorder as if you were aboard the sailboat, describing the rights, reasons, obligations and opportunities for that boat and then update the description as the situation unfolds. Most incidents so discussed will not lead to protests but if they do, you will have already recorded a live description of the incident as it developed. You can then add to the description the supplemental information above. The World Sailing umpire manual, available on the World Sailing Race Official training page, has a good description of this role-playing technique.

Radio Communications

Good radio communications are also necessary between the jury and RC on the water. Keep in mind, however, that discretion is essential, and nothing should be said over the radio that you don't want the entire regatta to hear. Sensitive conversations are best conducted face-to-face or via cell phone.

Judging Rule 42

Self-policing is a basic tenet of sailboat racing. When it came to propulsion, however, the self-policing concept failed because it was too difficult for a protestor to bring sufficient evidence to convince a jury that a breach of rule 42 had occurred. Over time, this led to a need for officials on the race course to enforce the propulsion rules. With competent on-the-water judging, a high level of compliance with rule 42 can be attained, thus providing fairer competition for the sailors.

Appendix P On-the-Water Enforcement and Changes to Rule 42

Appendix P (Special Procedures for Rule 42) allows on-the-water PCs and their appointed observers to penalize boats breaking rule 42 without a hearing. For Appendix P to apply, it must be so stated in the NoR or the SIs.

Only class rules may modify rule 42. Several classes do make changes to rule 42, but in manners that vary widely.

The Inter-collegiate Sailing Association (ICSA) and Interscholastic Sailing Association (ISSA) act as class associations, allowing them to change rule 42 in their procedural rules. Judges involved with these events should review these procedural rules before undertaking any on-the-water activities and especially before making any rule 42 calls.

Rule 42 is also modified by some *RRS* appendices. The windsurfing (rule B4.42) and match racing (rules C2.16 and C2.17) appendices both change rule 42, while the match racing and team racing appendices also specify different penalties and protest processes.

World Sailing Guidance for Judging Rule 42

Issues relating to rule 42 have occurred when sailors misunderstood the rule and when judges applied inconsistent tests and levels in protesting boats. In recent years, World Sailing has tried to improve the worldwide consistency of rule 42 enforcement. World Sailing's website has training information available under Race Officials, then under Rule 42. (Link in Chapter 13 – Resources.)

World Sailing has also issued interpretations of rule 42 to clarify the rule and to establish consistency in its enforcement. These interpretations have the same status as World Sailing Cases and the World Sailing Match and Team Racing Calls, and they rank as authoritative interpretations of the *RRS*. They are available for downloading from World Sailing's website.

The *WS Race Officials' Manual* and the *WS Judges' Manual* have been updated to reflect these rule 42 interpretations. The US Sailing Judges' Committee believes that this information reflects good practice and is applicable to on-the-water rule 42 events in the United States. A link to the *WS Judges' Manual* can be found in Chapter 13 – Resources of this manual.

Post-Race Operations

After the race, the PC must decide protests and requests for redress. The proper conduct of a hearing is explained in Appendix M of the rulebook and Chapter 6 (Conduct of a Protest Hearing) of this manual which describes the processes for receiving and scheduling protests. Two Protest Hearing Procedures, one simple and one a detailed list, are included in Chapter 13

Receiving Protests

The SIs should specify where protests are to be delivered. The procedures for receiving and logging in Hearing Request forms are detailed above in the description of the jury secretary's duties. If a jury secretary is not available, members of the PC will undertake those duties.

Collecting Additional Protest Information

Sometimes a protestor wants to withdraw the protest after filing it. Once a protest is delivered, it must be heard (rule 63.2(a)) unless the PC agrees to a protestor's request to withdraw it. See Chapter 6 for further discussion.

The PC occasionally requests that the RC provide an action report at the end of each day of racing. At a minimum, the report should contain a list of boats observed flying protest flags at the finish. The report may also contain:

- A list of boats observed flying alternative penalty flags at the finish.
- A record of reported protests, including the names and sail or bow numbers of the protesting and protested boats.
- A record of reported penalty declarations.
- A list of boats retiring.
- The time the last boat finished in each race.
- Any RC action that determines the protest time limit.

If the SIs require that protests be brought to the attention of the RC when finishing, the report from the RC should be used to verify compliance and the appropriate notation made on the protest.

In case of a request for redress, the PC may request copies of mark rounding records and other log information that the RC records.

Chapter 13 – Resources contains links to these forms, which are available on the Judges pages of the US Sailing website (judges.ussailing.org).

Scheduling Hearings

The order of hearings and their estimated starting times should be posted as soon as possible. When there are protests from different boats about the same incident, as Case 49 states, a PC should schedule the protests to be heard in one hearing.

Since protests are received individually and it is not always clear before a hearing which protests involve the same incident, each is given a unique sequential number and assigned to a separate folder or envelope. When the PC decides that multiple protests apply to the same incident, it should combine them into a single hearing. If the protests do not apply to a single incident, the separate folders allow the matters to be heard separately.

If available, a member of the PC can assist the jury secretary by reviewing the filings after they are logged in to determine if two protests or redress requests relate to the same incident and also to separate protests that are eligible for arbitration (if applicable) from those that are not. The goal is to keep the process flowing smoothly, while striving to get hearings started as soon as possible.

Hearings should generally be scheduled in the order that the forms were received. However, those requiring RC evidence are frequently heard consecutively and as soon as reasonably possible. The RC should be informed promptly of any requests for redress so it has adequate time to investigate the circumstances.

Posting interim hearing schedules can be useful for getting protest hearings started. The jury secretary should maintain the master schedule and periodically update it while protests are being received. He or she should note that the schedule is preliminary and also note the posting time, then post a copy on the notice board. The secretary then continues to update the master schedule at the jury desk. This preliminary posting can be repeated throughout the filing period. The final copy of the schedule to be posted should also be time stamped and state that no additional hearings will be scheduled that day.

When the PC is ready to begin, a copy of the protest or redress form should be given to each committee member and to the parties (in case they didn't receive it beforehand). When the PC is ready to proceed, the parties are called. The jury secretary should ensure that:

- The protest notice has been posted properly.
- There is a representative from each boat standing by.
- Any witnesses are available and waiting.
- Any witnesses are excluded from overhearing the proceedings (see Appeal 62).
- On completion of the hearings, the jury secretary should:
 - Post a record of protest hearing decision(s).
 - Notify the scorer of any scoring changes as a result of the hearing(s).

The jury secretary should promptly inform the Chief Judge if there are any written requests from competitors.



On-the-Water Judging of Rule 42 at an Optimist Event

6 – Conduct of a Protest Hearing

“That any Yacht having been disabled by foul sailing on the part of any other Yacht, or having valid cause of complaint may hoist the Club ensign in lieu of their distinguishing flag as a signal of protest, which signal shall be answered by the Commodore firing a gun.”

Sailing Regulation 16
Royal Thames Yacht Club, c. 1840

NOTE: Case Numbers are still based on 2021-2024 Cases

Introduction

Hearings must be held to decide protests, decide requests for redress, act under rule 69, or consider whether a *support person* has broken a *rule*.

This chapter describes the procedures for basic protest hearings. Chapter 7 discusses procedures for redress hearings, Chapter 8 discusses other RC protests and procedures, including actions under rule 62.1 (*support persons*) and Chapter 10 discusses Fair Sailing (rule 2) and Misconduct (rule 69) hearings.

The Right to Protest and Request Redress

As established in rule 60, a boat may protest another boat. If the incident involves a rule of Part 2 or rule 31, she must have been involved in or seen the incident. A boat may not protest the RC, PC, TC or OA, but she may request redress.

A race committee may protest a boat, request redress for a boat or report to the protest committee requesting action under rule 69. However, a protest by the RC or a hearing is not required when the RC penalizes a boat under rules 30.2, 30.3, 30.4, 78.2 and A5. See Protest Committee Initiated Actions in Chapter 8 for further discussion.

A protest committee may protest a boat, request redress for a boat, call a hearing to consider redress, call a hearing to consider whether a *support person* has broken a *rule*, or act under rule 69.2(b). However, it may not protest a boat as a result of information arising from a request for redress or an invalid *protest*, or from a report from a person with a *conflict of interest* other than the representative of the boat herself, or if it learns of an incident involving a boat that may have resulted in injury or serious damage.

Preparation Prior to the Hearing

Each PC member should have the NoR, the SIs and amendments (especially noting any changes to the RRS (see Appeal 56 and Case 85), the current RRS including the US prescriptions, *The Appeals Book for 2025-2028*, and the *World Sailing Case Book for 2025-2028*. It is also helpful to have class rules available.

The PC should also have a set of model boats and an appropriate grid to use for describing and discussing the incidents.

Blank Hearing Request forms and pre-printed forms, such as the “Protest/Redress Summary,” “Scoring Inquiry,” “Protest Filing Deadline” “Protest Worksheet”, “Alternative Penalty ,

Acknowledgement” and “Arbitration Report” forms should be available at the protest desk. These forms are often handled by the jury secretary, but if a secretary is not appointed, the Chief Judge should assign this task to a member of the PC.

Online Notice Boards and a complete overview of the Jury Secretary’s duties, including the receipt, logging-in and copying of filings, posting a Summary of protests and redress requests on the notice board, etc. is described in detail in Chapter 5.

These forms and others the PCs may need are in the Judges’ page on the US Sailing website, and links to them can be found in Chapter 13 – Resources.

Posting the Notice of Protest Filing Deadline

If a race committee action (such as the docking of the RC signal or finish boat) triggers the protest time deadline, the RC may choose to post the notice of the protest filing deadline, in which case a PC member should verify the posting including the posting time. Otherwise, the RC will inform the PC of the time limit, and the PC will post the notice, adding the time of posting.

RC Information Provided to the PC

A member of the RC needs to check in with the PC after racing is finished for the day and provide the PC with the following information:

- a list of boats displaying protest flags at the finish.
- if required by the SIs to do so, a list of boats notifying the RC at the finish of their intent to protest, and
- a list of boats flying penalty flags and boats that have been scored other than in their finishing positions (DNC, DNS, OCS, DNF, RET, NSC, ZFP, UFD, BFD or SCP).

Accepting and Withdrawing Protests and Redress Requests

A PC shall hear all protests and requests for redress that have been received (63.2 Hearings). However, rule 63.2(a) (Hearings) allows a protest to be withdrawn if approved by the PC. The PC should consider carefully any request to withdraw a protest. When considering the request, the PC may decide:

To approve the request to withdraw the protest when:

- The protestor has subsequently decided that no *rule* was broken.
- Either *party* has taken an appropriate penalty for the incident.
- Either *party* retires prior to the request for withdrawal.
- Arbitration or a similar process is being used that allows withdrawal of a protest.
- The protest is obviously invalid.

To disapprove the request to withdraw the protest when:

- There has been contact, other than incidental.

- A boat may have gained a significant advantage as a result of the incident.
- There is another protest relating to the same incident (counter-protest), even if invalid.
- The protestor may have been pressured or induced to withdraw his protest. This might occur when a top-of-the-fleet competitor pressures a middle-of-the-fleet protestor to withdraw it, or when the host club pressures a competitor to withdraw a protest that might hold up the trophy presentation.

The PC may allow a single judge, either working at the protest desk or conducting an arbitration meeting, to approve the withdrawal of a protest. Otherwise, a request to withdraw a protest should be considered by the full PC.

A request to withdraw a protest is recorded by completing the spaces provided on the Hearing Request form.

Role of PC Members

The period prior to hearings can be a period of high activity as competitors, the RC and others converge on the jury area. Unless directed by the Chief Judge, other members of the PC should curb the natural tendency to “try to help” and flock around the jury desk or space.

A PC member should never take any protests or other paperwork from the jury desk unless specifically instructed to do so by the Chief Judge or jury secretary.

The Chief Judge may wish to assign duties to PC members that they will undertake prior to and during the hearing. For example:

- Although each member should take notes, a scribe may be assigned to write the facts found, decision, etc., at the end of the hearing.
- One member (usually a person close to the door) may be assigned to call *parties* to the hearing and escort witnesses to the hearing room. A *party* should not be allowed to bring his own witness into the hearing room.
- One member may be assigned to research appeals and cases that may be applicable.
- Any member of the PC who is comfortable with hearing procedures may be invited to conduct a hearing.
- If the parties to a hearing and their witnesses are available and the members of the PC are ready, it is acceptable to convene a hearing before the end of protest time.

Opening the Hearing

Prior to Admitting Parties

Before admitting the *parties* to the hearing, the members of the committee should:

- Review the protest or request for redress so they can anticipate any procedural issues that may arise.
- The PC should verify that all *parties* to the hearing have been notified of the time and place of the hearing by the method specified in the sailing instructions. (See rule 63.1(a)(1), US Prescription for Redress and WS Case 48).
- The hearing chair should appoint the scribe and procedural judges.

- If a member of the committee realizes that he or she has a conflict of interest, he or she should immediately notify the hearing chair. The PC should assess the conflict of interest and decide if it is significant (see rule 63.3(d)). The hearing chair should determine if any members of the committee saw the incident. If so, rule 63.4(d) requires they state that fact in the presence of the *parties*.
- If there shall be no appeal from the decisions of the jury, is it constituted in accordance with the approval granted from US Sailing? (see rule 70.3, App N).
- Is the *protest* in writing and identify the protestor, the protestee and the incident or redress request reason? (rule (60.3(a), 61.2(a), Appeal 46, Appeal 65, Case 22).
- When redress has been requested, or may be considered, that could affect other boats' score. Rule 61.4(c) requires that the PC makes as fair an arrangement as possible for boats affected before granting the redress. Even if the US prescription to rule 63.1(b) has been deleted, when hearing a request for redress, you should consider redress for other boats in the race, making them a *party* to the hearing (see rule 61.1(c) and the definition *Party*). If the US prescription to rule 63.1(b) is in effect you must allow other boats to participate and make a reasonable attempt to notify all boats of the hearing time and place (see rule 63.1(b)+USRx, rule 61.4(c).

Interpreters

Unless an interpreter is required, only one representative from each boat is permitted into the protest room. The interpreter may translate what a PC member, *party* or witness says, but he may not coach or add words of his own to the translation. The interpreter should sit behind or outside the *parties*. The interpreter should not physically come between the *parties* or between the witness and a *party*.

No Appeals Hearing

When the right of appeal has been denied under rule 70.3, appoint a Review Judge, who preferably is not part of the hearing. The Review Judge is responsible for reviewing the written result of the hearing, including the facts found, the applicable rules, the decision, the reasons for it, and any penalties imposed, or redress given. They shall decide that the written result of the hearing is either adequate or requires changes. They could decide the facts are inadequate, or make comments on the conclusions, the applicable rules, the decision, the reasons for it, and any penalties imposed, or redress given. This review could require the protest committee to amend the written result of the hearing or reopen the hearing.

Following Procedures

It is very important for the PC hearing chair to follow and complete the top portion of page 2 of the US Sailing or World Sailing hearing form. When the procedures on the form are carefully followed, the committee is not likely to commit a procedural error that would invalidate the hearing. It is also important for the PC hearing chair to follow the guidelines in Appendix M.

Convening the Hearing

The following is a summary of the procedures involved in a hearing. Various facets of the hearing will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

The panel chair will convene the hearing. After the *parties* are admitted, the chair should:

NOTE: Case Numbers are still based on 2021-2024 Cases

Hearing preliminaries with the *parties* present. (M2)

- Confirm that everyone is in the correct hearing. This is an incident between [who] at [where] [when]. Correct?
- Offer the opportunity to take a post-race penalty if they apply and 44.1(b) does not apply. (App T1, US Rx V2).
- If observers are present, provide rules, and make ensure they understand that they cannot be a witness (see rule 63.4(e), Case 49).
- Introduce the PC and the *parties*, recording the names of the *parties* on the hearing form.
- Only one representative per boat is allowed unless a *party* requires an interpreter, (see M2.1(b), 63.1(a)(4), Case 49).
- If any *party* to the hearing is not present, consider proceeding under rule 63.1(b). (M2.1(c)).
- Disclose if any member of PC saw the incident? (M2.2, 63.4(d)).
- Ask the *parties* if they object to any PC members based on *conflict of interest* and record their responses. (M2.3, 63.3(b), 63.3(c), Case 137).
- Ensure that each *party* has a copy of the hearing form and has had time to prepare. (see M2.1(a), 63.1(a)(2) and 63.1(a)(3), Case 48).
- If the protest claims a breach of a rule of Part 2, 3, or 4, make sure that the representatives of the boats were on board at the time of the incident. (M2.1(d), 63.1(a)(4)).

Check the Validity of the Protest or Request for Redress. (M3.1, 60.4, 61.3, 63.4(a), Case 19, 22)

Ask conditions at time of incident. In case relevant to validity of Part 2, 3 or 4 protest.

- Verify that the filing is timely. If not, is there good reason to extend? (61.2, , Case 102, 128, Appeal 90, Appeal 94).
- Verify that the protestor notified RC at finish if required by SIs.
- New in 2025 is rule 60.3(a) “When delivered, a protest shall be in writing and identify the protestor, the protestee , and the incident”.
- Ensure the hearing request form identifies the protestor, the protestee, and the incident. (rule 60.3(a), 61.2, Case 22, Case 102).
- Ask protestor how protestee was notified of intent to protest. By hail? When? Words used? If too far to be heard, notified at first reasonable opportunity? (rule 60.2(a)(1), Appeal 61, Appeal 65, Case 122).
- Ask about display of red flag (if hull longer than 6 meters). When and where flown? Conspicuous display? Size and shape of flag appropriate for size of boat? Displayed at first reasonable opportunity? (rule 60.2(a)(1), Appeal 66, Appeal 67, Appeal 82, Appeal 124, Case 39, Case 72, Case 85, Case 104).
- If there was no hail or flag was the protestee properly informed? (rule 60.2(b), (c) or (d), Appeal 65, Appeal 84, Case 19, Case 112, Case 141).
- For an alleged breach of a rule of Part 2 or rule 31 verify the protestor was involved in or saw the incident. (rule 60.4(a)(2), Appeal 116).

- Decide if protest is valid. If in doubt, excuse *parties* and deliberate.
- If protest is valid, continue with hearing by taking evidence of *parties*.

Take Evidence

Protestor tells their story first, then protestee tells their story.

- Ask parties to describe the conditions, the incident and what they saw. (63.4(b)).
- Protestee asks questions of protestor, then protestor asks questions of protestee.
- Take evidence of witnesses (preferably protestor's first) by setting stage and saying: "Tell us what you saw".
- Protestee questions witness (to avoid the possibility of the protestor asking leading questions of his own witness), then protestor questions witness.
- The PC questions the witness. Repeat the process for each witness.
- PC questions protestor, then protestee.
- Ask each *party* to give a short summary.

Excuse parties and deliberate

Scribe reads the facts found, PC makes amendments as needed until they find the facts. (M3.3).

- Call back *parties* for more questions if necessary.
- Decide what rules apply to the boat(s), decide which boat (if any) broke a rule, and decide the relevant penalty.
- Scribe reads the conclusions and decision using preferred standard wording. PC agrees with the conclusions and decision as presented or makes amendments. (M3.3).
- Verify diagram (if applicable) agrees with the facts found. If not take a picture of the model boats or redraw.
- Decide if redress affects other boats' scores or places. Decide if further evidence is needed from affected boats. Decide if you need to request redress for other boats not a *party* to the hearing. (M3.4, 63.5).
- Complete the back side of the form with the names of the panel members, the signature of the chair, and date and time.

Inform the Parties. (M3.5, 63.6)

Recall the *parties*, read the facts found and announce the decision.

- Give any party a copy of the decision on request. (M3.5, 63.6(b)).
- Make sure the race committee scorer is apprised of the decision and any scoring changes. (90.3(d)).
- Ask the jury secretary to file the completed Hearing Decision form and post the decision on the notice board. (rule 63.6(c)).

Conflict of Interest

A member of a PC with a *conflict of interest* shall not be a member of the committee for the hearing unless all *parties* consent or the PC decides that the conflict of interest is not significant.

When deciding whether a *conflict of interest* is significant, the PC shall consider the views of the *parties*, the level of the conflict, the level of the event, the importance to each *party*, and the

overall perception of fairness. When the PC is considering whether a person has a *conflict of interest*, or whether the conflict is significant, the committee will apply the rulebook definition of *conflict of interest* and will also consider rule 63 and Appendix M 2.3.

Competitors who sail and finish a race have a *conflict of interest* because they stand to gain or lose by the decision (Appeal 22). When an action or omission of the RC is the subject of a request for redress, members of the RC have a *conflict of interest* (see Appeal 39). However, when the RC protests a boat, it does not have a *conflict of interest* in that protest (see Appeal 18).

Time to Prepare

If *parties* are not ready, they may be given additional time to prepare. If copies of the protest are not available, and the representatives have not had an opportunity to read the protest, they must be given a reasonable time to prepare. However, be aware of Case 48, which establishes that if a boat is aware she is being protested, it is her duty to prepare a defense. The abstract of that Case states: “Part 5 of the racing rules aims to protect a boat from being unfairly treated, not to provide loopholes for protestees. A protestee has a duty to protect herself by acting reasonably before a hearing.”

Absent Parties

When a *party* is not present for a hearing, rule 63.1(b) (Rights of Parties) allows the PC to decide the protest without that *party*. However, it is far better to have all the *parties* present. If practical, both the PC and the *parties* present should attempt to find the missing party.

Should a *party* show up while the hearing is underway, the PC should pause the hearing to determine the cause of the absence. If the absence appears to have been unavoidable, the PC should restart the hearing. The PC should provide some latitude in making this determination. For example, some competitors may not keep their boats at the regatta venue and may have to travel to get to the hearing. Since this *party* did not hear earlier evidence, the PC will need to ask the same questions again, and the chair must ensure that all evidence provided earlier is repeated in this restarted hearing.

Should the PC decide not to restart the hearing, the *party* still has the right to be present for the remainder of the hearing and cannot be excluded. In such cases, the PC may expect a request for redress or reopening.

When a *party* wishes to attend a hearing but finds the time of the hearing inconvenient, the PC must decide how much it will accommodate the competitor. When no one attends the hearing, the PC may act under rule 63.1(b) as it sees fit and should expect a request to reopen.

Inexperienced Parties

If the *parties* are inexperienced, the chair of the hearing may wish to explain the hearing process to them. The chair can explain the entire hearing at once or break it into parts, discussing the validity section first and the remainder of the hearing before taking testimony.

Hearings Involving the Same Incident

When two hearings are scheduled that arise from a single incident, or from very closely connected incidents, they may be heard together in one hearing. This applies to hearings resulting from protests, requests for redress, and hearings under rule 62.1 involving a support

person. A single hearing will ensure all *parties* are present throughout the hearing of all evidence as required by rule 63.1(a)(4). Case 49 illustrates the problems that can arise if this procedure is not followed. However, any hearings conducted under rule 69 shall not be combined with other types of hearing. (see M6.4).

Open Hearings

Hearings at which observers are present can be educational and enhance respect for the hearing system. However, open hearings should be held only if all members of the PC and the *parties* are comfortable with the procedure. When a hearing is open, no person who may be a witness may stay in the room, see rule 63.4(e). Observers may be excluded or allowed to remain during the PC's deliberations at the discretion of the committee. Chapter 8 further discusses open hearings.

Validity

The PC must test the hearing request for validity at the beginning of the hearing. The Hearing Decision form includes a list of requirements for a valid protest. The PC hearing chair normally completes this section in the order listed. The chair should always address validity questions in the following order and record the results on the Hearing Decision form:

- Was the hearing request form filed within the time limit? If it was delivered after the end of the protest time limit, it is invalid unless there is good reason to extend the time. The PC may consider extending the time for an onboard emergency such as a sinking boat, an injury that needed attention, logistics such as traffic problems or a remote race course, or an unreasonable protest time limit in the sailing instructions. (Note that if the PC decides there is a good reason to extend the time, to do so per rule 60.3(b) (Delivering a Protest).
- The Protest, when delivered, shall be in writing and identify the protestor, protestee, and the incident. The identity of the protestor or protestee can no longer be corrected (see rule 60.3(a) (Delivering a Protest).
- How did the protestor inform the protestee? What words were used? When was the hail made? Avoid leading questions such as "Did you hail 'Protest!' at the earliest opportunity?"
- The hail must be made at the first reasonable opportunity. "The first reasonable opportunity" means as soon as practicable, not as soon as convenient (Appeal 61, 124). Extenuating circumstances may delay a hail if a boat capsizes or when safety is a factor. Otherwise, very little latitude should be given to the timeliness of the hail.
- The hail can be omitted under rule 60.2(c) if as a result of the incident a member of either crew is in danger, or there is injury or serious damage that is obvious to the boat intending to protest, but she must attempt to inform the other boat within the time limit. .
- Rule 60.2(a)(1) requires that a boat shall "inform" the other boat, so the hail must be sufficiently loud and clear. A statement by one party that he hailed "*protest*" is not necessarily in conflict with a statement by the other party that he did not hear a hail.
 - If the boats are not within hailing distance, the hail of "*protest*" is not required (rule 60.2(b)(1), but the protestor must inform the protestee at the first reasonable

opportunity. This may be at the next mark rounding or when they get back to the dock.

- The PC must apply a test of reasonableness to each of these obligations. Was it reasonably possible for the protestor to hail “protest” and not be heard in the prevailing conditions? Was it reasonable that the first opportunity to inform the other boat was back at the clubhouse? In addition to the physical distance between the crew hailing and the closest opposing crew, other factors that affect sound include the wind speed and direction, the boats’ speeds and their courses, the sounds of sails and boats nearby, etc.
- Was a red flag, if required, displayed in a timely manner? The display of a red flag applies only to boats with hull lengths greater than 6 meters (19.7 feet) unless the NoR or SI change this requirement. The flag must be displayed at the first reasonable opportunity. “The first reasonable opportunity” means as soon as practicable, not as soon as convenient (Appeal 67, Question 125). The flag must be displayed until the boat is no longer *racing*.
- The flag need not be displayed under rule 60.2(c) if a member of either crew is in danger or there is serious damage or injury that is obvious to the boat intending to protest, but she must attempt to inform the other boat within the protest time limit. .
- Was the protest flag properly displayed? The flag must be red, a reasonable size and displayed so that it is easily seen by other competitors and the RC. A 3”x 6” red flag that is adequate for an Optimist Dinghy would not be conspicuous on a 54’ boat. The flag must be recognized as a flag (Appeal 66 and Case 72).
- Did the protestor fly the flag until she was no longer racing? Since a RC may not notice a protest flag on a boat and may, therefore, not include the protestor on its RC report, the PC may need to get additional evidence from the RC or other witnesses.

If any of the above conditions is not met, ask the *parties* to leave the room for a committee discussion of validity. If the committee concludes that the protest is invalid, the *parties* are recalled, the protest is declared invalid and the hearing is closed, unless there appears to be injury or serious damage and rule 60.2(c) applies.

If the protest appears to be valid, the hearing chair may ask in the presence of the *parties* if the committee agrees that the protest is valid and should proceed. If all agree, the chair announces that the hearing will proceed. Normally, there should be no further discussion of validity, unless other significant evidence is presented later.

Protests by the RC, TC and PC and requests for redress must also be tested for validity. This is discussed more fully in Chapters 7 and 8.

Taking Testimony and Gathering Evidence

Evidence consists of testimony by the *parties* and witnesses, records such as RC reports, documents such as the NoR and SIs, and any physical evidence, such as damage to a boat. As noted in the preamble to Appendix M, the PC should weigh all testimony with equal care, and should recognize that honest testimony can vary or be in conflict as a result of different observations and recollections.

A general approach when taking evidence is to look for the “Key Facts” relevant to the issue(s) at hand. The hearing result will hinge on one or more “Key Facts” where the *parties’* testimony may differ. In applying this approach, the PC should recognize the point when divergence occurs. Focus on the testimony that will allow resolution or determination of the “Key Facts” and attempt to minimize any extraneous facts.

Hearings must be conducted under the principles of fairness and sportsmanship. The PC must ensure that the parties maintain appropriate demeanor. Neither *party* should be allowed to intimidate or unreasonably influence the other. The PC may initiate a rule 69 hearing against a *party* in a valid protest who demonstrates disregard for the principles of good sportsmanship, such as a serious breach of a rule or ill-mannered behavior (see Chapter 10).

Evidence from the Parties

The chair should get the *parties* to agree on some basic information. This may help establish a more constructive atmosphere during the hearing. The *parties* can usually agree on:

- The size and type of the boats.
- The representatives’ positions and duties on their boat at the time of the incident.
- The time of the incident and the location on the race course.
- Wind speed and direction.
- The speed and direction of current and whether it was a factor.
- The sea state at the time of the incident.

The chair should first ask the protestor to describe the incident as the protestor saw and heard it, using the boat models if appropriate. The boat models used for the hearing should, if possible, correspond to the actual boats. There should be no interruptions unless a member of the PC wishes to ask a question to clarify something (for example, confusion about the color of models). The protestee is then asked to describe the incident as the protestee saw and heard it. Following the protestee’s presentation, the protestor is permitted to question the protestee, if he wishes, and vice versa. The chair should limit the questioning to pertinent questions and answers.

PC members may then ask questions about conflicting statements or actions. For instance, the representatives may have placed the same boat on opposite tacks. Substantive questions should be held until all testimony is received.

If the parties disagree on distances, times or boat speeds, the chair may demonstrate the use of speed and distance calculations by describing, for example, how 6 knots of boat speed equals 10 feet per second and relating this to distance. Chapter 13 – Resources provides a time, speed and distance table that may be helpful in determining what actually happened.

Evidence from Witnesses

When the committee has heard the facts alleged by each *party*, the chair should ask whether the protestor wishes to call any witnesses. The decision to call a *party’s* witness is left to that *party*. The PC is required by Rule 63.4(b) (Hearing Procedure) to take evidence from the *parties* and their witnesses. First the protestor, then each protestee, calls witnesses one at a time. As an alternative, a PC may choose to call in the protestor’s first witness, then the protestee’s first witness, alternating back and forth until all *parties’* witnesses have been called. In addition, the PC may wish to call its own witnesses.

For each witness called, the chair should:

- Get the name of the witness and have a member of the committee summon him or her. Do not permit the *party* to summon his own witness.
- Scramble the positions of any model boats being used.
- Seat the witness between the *parties*.
- Ask the witness for his or her name and position on the boat.
- State who called the witness and identify the incident in question.
- Tell the witness which color model represents which boat and ask the witness to tell what he or she knows about the incident.
- Invite questions first by the other *party* and then by the *party* who called the witness. The *parties* should be cautioned against asking leading questions and reminded not to make additional statements. The chair may interrupt the testimony to enforce proper questions and answers.
- Invite the PC members to question the witness.
- Dismiss the witness when his or her testimony is complete.

The *parties* may call many witnesses, one at a time, as they wish. However the chair may suggest that the *parties* call only witnesses who will add to or clarify the testimony. And under Rule 63.4(b) “the committee may exclude evidence which is irrelevant or unduly repetitive”.

Oral and Written Evidence

Oral or written testimony from someone who is not present at the hearing (hearsay) shall be taken, Rule 63.4(b). However, a party present at the hearing may question any person who gives evidence, Rule 63.4(c). The person “who gives evidence” is considered to be the person who is not at the hearing whose evidence is being presented for its truth by a party who is at the hearing.

To address this situation, the PC should ask the parties before the hearing begins if they have any witness evidence to offer during the hearing. If the answer is ‘yes’, the protest committee should ask if the witness[es] will be present at the hearing; if the answer is ‘yes’, then the protest committee should obtain the name of the witness[es] and arrange for them to be present outside of the hearing room until it is their turn to testify. If the answer is ‘no’, the protest committee should determine the type of witness evidence that will be offered [oral or written] and inquire into the availability of the witness to answer questions. It may be, for example, that the parties could review the proposed evidence before the hearing and question its author when the author is available, or a conference call during the hearing could be arranged. While the protest committee can accommodate such approaches if it chooses to do so, it has no obligation to organize or facilitate them and it is cautioned not to allow any such arrangement to unnecessarily prolong the hearing process.

Then, once the evidence is presented, the protest committee shall give the evidence the weight it considers appropriate, Rule 63.5(a) and that may be little to no weight.

Protest Committee Members as Witnesses

Occasionally, one or more PC members observe an incident on the water that results in a protest and will be called as witnesses in a hearing. Since all *parties* are entitled to be present to hear evidence presented by witnesses, the PC witnesses must be careful not to discuss what they saw

with other members of the committee before the hearing or during the deliberation and decision phase of the hearing. Members of a PC must notify the Chief Judge or hearing chair as soon as they are aware of a protest of an incident they have witnessed.

At the outset of the hearing, or as soon as the association is known, a member of the PC who saw the incident shall declare this fact to the *parties* attending the hearing. The hearing chair should explain that the PC member has not discussed the incident with any other committee members, and describe the protest procedure regarding a PC member as a witness.

How a PC witness is handled depends in part on whether or not the PC itself initiated the protest. When the PC is the protestor, it should strive to act as a single team throughout the protest process. The PC should take extra precautions to be seen as an independent body intent on fairness in the competition as a whole, not as a group of individuals intent on protesting or witnessing against individual competitors, and therefore appearing to have a personal interest in the outcome of the protest.

If one or more members are witnesses, then the chair is encouraged to keep the PC witnesses on the panel, and the witnesses will generally remain in their seats as part of the PC. If not all of the PC witnessed the event, it may be best if someone other than the chair serves as a witness.

Whenever there are PC witnesses, the chair should call the PC witness after all other witnesses have been heard, remind the PC witness to tell everything they know about the incident, and invite all parties and the members of the hearing panel to question the witness.

When the PC has not initiated the protest, the PC witness may move to the customary witness seat between the *parties* while giving testimony.

If the PC witness remains as a member of the PC after giving testimony and answering all questions, he will return to his seat as a member of the PC. If the PC witness steps off the panel, he will leave the hearing room after testifying.

When a member of the PC is a witness, the chair must decide whether the PC witness should remain on the PC or step aside after giving evidence. Considerations in favor of keeping the PC witness on the panel include:

As discussed above, when the PC initiated the protest.

- When the effectiveness of the PC would be impaired without the PC witness, such as when there is a small panel or when the witness is either the chair or one of the most experienced members.
- When the diversity of the PC would be diminished in an event where diversity is important.
- If the proper composition of an International Jury under rule N1 (Composition, Appointment and Organization) would be compromised.
- If the PC witness's testimony is either on its own inconclusive or the testimony corroborates other testimony, and it is non-controversial.

Considerations in favor of having the PC witness step off the panel for that hearing include:

- When, as a result of witnessing the incident, the PC witness has a strong opinion about whether or not a party broke a rule.

- If the appearance of objectivity of the PC would be diminished if the PC witness remained on the panel.
- If the PC has enough experienced members that its effectiveness would not be impaired by the loss of the PC witness.

When an event is large enough to field two or more separate PCs, the Chief Judge may be able to assign judges to PCs so that the panel for each hearing does not include any PC witnesses except for protests initiated by the PC. Then a judge who was a witness to an incident could be a witness called by the PC without otherwise being a member of that PC.

When the US Sailing prescription in the preamble to Part 5, Section B, is in effect, no person who brings an incident to the attention of the protest committee or who will give evidence regarding an incident shall, when practicable, be a member of the protest committee for a hearing involving that incident.

Photographic and Video Evidence

The Judges' Committee recommends the best practice is to not deny video or photographic evidence. Photographs and video can sometimes provide useful evidence, but PCs should recognize their limitations and note the following points (also described in rule M8 (Photographic Evidence)):

- The *party* producing (presenting) the photographic or video evidence is responsible for arranging the viewing. The images or screen should be of sufficient size so that the PC and parties can view the material as a group.
- View the video several times to extract all the information from it.
- The depth perception of any single lens camera is very poor; with a telephoto lens it is nonexistent and a fish eye lens may present additional distortion. When the camera views two *overlapped* boats at right angles to their course, it is impossible to assess the distance between them. When the camera views them head on, it is impossible to see whether an *overlap* exists unless it is substantial.

The PC should also ask the following questions:

- Where was the camera in relation to the boats?
- Was the camera's platform moving? If so, in what direction and how fast?
- Is the angle changing as the boats approach the critical point? Fast panning causes radical change.
- Did the camera have an unrestricted view throughout?
- Who took the photo or video?

Rule 63.4(b) states "The protest committee shall take the evidence of the parties present at the hearing, their witnesses, and any other evidence it considers necessary. Hearsay evidence is admissible. However, the protest committee may exclude evidence which is irrelevant or unduly repetitive." Therefore, denying the right to present video evidence, the party could appeal.

Rule 63.5(a) discusses what weight to give the evidence presented.

GPS Evidence

GPS devices have become increasingly popular as onboard equipment during racing. The GPS units may be owned by a *party* or made available to a fleet during a regatta by the OA or outside entities.

Parties might wish to present information from these devices to the PC during a hearing. Usually, the party wishes to use these devices as evidence that might depict location on race course (e.g., during an OCS hearing), position relative to other boats or a mark, or indication of course changes or penalty turns

Typically, parties seek to introduce information from these devices after an initial hearing, claiming that it meets the standard of “significant new evidence” as required under rule 66 (Reopening a Hearing).

The PC should consider the following questions:

- Where was the location of the device on the boat and in relation to other boats – especially if supplied by an outside entity?
- Was the device secured?
- Is the information the original acquired data, or was some form of processing or interpolation applied?
- How were locations of marks and other objects determined?
- What is the accuracy in both time and position of the devices used for the event? Many GPS units may have a distance error of three to six meters.

Just as they would with photographic and video evidence, the PC should consider and use evidence from GPS devices with caution. Generally, GPS evidence:

- May or may not accurate enough to confirm boat-to-boat or boat-to-start line distances.
- Is insufficient to overturn the judgment of a race officer deciding whether a boat is OCS at the starting signal. However, it may be useful in an OCS redress when a boat maintains, for example, that they restarted – perhaps by taking a turn around the pin end of the line – but the race committee did not record that restart. Or in a person overboard situation with redress requested.
- Can be useful when the devices are on all boats to develop a “big picture” about how an incident unfolded.
- Can help determine the timeliness and validity of penalty turns.
- Can be useful in the case of mistaken or missing identity.

Summary Statements

When the committee has heard all the evidence, the hearing chair invites the protestor first, then the protestee, to give a brief final statement. The summary should be limited to relevant rules and appeals or cases that apply and key facts for the committee to consider. The chair should restrict a *party* to a summary only and stop any *party* who attempts to repeat testimony or introduce new evidence. The *parties* should then be excused while the committee deliberates.

Deliberations

The PC must establish the facts from the testimony and evidence presented. Rule 63.5(a) says “The protest committee shall consider the evidence and decide what weight to give it. It shall then find the facts based on the balance of probabilities (unless an applicable rule requires otherwise), and then apply the rules to those facts to make its conclusions and a decision.”

Initially, the committee will find points about the incident on which the *parties* agree, such as the wind speed, the tack each boat was on or whether there was contact. When there is significant disagreement in the testimony, the PC might begin with the last point before the incident and the first point after the incident where the *parties* agree. From there, they can review the evidence presented by each boat during testimony and accept as facts the points on which the boats agree. When there are points of disagreement, the PC can set them aside and return to them later.

When writing facts, the PC must be careful that each is a fact and not a conclusion or an interpretation. If a “fact” includes words such as “ample” and “adequate,” it is probably a conclusion. “Ample time” should be replaced with an exact time if the statement is to become a fact. If an exact time or distance is not known, a fact may use “approximately one boat length” and still qualify as a fact.

In the context of rule 63.5 and other *rules* using the term, a “fact” is an action or condition that a PC “finds” occurred or existed. A “conclusion” is derived by reasoning from something else and can be purely factual. For further discussion on facts versus conclusions, see Case 104.

Some experienced PC members may be able to write basic facts about the incident in a chronological order while the evidence is presented. Those facts might include the points on which there is agreement, evidence presented by one *party* and not refuted by the other, and what may seem to the writer as facts. Points on which there is conflicting evidence is left for the consensus of the PC.

There are several approaches used in keeping well-organized hearing notes. Generally, with increased experience, judges tend to develop their own particular note-taking style.

Approach A

One approach uses the left side of the paper to write down the testimony and evidence presented by *parties* and witnesses in a sequential, narrative order. This might take several sheets.

The right side of the paper is used to jot down potential rules that might apply, relevant questions that occur to the judge to ask when it becomes his or her turn, and to highlight any diverging areas or any Key Facts that become apparent.

Protestor (Bow 11)

1. Bow 11 & 44 sailing DW leg on starboard gybe
2. Approach mark, Bow 11 windward, inside and O/L
3. Bow 44 leeward, outside
4. Bow 11 still O/L at zone

Rules

- 11, 17?
Q: how O/L created?
11, keep clear, overlapped
11, 16, 17
18, mark-room

Protestee (Bow 44)

1. Bow 44 approaching DW mark with much more speed than Bow 11
2. Bow 44 C/A before zone

Rules

11, 16, 17
Q: what speeds?
18.2(b)

Approach B

An alternative also divides the paper into two columns. Testimony and evidence given by the protestor gets placed in the first column. The testimony and evidence for the protestee is placed in the second column.

The notes are entered into the columns in more or less chronological order, including the incident.

Protestor (Bow 11)

1. Both boats sailing DW leg on starboard
2. Bow 11 inside
3. Bow 44 outside
4. Bow 11 had O/L at zone

Protestee (Bow 44)

Agree
Agree
Agree
Disagree - C/A at zone

The judge lines up the areas where the testimony is the same. Just as importantly, he or she notes where the testimony differs or diverges or where there is missing testimony or evidence.

Approach C

An alternative method is the judges first look at the situation on the Request for Hearing form and evaluate the relationship of the boats, what rules likely apply and what information you will need to make that call. Put that information on a list and mark on two columns next to it if each party agrees to that relationship.

After that, Approach A or B can be used to note the testimony of the parties.

After writing the facts, the PC must consider these issues:

- What *rules* are applicable? Rule 14 (Avoiding Contact) should be considered whenever there is contact. It applies to all *parties* and should be noted in a protest involving contact, whether it was broken or resulted in a penalty.
- Did either *party* break one or more *rules*?
- Should exoneration be considered under rule 60.5(c)(1) (Protest Decisions)?
- Rule 43.1(a) says when a boat has compelled another boat to break a *rule*, the other boat is exonerated for her breach. Case 51 instructs a PC that it must exonerate a boat in that situation.
- Rule 43 also contains provisions for exonerating a boat that broke a rule while entitled to *mark-room* or while rounding a mark on her *proper course*.

The PC should use the models and notes to re-enact the incident to scale. As the committee goes through the incident, they determine which *rules* are in play and follow through each boat's rights and obligations as they change. After listing the facts, the chair asks what conclusions could be reached. The PC should examine relevant Cases and Appeals and should carefully review applicable *rules*. One member (often referred to as the 'scribe') records the decision collectively crafted by the PC.

In contrast with facts, conclusions typically include evaluative words such as “ample” or “adequate.” They also use language from the rules, such as “X, on port, did not keep clear of Y on starboard tack, and broke rule 10” or “X, outside overlapped, failed to give Y mark room and broke RRS 18.2(a)(1).” Chapter 13 – Resources has a link to the World Sailing “Preferred Standard Wording” for writing conclusions on a hearing decision Form.

If the committee is unable to reach a decision, it is possible that there is insufficient evidence. It may be necessary to recall the *parties* for further questioning. In that case, the committee should know beforehand what information is needed and get it quickly. All *parties* must be given an opportunity to be present during the introduction of any new evidence.

The Decision

Under most circumstances, the decision that results from a hearing is whether the protest is upheld or denied or whether the request for redress is granted or denied. However, when rendering a decision as required under rule 63.6 (Informing the Parties and Others), a PC must include sufficient facts to justify its conclusion and its decision along with any scoring adjustments that result from the decision. Therefore, the written decision will be composed of:

- The facts found.
- A PC-generated diagram or PC-endorsed diagram, if applicable, that supports the facts found and conclusion. One option is to take a photo of the boat models as the PC endorsed diagram.
- The conclusion with all applicable *rules*.
- A decision as to whether any boat broke a *rule*.
- Any penalties imposed or redress given.

The *parties* are recalled when the committee is satisfied with its decision and the facts found are read to the *parties*. If there are other protests to be heard, it is satisfactory to leave the facts, conclusion and decision written in draft form. The facts that are read from the draft copy are the ones that will appear when transferred to the Hearing Decision form later.

The conclusion includes any relevant right-of-way/keep-clear relationships between the boats, the applicable *rules* considered and all of the *rules* that were broken. It is important that all applicable rules be identified regardless of whether they are relevant to the decision. For example, if an inside boat entitled to *mark room* breaks rule 11 (On the Same Tack, Overlapped) in taking such room, the violation of rule 11 should be documented along with the corresponding exoneration under rule 43. The conclusion should also report that a boat was compelled to break a *rule* and whether that boat is exonerated. When the facts include contact between boats, rule 14 applies and the conclusion should contain the relevant findings as discussed above in the Deliberations section.

The decision describes the result of the hearing and whether the protest is upheld or denied. One or more boats may be disqualified or given some other applicable penalty under rule 60.5(c). This *rule* requires a PC to consider all applicable *rules* that may have been broken by a boat that is a *party* to the hearing. A PC will often find that a boat broke more than one *rule*, and must cite all applicable *rules* that were broken in the decision. Well-written decisions mention each *rule* that

each boat is obligated to meet, and then state whether or not the boat fulfilled that obligation. The reader, and maybe the appeals committee, will be interested to know if the committee considered all the applicable *rules*. Rules 14 and 16 (Changing Course) often apply to an incident and a PC will appropriately include its finding in the decision.

Case 25 is a good example of a nicely worded decision in which the appeals committee concluded that OL gave IW *room* to *keep clear* and did not break rule 16. With the exception of those rules listed in rule 60.5(b) and those covered by rule 60.5(b)(3),, only a boat that is a *party* to a protest hearing may be penalized. A boat that is not a party, whose crew is called as a witness by one of the *parties* may not be penalized at that protest hearing even if she broke a *rule*.

After the decision is read, the hearing chair should thank the *parties* and excuse them. If either *party* requests a copy of the decision, rule 63.6(b) states that the request must be made in writing within seven days and the committee must respond promptly. As with any time-sensitive requirement, the PC should log the date and time of the request and the PC's response on the hearing decision form. Since the request for a written decision could come after the PC has left the venue, the PC should prepare or endorse a diagram and complete the last page of the hearing decision form before they adjourn. The scorer must be informed and the decision posted. The completed hearing request form and hearing decision form may be kept by the Chief Judge or given to the OA chair for the regatta records.

Online Hearings (Video Hearings)

Online hearings often work well for a hearing. The Guidelines for Online Hearings is the guidance from the judges Committee on Online (video) hearings. It is available in the document "[Guidelines for Online Hearings](#)" on the Judges page under Guidelines. It covers everything from organizing the online hearing to running the hearing online.

Contact and Damage

Contact

Whenever contact has occurred between boats, rule 14 applies. If any or all of the boats broke rule 14, this conclusion must be included in the decision. While there is no *rule* that requires a PC to state that a boat did not break a *rule*, it is good practice and there is very good reason to do so with rule 14. Such a finding is essential if the *parties* to the protest need an insurance underwriter or court to further adjudicate a claim for damages.

Damage and Serious Damage

PCs are asked within the *rules* to determine whether damage resulted from an incident and, in some cases, the extent of the damage or injury. A right-of-way boat, or one sailing within the *room* or *mark-room* to which she is entitled, is exonerated for breaking rule 14 if the contact did not cause damage or injury. A request for redress may require the committee to determine whether damage or injury occurred as a result of an incident. Case 19 establishes that there is no special meaning for the word "damage" in the racing *rules*, but does offer a dictionary definition and some questions to ask when deciding whether an incident resulted in damage or injury. Also see Case 141.

The terms “injury” and “serious damage,” which are used in rule 44.1 (Taking a Penalty), are also undefined in the *rules*. There are clear cases of serious damage and clear cases where damage is not serious, but the gray area between them is wide. The determination of whether there is no damage, damage or serious damage will always be a conclusion by the PC and, therefore, subject to appeal.

It is particularly important in a case involving damage for a PC to detail the relevant facts and clearly delineate its conclusion. Descriptions of the damage and its effect on the boat’s speed and maneuverability are essential. There may be occasions when, as part of the evidence gathering portion of the hearing, the PC may wish to inspect and possibly photograph the damage.

The following table, which attempts to define levels of damage, has been used at a variety of high-level events, including the 2017 International Women’s Keel Boat Championship and the 2017 US Sailing Championship of Champions. It is included here for reference and should be considered advisory.

Guidance on Damage

Level	Extent	Effect
Level A: Minor Damage	The damage does not significantly affect the value, general appearance or normal operation of the boat.	The boat may race without repair, although some minor surface work may be required after the event. Repairs should not normally require more than 1 hour of work.
Level B: Damage	The damage affects the value and/or general appearance of the boat.	The damage does not affect the normal operation of the boat in that race but may require some (temporary) work before racing again. Requires more than 1 hour of work but should not normally require more than 3 hours of work.
Level C: Major Damage	The normal operation of the boat is impaired and its structural integrity may be compromised.	The boat will need significant repair work before racing again. Requires more than 3 hours of work.

Liability for Damages

“Damages” is a legal term that refers to the estimated monetary equivalent of the loss, damage or injury sustained.

Part (a) of the US Sailing prescription to rule 65 makes it clear that even when a boat retires or accepts a penalty, she does not, by that action alone, admit liability for monetary damages.

Part (b) of the prescription prohibits PCs and appeals committees from adjudicating any claim for damages. A PC must find facts and make its decisions only in compliance with the *rules*. Since

laws vary from country to country, rule 65 appropriately directs the question of assessing damages to the civil courts of the applicable nation.

In section (c) of the rule 65 prescription, competitors are advised that, by participating in an event governed by the rules, a boat agrees that the responsibility for damages arising from any breach of the rules shall be based on fault as determined by application of the rules rather than by application of local law. To that end, section (c) rejects the legal doctrine of “assumption of risk” as the basis for determining monetary damages. Under that doctrine, a boat would assume the risk of whatever happens to her once she leaves the dock or casts off her mooring. As stated in section (c), that doctrine does not apply to events governed by the rules.

An amicus brief filed by US Sailing in a 1994 court case clearly underscores this idea. The court in Manning v Gordon observed: “The US Sailing Association filed an amicus brief opposing the application of the doctrine of assumption of risk to yacht racing on the grounds that sailing associations have very strict rules to avoid collisions, and assumption of risk will convert the sport to a ‘no fault’ enterprise and thereby undermine respect for the rules. The Sailing Association also contends that ‘one of the longest standing and most important traditions is that the competitor at fault in a racing collision pays for the damage to the other party’.”

The question of determining damages is therefore a bifurcated process. While the PC is charged with finding the party or parties at fault in the incident through application of the rules, it is prohibited from determining the actual monetary value of the damage, injury or loss.

7 – Redress

Introduction

Redress is the mechanism in the rules for competitors to receive corrective action when something has gone wrong. A request for redress is not a protest. As noted in Case 44, a boat may not protest the RC for breaking a *rule*, but she may request redress. The RC, TC, PC and OA cannot be protested or penalized.

Rule 61.4(b) (Redress) is very restrictive in defining how a boat qualifies for redress, but it also gives the PC considerable discretion in deciding what form of redress to grant. Rule 61.4(c) (Redress Decisions) requires that the PC make “as fair an arrangement as possible for all boats affected, whether or not they asked for redress.”

US Sailing’s prescription to rule 63.1(b) requires that when redress has been requested or is to be considered for one or more boats:

- Any other boat may participate in the hearing and
- The PC shall make a reasonable attempt to notify all boats of the time and place of the hearing and the reason for the request or for considering redress and shall be allowed reasonable time to prepare for the hearing. This is ordinarily done by posting such notice on the official notice board. An additional method may be using the texting message system used for the event. Any other boat may participate in the hearing and become a *party* to that hearing. This gives boats whose scores or place may be affected as a result of the redress hearing the opportunity to participate and give evidence at the hearing and to appeal. Note that those boats do not need to request permission to participate in writing; they may simply show up at the hearing.
- The protest committee shall call a hearing to hear the request for redress and to consider redress for any other boats that (1) participate in the hearing, or (2) request in writing to do so before the hearing begins, thereby making them *parties* to the hearing. (see the prescription to rule 63.1(b)). Some committees provide a signup list at the hearing location to be sure it knows the name of each participant.

Given the notification requirement imposed by the above prescription, it is important that PCs treat requests for redress separately from boat-on-boat protests. For example, if a person submitting a Hearing Request form checks both the Protest by boat against boat box and the Request for redress box, these should be treated as two separate hearings. One useful practice is to post the notice for the protest hearing and the notice for the redress hearing at the same time with the time for the redress hearing posted as “immediately after the protest hearing”. This satisfies the US prescription to rule 63.1(b)) to invite all the boats. Procedurally, it may make sense to photocopy the original form and add a comment denoting the need for a separate hearing.

If the protest committee decides to call a hearing to consider redress for a boat after deciding a boat-on-boat protest, the PC will need to file a separate Hearing Request form and check the box

for Type of Hearing, Redress and comply with the requirements of the US prescription to rule 63.1 before proceeding.

Validity

As in a protest hearing, the first step in a redress hearing is to establish the validity of the request in accordance with rule 61.3. The request must be in writing and identify the reason for making it. A Hearing Request form is customary and acceptable, but not required. The written request must be filed within the time limit for filing a written protest in accordance with rule 61.2 or within 2 hours of the incident, whichever is later. Other requests shall be delivered as soon as reasonably possible after learning the reasons for making the request. The protest committee shall extend the time if there is good reason to do so. A good reason might be an injury or the late posting of RC actions after the competitors have left the venue. Appeal 41 establishes that, when it is not reasonably possible for a competitor to comply with the protest time limit, the PC must extend it.

No protest flag is required for a redress request except in match racing under rule C6.3.

Requirements for Redress

Rule 61.4(b) describes the five conditions for which a boat may be granted redress, and says:

“A boat is entitled to redress if her score or place in a race or series has been made, or may be made, significantly worse through no fault of her own by:

(1) an improper action or improper omission of a *committee* or the organizing authority, but not by a protest committee decision when the boat was a *party* to the hearing,

(2) injury or physical damage because of the action of a boat that was breaking a rule of Part 2 and took an appropriate penalty or was penalized,

(3) injury or physical damage because of the action of a vessel not *racing* that was required to keep clear or is determined to be at fault under the *IRPCAS* or a government right-of-way rule, NOTE: In 61.4(b)(3) care needs to be taken in determining fault under the *IRPCAS*.

(4) giving help (except to herself or her crew) in compliance with rule 1.1, or

(5) an action of another boat, or a crew member or *support person* of that boat, that resulted in a penalty under rule 2 or a penalty or warning under rule 69.”

The word “shall” in rule 61.4 mandates that a hearing must take place if the request for redress is valid. And the PC is required to grant redress if one of the conditions in rule 61.4(b) exist. The PC must carefully consider each requirement and then make as fair an arrangement as possible for all boats affected per rule 61.4 (c).

A Boat’s Score or Place Has Been Made Significantly Worse

The PC must decide if the boat’s finishing score or place, in either a race or a series, has been made, or may be made, significantly worse as a direct result of the incident claimed in the request for redress. The request must pass that test.

For example, Appeal 54 describes such an error by the RC. By starting a race after the latest permissible time stated in the SIs, the RC committed an error. The finishing place in the series for the boat requesting redress was made significantly worse. The request for redress was granted and the race was excluded from the series score.

Through No Fault of Her Own

When a PC concludes that the RC committed an error in scoring a boat OCS, for example, the boat is not automatically entitled to redress. If the PC determines in the hearing that the boat knew or should have known that she was over the starting line, the request for redress has not met the “through no fault of her own” requirement. If she was several boat lengths over the starting line, she has no valid claim that she had to rely on the RC signals.

It should be noted that the rule stipulates “no” fault on the part of the boat requesting redress. A partial contribution in the loss of finishing place will not meet the test for “no” fault and the request for redress must be denied.

Suppose a right-of-way boat on starboard-tack suffers significant damage in a collision with a boat on port that was required to keep clear. The damage prevents S from continuing the race in safety and she retires. S protests P under rule 10 (*On Opposite Tacks*) and requests redress under rule 61.2. In the protest hearing, the PC disqualifies P under rules 10 and 14 but finds that much or all of S’s damage was caused because S also broke rule 14. In such a case, the PC would likely disqualify S under rule 14 and deny her request for redress since the damage that caused her to retire (and lose finishing positions) was at least partly her own fault.

Conditions of Rule 61.4

When considering whether to grant redress, the PC must conclude that the worsening of the boat’s score described in the request meets one of the five conditions listed in rule 61.4. Otherwise redress must be denied. Those conditions are:

Condition One: Rule 61.4(b)(1)

61.4(b)(1) “an improper action or improper omission of a *committee* or the organizing authority, but not by a protest committee decision when the boat was a *party* to the hearing,”

Allegations of improper race committee procedures are the most common type of redress requests. Most often a boat claims that the RC incorrectly scored her OCS for breaking rule 29.1 (*Individual Recall*). Related requests involve rule 30 (*Starting Penalties*) where the boat claims she was incorrectly scored ZFP, UFD, BFD, NSC or OCS. For redress requests involving starting penalties, if the RC was using acceptable methods and is confident of the call, the boat must demonstrate that the RC erred (improper action or omission). The boat should also demonstrate to the PC’s satisfaction that she started properly. The boat may qualify for redress if the RC fails to meet the signaling requirements in the rules (typically rule 29.1). Case 79 establishes that:

“When a boat has no reason to know that part of her hull crossed the starting line early and the race committee fails to signal ‘Individual recall’ promptly, yet scores her OCS, this is an error that significantly worsens the boat’s score through no fault of her own, and therefore entitles her to redress.”

Frequently a boat that was scored OCS bases her claim for redress on the fact that another boat that was farther up the course was not scored OCS. In that circumstance, the PC should deny the request for redress if there was no error in identifying the boat scored OCS.

The RC must score a boat in her finishing place if she meets the definition *Finish*. An exception is when an RC witnessed a boat failing to sail the course as required by rule 28 (Sailing the Course). Under Rule A5.1, the RC scores the boat NSC - Did not *sail the course*.

Rule 3 (Decision to Race) requires a boat to take responsibility for deciding to race. If, as in Appeal 39, she decides not to race, she cannot claim that her score was made worse by an improper action of the RC. The request was denied.

The RC is required by rule 5 (Rules Governing Organizing Authorities and Officials) to conduct races in compliance with the *rules*, which include the NoR and SIs. When it fails to do so, a boat may be entitled to redress.

The action or omission must be “improper.” In Case 68, the RC’s failure to discover that a boat was sailing without a valid rating certificate was not an improper omission. Appeal Question 44 makes it clear that it is a proper action for the RC to correct a scoring error. Boats whose scores are changed as a result of the correction are not entitled to redress.

Condition Two: Rule 61.4(b)(2)

61.4(b)(2) “injury or physical damage because of the action of a boat that was breaking a rule of Part 2 and took an appropriate penalty or was penalized,”

When deciding whether a boat is entitled to redress under 61.4 (b) (2) a PC must establish that the boat suffered physical damage that affected her ability to proceed in the race at normal speed. Contact with another boat without bodily injury or physical damage that results in a loss of finishing place does not qualify for redress. The loss of concentration due to a crash tack does not qualify. Case 19 interprets the word “damage.” The damage to the boat seeking redress need not be the result of a collision. However, the damage must be caused by the action of a boat or vessel required to *keep clear*. When a starboard-tack boat executes a crash tack to avoid a port-tack boat and seriously rips her only jib, she qualifies for redress. The damage itself must affect the speed or handling characteristics of the boat in such a way that the boat’s score is made significantly worse. A bent stanchion that does not affect sail trim or prevent crew from hiking normally qualifies as damage but may not affect the speed or handling characteristics of the boat. Case 110 clearly requires the damage itself to be the reason for the loss of finishing place.

As noted in Case 110, the word “injury” refers to bodily injury to a person. Injury would be any bodily injury that requires medical treatment or that renders a crew less functional. Minor cuts or abrasions would not be considered “injuries” for the purpose of this rule. “Damage” is limited to physical damage to a boat or her equipment that results in the value of part or the whole of the boat being diminished or rendered less functional. The following are examples of actions that do not qualify as physical damage:

- capsized
- crew overboard
- rigs or lifelines entangled

- loss of places

Condition Three: Rule 61.4(b)(3)

61.4(b)(3) “injury or physical damage because of the action of a vessel not *racing* that was required to keep clear or is determined to be at fault under the *IRPCAS* or a government right-of-way rule,

Condition Four: Rule 61.4(b)(4)

61.4(b)(4) “giving help (except to herself or her crew) in compliance with rule 1.1”

Rule 1.1 (Helping Those in Danger) directs a boat to give all possible help to any person or vessel in danger. The loss of finishing places as a result is a valid reason for claiming redress. When a boat complies with rule 1.1 and loses finishing places as a result, a PC must grant a request for redress. Boats that stand by capsized boats or respond to distress signals can expect to receive redress. In Case 20, a boat that goes to the aid of another boat that appears to be, but actually is not, in danger is granted redress.

Please read Appeal 127 that fully describes rule 1.1, Safety, Helping those in Danger, and rule 41, Outside Help.

Condition Five: Rule 61.4(b)(5)

61.4(b)(5) “an action of another boat, or a crew member or *support person* of that boat, that resulted in a penalty under rule 2 or a penalty or warning under rule 69.)”

This provision allows a PC to grant redress to a boat that suffered a loss in finishing place by the actions of a boat that broke rule 2 (Fair Sailing) or rule 69 (Misconduct). Case 34 describes a situation in which Boat A crossed the starting line well before the starting signal and then hindered Boat B in order to ensure that B’s finishing place was made significantly worse, which made A the winner of the series. A was penalized under rule 2.

Case 34 also discusses B’s ability to request redress under **61.4(b)(5)**. Similarly, if the SIs require a boat disqualified under rule 30.3 or 30.4 to retire, and the boat fails to do so after being properly notified, she breaks rule 2 as stated in Case 65. If she then hinders another boat, that boat may be entitled to redress under rule **61.4(b)(5)**. Also see Case 78.

Special Conditions Added by SIs or Other Rules

In some events, the RC may add additional conditions in the SIs to specifically allow or deny redress in certain circumstances. For example, at an event where the OA supplies boats for competitors, RCs frequently add language to the SIs regarding redress involving equipment breakdowns. Another common SI is language to limit OCS redress where the RC intends to announce OCS boats via VHF radio transmissions.

Judges should take some precautions regarding such clauses:

- Ensure that the SIs properly cite changes to racing rules and that they change racing rules only as permitted by rules 85 and 86.
- Check for rule changes embedded in class rules that are not properly made (often because the class rules attempt to change rules that they are not allowed to change). When a judge sees such clauses, he or she should work with the OA and RC in advance to ensure that the changes are properly brought into the SIs.

- Sometimes a sailing region or class will use special clauses as their normal practice. When that happens, judges and sailors must be careful not to assume that the language is present in SIs outside of that region or class.

Decisions on Redress

Once the PC has decided that one or more boats are entitled to redress, rule 61.4(c) requires the PC to make as fair an arrangement as possible for all boats affected. The PC is advised to avoid abandoning a race whenever possible. The PC is required to “take evidence from appropriate sources” when in doubt about the facts or probable results due to awarding redress. This may involve expanding the hearing to include other boats or taking testimony from additional witnesses.

The redress must include all boats affected, whether or not they sought redress. For example, if one boat asks for redress and the PC finds the boat is entitled to redress because of a race signal timing error, the jury is obligated by rule 63.4(b) to take testimony and find facts regarding any other boats that were affected by the same error.

However, as Case 37 suggests, the redress should not extend across multiple races if redress is not sought. If, in a multiple class event, the SIs are ambiguous and boats in one class are confused and sail different courses, some of them may be entitled to redress. If, however, in other classes all of the boats sail the same course, those boats are not entitled to redress unless they are protested under rule 28.

While not a requirement, before excusing the *parties* and entering into deliberations the hearing chair can ask what type of redress they seek. This provides the PC with some gauge to use in their deliberations and decision.

Finally, if the proposed redress would significantly affect the score or results of another boat or boats, the PC should consider inviting representatives of those boats into the redress hearing and obtain testimony from them as well. The resulting redress is more likely to be respected and accepted by all the competitors if the PC has taken the time to listen to their perspectives.

Scoring Redress

When redress has been granted and the PC decides to adjust scoring, it will turn to rule A9 (Guidance on Redress). However, rule A9 is advisory, so the PC may look outside this rule for a scoring solution. Rules A9(a) and A9(b) use average points and are the two most common scoring adjustments when redress is granted to only a few boats. Rule A9(a) suggests calculating average points of an entire series, excluding the race in question. Frequently, the races to be sailed on the final day of an event are also excluded so that all boats know where they stand going into the final day. Rule A9(b), which suggests granting the average of her scores of all races before the race in question, is more appropriate in some circumstances, such as when the weather conditions have changed dramatically. Rule A9(c) suggests points based on the position of the boat at the time of the incident. This can be used if the boat’s exact position is known and if the incident occurs very near the finish. For handicapped races scored on elapsed time, adjustments can be made in the finishing times.

The PC should also be aware that rule A6.2 allows for duplicate scores unless the PC decides otherwise. This prevents situations where the finish position of an “innocent” boat is altered because of a redress decision. It is advisable to specify clearly the PC’s intent when providing redress information to the scorer. For example, a decision could read: “... Boat A is granted redress and is to be scored in 15th place, with no change to the scores of other boats ...”

Redress given to a boat that made an error as a result of an improper action of the RC should not result in that boat receiving a better score than boats that did not make the error. In Case 45, the SIs incorrectly gave instructions for finishing that were contrary to the definition *Finish*. Boats that *finished* in accordance with the SIs were entitled to redress, but the appeals committee determined that, in this situation, it would not be fair to award better finishes to those boats that followed the SIs than to boats that *finished* in accordance with the definition.

When granting redress, it is always an option for the PC to decide to let the results stand.

If there is a major RC problem at the finish of a race, the PC may have to reconstruct the actual finishing order or use the positions at the last rounding mark. Reconstructing a finish requires creativity and testimony from many witnesses. One method is to open the hearing up to the entire one-design class or fleet. The Chief Judge, or hearing chair might ask the skippers to line up in the order they believe they finished. It is surprising how well this can work to determine the finishing order for the vast majority of the fleet.

8 – Other Procedures

Race Committee-Initiated Actions

Protests Initiated by the RC

The RC is permitted by rule 60.1 (Right to Protest) to protest a boat under specific conditions.

The RC is prohibited from protesting a boat based on information in an invalid protest or in a request for redress, or from a report from a person with a *conflict of interest* other than the representative of the boat herself. For example, if a coach or parent complains to the RC about something that happened on the water, the RC cannot protest based on that information. However, such a complaint might cause the RC to examine its own records further to determine if there are grounds to protest.

When the RC intends to protest for an incident it observes in the racing area, it shall inform the boat after the race and within the time limit of rule 60.3(b). For other protests, it shall inform the boat of its intention to protest as soon as reasonably possible. Posting on the official notice board constitutes the notice required by rule 60.2(d) (Informing the Protestee). However, the RC should attempt to locate the skipper of the boat being protested and notify him or her in person.

RC protests often involve a boat touching a mark. Rule A5.1 says If the RC determines a boat did not *sail the course*, it shall score her NSC.

The PC must ensure all validity requirements have been complied with before proceeding with the hearing. During the hearing, the RC is a *party* to the hearing and acts as the protestor. This includes giving evidence, being given the opportunity to ask questions, answering questions and calling witnesses, and being asked to leave the room during the PC deliberation.

As stated in rule 60.5 (b) A boat shall only be penalized.

- (1) at a protest hearing to which she is a *party*.
- (2) under rule 62.4, 64 or 69, or
- (3) under a *rule* which expressly states that a penalty may be applied without a hearing.

Boats that are scored in anything other than their finishing places should be notified promptly. The RC usually does this by posting the scores or, if there is any significant delay, by posting a separate report of “Race Committee Actions.”

Requests for Redress Initiated by the RC

The RC cannot grant redress, but it may request that the PC consider giving redress to a boat under rule 61.1(b). This is generally done when the RC discovers its error too late to recall or postpone the race, or when abandoning the race is clearly not the proper or desirable action. The RC may also request redress on behalf of a boat that has been scored OCS but may have actually returned and started properly, or one that may have been impeded by a mark boat.

Protest Committee-Initiated Actions

Protests Initiated by the PC

Rule 60.1 and rule 60.4(c) permits the PC to protest a boat under specific conditions. Such protests have the same validity requirements as for those initiated by the RC and the TC, which must be met before the hearing.

Under rule 60.4(b), the PC may not protest a boat “as a result of information arising from a request for redress or an invalid protest, or from a report from a person with a *conflict of interest* other than the representative of the boat herself.” However, there are two exceptions. Rule 60.4(b) permits the PC to protest a boat involved in an incident that may have resulted in injury or serious damage, but the PC must, as a condition of validity, first determine whether the incident did result in injury or serious damage. Rule 60.4(c)(2) permits the PC to protest a boat when, during the hearing of a valid protest, it learns that the boat, although not a *party* to the hearing, was involved in the incident and may have broken a rule. If the PC decides to protest a boat under this rule, it must inform her as soon as reasonably possible, close the current hearing, proceed by completing a Hearing Request form as required by rule 60.2(b)(4), follow the due process requirements of rule 63 and hear the original and new protests together.

When the PC initiates the protest, the “protestor” is the PC as a whole. When conducting the hearing, the chair should ensure that the boat’s representative is aware that, although one or more individual members of the PC will present the evidence, it is the PC as a body that has initiated the hearing.

Judges who see an incident must be careful not to discuss testimony with the other PC members prior to the hearing. Rule 63.1(a)(4) gives all *parties* the right to be present for all testimony, so PC members must never discuss the incident without the *parties* present. Before racing begins, PCs should agree on the circumstances under which they will protest. Then, if a member witnesses an incident that falls within the agreed guidelines, he or she can deliver a protest on behalf of the PC without discussing the incident in detail. However, the member should also discuss their intent to file with the Chief Judge before actually doing so.

A basic principle in *Sportsmanship and the Rules* is that competitors are expected to follow and enforce the *rules* and to protest when a *rule* is broken.

There may be circumstances when the PC should consider initiating a protest under rule 60.1 and 60.2(a)(2). However, the US Sailing Judges’ Committee recommends that, unless specifically directed by the OA to do so, judges should not initiate a protest under rule 60.1 against a boat on the water except when:

- It is obvious a boat broke a *rule* and there is no other boat nearby that could protest.
- It is likely that a boat or competitor broke rule 2.

Note that if the judge is on the water under Appendix P, it is not a protest. It is giving a penalty.

When the PC protests under rule 60.1, it is important to remember the principles of hearing evidence laid out in rule 63.4(b), (c), and (d). One judge will represent the PC as the protestor in the hearing. If more than one judge saw the incident, one will present the case and the others

may testify as witnesses. The *parties* to the hearing and the PC are entitled to question any judge who gives testimony.

Rule 60.2(a)(2) requires that the PC inform the boat that the PC is protesting them within the protest time limit (unless the protest is based on information in another valid protest). Rule 60.2(d) states that posting on the official notice board qualifies as notification. However, even if posting is the only notification, it must be accomplished within the protest time limit, and it is good practice to attempt to notify the protested boat so she can prepare her defense.

Since appearances do influence people's attitudes, the PC member who acts as the protestor usually sits in the position occupied by the protestor. If the PC is large enough and skilled enough, it should consider having that judge act only as the protestor and not serve on the panel. However, there are circumstances when this is impractical. Chapter 6 discusses procedures when a PC member is a protestor or witness in a hearing.

Other PC-Initiated Hearings and Penalties

The PC may consider redress without a request from a boat if it receives such a request from the RC or from the TC under rule 61.1(b) or if the committee decides it is appropriate under rule 61.1(c). If judges observe an incident on the water that appears to meet the requirements for redress and neither a competitor nor the RC requests redress, the PC may initiate a hearing to decide if redress is appropriate.

The PC may initiate a hearing under rule 69 as described in Chapter 10 (Hearings Involving Misconduct).

If the SIs invoke Appendix P, the PC may penalize a boat without a hearing for breaking rule 42 but must limit such penalties to incidents that a member of the committee or its designated observer sees.

Technical Committee-Initiated Actions

Protests Initiated by the TC

Equipment inspectors and event measurers are collectively called the Technical Committee (TC), which is appointed by the OA or RC (rule 92). The function of the TC is to conduct equipment inspection and event measurement as directed by the OA and as required by the *rules*. When the TC for an event decides that a boat or a competitor's personal equipment is not in compliance with class rules, it has the authority to protest a boat directly (rule 60.1). In addition, the TC has the authority to request redress for a boat rule 61.1, to act as a *party* to a hearing and to report to the PC requesting rule 69 action.

The TC is under the same limitations as the PC and the RC for protesting a boat. It cannot protest a boat as a result of information arising from a request for redress or an invalid protest or from a report from a person with a conflict of interest other than the representative of the boat herself.

The TC must meet the same protest requirements as the PC and the RC regarding informing the boat (rule 60.2(a)(2)), protest contents (rule 60.3(a)) and the protest time limit (rule 60.3(b)). The TC has no authority to call a hearing or penalize a boat.

Measurement

Measurement is the process for determining under rule 78 (Compliance with Class Rules; Certificates) that a boat conforms to her class rules and her measurement or rating certificate. Competitors, RCs, PCs and TCs are all required to abide by these *rules*. The procedures for deciding a measurement *protest* are described in rule 60.5(c) and (d) (Protest Decisions).

Class rules include the details of how a boat is measured and rated. The class rules usually contain administrative provisions and owners' responsibilities. Although class rules and measurement procedures sometimes appear complex, a PC usually can understand them with a little effort and some informed assistance from an expert witness, usually a measurer or class administrator. The definition of *rule* includes the class rules (the rules of a handicap or rating system are also class rules). The class rules are always in effect even when they are not mentioned in the NoR or SIs by the following statement in the NoR: "The regatta will be governed by the rules as defined in *The Racing Rules of Sailing*."

International Measurers are appointed by World Sailing to measure for international classes or specific rating rules. Class measurers are appointed by class associations to measure for that class. Class rules may include a description of the qualifications and appointment process. However, when World Sailing's Equipment Rules of Sailing (ERS) are invoked, they specify that the TC appoints an Equipment Inspector (ERS C.4.6). In such cases, the PC should ensure prior to the event that the Equipment Inspector's required qualifications are met so that there are no misunderstandings between the OA and the class.

The SIs may include provisions for measurement and may also include specific requirements for pre-race measurement and measurement checks during or after the racing.

A person not appointed to the TC, even if he or she is an official measurer, has no official status at an event. Such a person can, of course, be called as an expert witness.

When the Equipment Inspector concludes before a race or regatta that a boat does not comply with the *rules*, he or she may request that the defect be corrected. If the boat then races without correcting the defect, or a defect is found after a race, the Equipment Inspector may protest under 60.1, 60.2(a)(2) and 60.4(c)(3).

When hearing a measurement *protest*, the PC must first determine whether the *protest* is valid. Rule 60.3(a) (Delivering a Protest) requires that the *protest* identify, among other things, the incident, where and when the incident occurred, and any *rule* the protestor believes was broken. A protest stating only that "the boat doesn't measure in" or that "she is too fast for her rating" does not meet the requirements of the rule. If no incident is identified, the *protest* is invalid.

Requiring a reasonable description of the measurement infringement does not prejudice the protestor. The same requirement exists for any other *protest*. If the protestor cannot be specific about an alleged breach, he is simply asking the PC to go on a "fishing expedition." A PC can deal with a specific complaint, but it can't be expected to order a full re-measurement simply because a protestor thinks the boat does not measure in.

When a *protest* alleging a breach of rule 78 is found to be valid, the PC must hold a hearing, find the facts, determine whether it can interpret the *rules* and, if so, decide the protest. If the PC is

in doubt about the meaning of a measurement rule, rule 64.4(b) requires it to refer its questions to “an authority responsible for interpreting the rule.” In this case, the PC may defer making a decision, but must still find the facts and identify the interpretation or application about which it is not clear. The PC need not be expert on class rules. It may call witnesses who understand the rule, including administrators, inspectors, measurers, designers or any other witness it deems necessary. Rule 63.4(b) requires that the PC take evidence from the parties and other evidence it considers necessary to decide the *protest*.

A person who is thoroughly familiar with the class rules and procedures, such as an official measurer, can be helpful to the PC as an expert witness. Boat designers and builders can also be expert witnesses, but they may have *conflicts of interest*. Witnesses, no matter how expert, are just witnesses. The PC makes the final decisions.

When a measurer is available and the protest involves complex measurement issues, the PC may wish to order measurement checks or even complete re-measurement. This falls within the “other evidence it considers necessary” part of rule 63.4(b). Nothing in the *rules*, however, gives a boat the right to demand that another boat be re-measured. The decision to order re-measurement is up to the PC (or the OA if so stated in the SIs or NoR).

The “authority responsible for interpreting” measurement rules noted in rule 64.4(b) is usually identified in the class rules. US Sailing prescribes that the authority for interpreting rules of a handicap or rating system is the organization that issued the certificate. In the United States, for IRC, ORC and ORR, this is the Offshore Director of US Sailing. For PHRF, the authority is the PHRF handicapping committee that issued the certificate.

Once a PC refers a measurement question to the qualified authority, rule 63.5(d) requires the committee to be “bound by the reply.” When such a referral is made, the PC gives up some of its authority, so it should word its questions carefully to ensure that it gets the information needed to make its decision without abdicating its responsibilities.

As provided by rule 60.5(d)(4), a boat that has been disqualified under a measurement rule may continue to race if she states in writing that she intends to appeal. She remains disqualified if she does not appeal or if her appeal is not sustained.

In a measurement protest, the PC has an additional responsibility. Rule 65.2 requires the unsuccessful *party* in a measurement *protest* to pay any measurement costs associated with the *protest*, unless the PC decides otherwise. The assignment of responsibility for paying the costs should be included in the PC’s decision.

Rule 78.1 now reads: ...“When a *rule* provides that the penalty for a breach of a class rule may be less than disqualification, the same penalty will apply to a breach of this rule.”

Hearings Involving Support Persons

The following section is adapted from an article by Wayne Balsiger, formerly RAJ-L, and Dick Rose, Chair of the World Sailing Racing Rules Working Party.

Hearings Involving Support Persons and Protest Hearings Compared

Most judges have lots of experience hearing boat vs. boat protests, but hearings involving support persons are rare. There are several differences between these two types of hearing and also several ways in which they are similar. These are discussed below.

Differences:

- A person who alleges that a support person has broken a rule is not required to notify the support person before he or she makes a report to the PC, and there is no requirement to hail 'Protest' or fly a red flag.
- A report alleging that a support person broke a rule must be made to the PC, but it does not have to be in writing or satisfy any of the requirements in rule 60.3(b).
- If a PC receives a report alleging that a support person broke a rule, it must decide whether or not to call a hearing. Also, a PC may decide to call a hearing based on its own observation or information received from any source, including evidence taken during a hearing (rule 62.1).
- There is no time limit for making a report alleging that a support person broke a rule.
- The PC must hear all protests delivered to the race office unless it allows the protest to be withdrawn (rule 63.2(a)). However, the PC is not required to hold a hearing when it receives a report alleging that a support person broke a rule. The PC must consider the report, or discuss its own observations concerning a support person's actions, and then decide whether or not to call a hearing.
- In a protest hearing, the parties are the protestor and the protestee, and the protestor presents the allegation. When a hearing is called alleging that a support person has broken a rule,
 - (1) the PC may appoint a person to present the allegation in the hearing, and
 - (2) every boat that the support person supports is a party to the hearing. This means that if a hearing is held because a coach, a parent or any other support person may have broken a rule, every boat supported by that person is entitled to be represented during the hearing and will have all the rights a protestee would have in a protest hearing.
- The details of the allegation shall be given to all parties to the hearing. Although there is no requirement that this be done in writing, doing so is a good practice.
- The validity rules in rule 60.4 do not apply, but the PC should make sure that the requirements of rule 63.1 have been met.
- In a protest hearing, only boats can be penalized (see rule 60.5(c)). However, in a hearing involving a support person, action against the support person may be taken (see rule 62.3), and, in addition, one or more of the boats that the support person supports may be penalized (see rule 62.4).
- In the decision phase of the hearing, the PC shall comply with rule 62.3, 62.4.

Similarities:

- All parties to the hearing shall be notified of the time and place of the hearing, and they shall be allowed reasonable time to prepare for the hearing (rule 63.1(a)(3)).
- All the requirements of rule 63.1(a)(4) apply, except the requirement that the representative had been on board..

- Rule 63.3, regarding possible conflicts of interest held by members of the PC, applies.
- Informing the Parties: rules 63.6(a) and 63.6(b) apply.
- All the requirements in rule 63.4 apply.
- Rule 64.1 applies.
- Reopening: rule 63.7 applies.
- Appeals and Requests: rule 70 applies.

Applicable Cases

Case 138 deals with Rule 2, Fair Sailing and Rule 69, Misconduct.

Case 139 deals with Rule 69.2(j), Misconduct: Action by a PC. This case specifically discusses when a PC should report an act of misconduct by a support person to the national authority or to World Sailing.

Rule 69.2(j) requires a report to the national authority or to World Sailing when the penalty applied is greater than DNE for one race, if the person has been excluded from the venue or in other cases when the PC considers it ‘appropriate’. It would be ‘appropriate’ to report in the following circumstances, as examples:

- (1) In a single race event the PC believes that the penalty for the breach would have been more than DNE for one race if it were in a multiple race event. This might be because of the seriousness of a single breach or a number of lesser breaches.
- (2) A support person is found in breach of rule 69 and would have been excluded from the venue, but the event is now into its last day and exclusion from the venue would be ineffective.
- (3) The PC has good reason to believe that the person who has breached rule 69 has previously been penalized for a breach of rule 69.1(a) and especially if the breach is similar.
- (4) The breach has an impact on events beyond the jurisdiction of the PC. For example, selection or qualification for another event and the breach has adversely affected the selection or qualification of another competitor.

The report is only sent to World Sailing when the breach occurs at specific international events as listed in World Sailing Regulation 35, Disciplinary Code. Otherwise the report is to be sent to the national authority of the person(s) found to have breached rule 69 (not necessarily to the national authority of the boat owner or venue).

Reopening a Hearing

There are two circumstances described in rule 63.7 when a PC is permitted to reopen a hearing after it has made its decision. The first is when the PC decides that it may have made a significant error. The second is when significant new evidence becomes available within a reasonable time. In both circumstances the reopening is optional. The word “significant” is used in both parts of the *rule*. The determination of what is significant is a conclusion made by the PC and is therefore subject to appeal. The only circumstance under which a PC is required to reopen a hearing is when it is directed to do so by an appeals committee under rule 71.3 or R5 (Inadequate Facts; Reopening).

If a *party* requests reopening, the PC first must decide if the request is valid. A *party* has 24 hours under rule 63.7 after being informed of the decision to ask for a reopening except on the last scheduled day of racing, when the request must be delivered within the protest time limit if the requesting *party* was informed of the decision on the previous day or no later than 30 minutes after the *party* was informed of the decision on that day.

If the request is timely, the PC decides whether to reopen. The initial portion of the hearing is a presentation by the requesting *party* of the reasons for reopening. That presentation should be limited to a discussion of reasons for reopening, not to actually taking any new evidence. While the *rules* do not require it, if all *parties* are available try to have them present during this initial fact-finding.

Evidence that was available to the *party* at the time of the original hearing but was not introduced is generally not considered “new evidence.” For example, suppose a boat was scored OCS and a redress hearing was held that confirmed the RC’s decision. Then suppose the next day, the boat requests reopening to call a new witness. The PC should ask why this witness was not called in the original hearing. If the PC believes that the boat had adequate time to prepare their case originally and that witness could have been called in the original hearing, then they would probably deny the request. Case 115 addresses what constitutes new evidence.

After the *parties* are dismissed, the PC decides whether there is sufficient reason to reopen and notifies the *parties* of its decision. If the hearing will be reopened, the PC must provide the same notification that is required for a protest hearing. Rule 63.7 states that a majority of the members of the PC conducting a reopened hearing should, if possible, be members of the original PC.

It is not necessary for a *party* to request reopening in order for the PC to reopen a hearing. If the PC decides that it may have made a significant error, it may reopen the hearing and re-deliberate without taking any new evidence and can revise its decision as necessary. When reopening based on a significant error, the protest committee shall, if practicable, have at least one new member. The *parties* are not entitled to be present for the deliberation. The PC could also learn of significant new evidence and decide to reopen the hearing. If any new evidence is to be considered, the *parties* have a right to be present under rule 63.1(a). In addition, the *parties* have the right under rule 63.4(c) to question any new witnesses.

Frequently, competitors try to use a reopened hearing to have the entire matter reconsidered. At a reopened hearing, only the new evidence or evidence related to the error should be considered. *Parties* may ask questions, call witnesses and sum up, and the PC proceeds as it would in any other hearing.

Open Hearings

Hearings that permit observers, such as other competitors, prospective judges, parents and coaches at protest hearings are called “open hearings.” This practice is becoming more common and is very beneficial to all concerned. It is especially useful for juniors whose concerns about protest hearings can be reduced by attending an open hearing.

The major thrust of holding open hearings is educational. In an open hearing, observers' knowledge of the *rules* will be enhanced and they will gain a better understanding of due process and proper protest-hearing procedures. There are other benefits to open hearings as well:

- All participants in an open hearing (PC, the *parties* and witnesses) know that what they say and how they say it will be observed by a number of people, some of whom may have seen the incident being discussed.
- Once observers in an open hearing understand how a PC functions, they will be less intimidated in the future.
- The impression that PCs act arbitrarily will be diminished.
- When coaches are allowed as observers, they will be able to debrief the sailors more accurately, having heard the testimony firsthand.

If hearings are to be open, the hearing chair or Chief Judge must make three rules for the observers very clear:

- Observers cannot be witnesses for either party. Before the hearing begins, this rule must be spelled out clearly to the parties and the observers. The hearing chair should ask the parties to the hearing to scan the room and make sure that they do not see anyone that they might like to have as a witness, because anyone who remains in the room when the hearing begins can no longer serve as a witness. Witnesses must be excluded from a hearing under rule 63.4(e), except when giving evidence.
- Observers may not speak or communicate with the parties during the hearing. The chair must carefully control this rule. However, if time permits after the conclusion of the hearing, questions from observers should be encouraged.
- Once the hearing begins, observers will not be allowed to leave the room until they are dismissed, since they cannot communicate with any of the parties or witnesses. Before the hearing begins, the chair should make sure that this rule is well understood among all observers. The chair should give any observer who might not be able to honor this rule a chance to leave the room before the hearing begins.

Some PCs prefer to dismiss all observers (close the hearing) during deliberations. Whether the PC allows observers to remain in the room during this segment depends, in part, on the nature of the protest. If the issue is straightforward, observers may well benefit from hearing how deliberations are conducted. If the case is particularly difficult or contentious, it may be wise to close the hearing during deliberations. Due to the sensitive nature of the testimony, hearings held under rule 2 or rule 69 must never be open to observers.

Protest Committees at Umpired Events

Umpired events seek, to the extent possible, to determine a winner at the end of a race. When the boats are racing, this requires on-the-water resolution of rules issues, including the imposition of penalties. This system makes racing more exciting, but it does not completely eliminate the need for protest and redress hearings after a race is over. For further information on Match and Team Racing Umpiring, refer to the World Sailing Umpire Manual available on the World Sailing website.

World Sailing Codes

Although the following WS codes rank as rules under Rule 6 (World Sailing Regulations), they are not printed in the rulebook because they can be changed or amended at any time by World Sailing: Advertising, Anti-Doping, Betting and Anti-Corruption, Disciplinary, Eligibility, and Sailor Classification. These codes can be found at Regulations 20, 21, 37, 35, 19, and 22 respectively. Changes to these codes are posted on the World Sailing website as soon as practicable after approval and may be obtained directly from World Sailing. Judges should access the website periodically to check for changes to these regulations.

Competitor Classification

Under rule 79 (*Classification*), World Sailing's *Sailor Classification Code* (Regulation 22) categorizes competitors according to the financial benefit they derive from activities that contribute to the performance of racing boats. Group 1 competitors generally do not benefit financially from such activity, while Group 3 competitors benefit financially to a greater degree. Regattas and classes can use the Classification Code to limit the participation of professional (Group 3) sailors. The code must be invoked by class rules or the NoR or SIs.

The Code can be applied in a variety of ways. It may apply to helmsmen or crew only, or it may be used to limit the number of competitors from a specific group (for example, not more than one Group 3 competitor shall be permitted per boat). The Code is typically incorporated into class rules in order to help shape the nature of competition. The wording of the Code may not be altered in class rules, the NoR or the SIs.

Classification *protests* are rare because competitors are typically required to apply for classification before the event. The code itself has a process for handling challenges, so protests during an event are the last resort. However, if a PC receives a *protest* based on classification and it is in doubt as to the classification of a competitor, it may refer its facts found to the Classification Authority at World Sailing and shall be governed by the decision of the Classification Authority on those facts. The PC must also report its decision to the Classification Authority.

Post-Event Reports

Occasionally the OA will request a report from the PC. The Chief Judge normally writes this report. At the end of each race day, the PC should meet to discuss each course and any problems, and the Chief Judge and vice-chair should meet with the race officers. The Chief Judge should meet with the jury secretary to compile the hearing results. A wise Chief Judge will arrange to keep notes for producing reports.

The report should outline the conduct of the racing and include recommendations for improving future events. It should include a summary of the scoring and results. When innovative or unusual race management procedures are used, a description should be forwarded to the US Sailing Race Management Committee. The chair of the RC and each judge should receive a copy of the completed report.

The report should also include any controversial or interesting decisions, preferably after discussion by the PC. If there was a rule 69 hearing where a penalty was imposed, a report to the

national authority is required. The report to the OA should include sufficient detail for a reader to understand why the decision was made. More than one report may be required. See Chapter 10 (Misconduct Hearings) for guidance on rule 69 hearings.



Judges observe the windward mark rounding at an ILCA event.

9 – Alternative Procedures for Dispute Resolution

Introduction

Appendix T, originally a US Sailing prescription to the 2013-16 RRS, provided options for resolving rules disputes that were more informal and less intimidating than a full protest hearing, including post-race penalties, expedited hearings, and arbitration. But those options applied only in the United States. World Sailing adopted arbitration for the 2017-2020 RRS (as Appendix T), so now the same system of arbitration applies world-wide. Appendix V is a US Sailing Prescription offering alternative penalties. Be aware, however, that Appendix T or Appendix V applies only if the NoR or SIs so state. While it is possible to amend NoR and/or SIs to “turn on” Appendix T or Appendix V via amendment, doing so after racing has begun is bad practice. After a hearing, such an action may be an improper act in the context of RRS 61.4(b)(1) as the alternative penalty was not available to the competitors throughout the event.

Post-Race Penalties

Rule T1 and the US prescription at rule V2 allow for a penalty, other than disqualification, provided that rule 44.1(b) does not apply. A boat that may have broken one or more rules of Part 2 or rule 31 in an incident may take a Post-Race Penalty at any time after the race until the beginning of a protest hearing involving the incident. However, as noted above, if a boat causes injury or serious damage, or despite taking a penalty, gained a significant advantage by her breach, the Post-Race Penalty is not available to her and her only option is to retire.

The Post-Race Penalty language provided in rule T1(b) and rule V2 calls for a Scoring Penalty of 30% calculated as stated in rule 44.3(c). If a boat may have broken a rule of Part 2 and rule 31 in the same incident, she need not take a penalty for breaking rule 31. The method for taking a Post-Race Penalty is described in rules T1(c) and V2.

Arbitration

Arbitration is a tool for resolving rules disputes that any OA can choose to implement. Rule T2 (Arbitration Meeting) describes the process, which includes the Post-Race Penalty option described above.

Arbitration provides a shorter, simpler and less intimidating alternative to a protest hearing that often results in sailors taking a voluntary penalty less than disqualification or withdrawing their *protest*. Arbitration is a meeting between the sailors and a rules expert (the arbitrator) prior to a protest hearing. Competitors may learn more about the application of the *rules* without having to sit through a lengthy protest hearing.

When arbitration applies, a Post-Race Penalty is also offered (see rule T1). This penalty is available to all competitors until a protest hearing involving the incident begins, regardless of whether they participate in arbitration. For example, after coming ashore, a competitor may realize that he or she

broke a rule after reading the rulebook or talking with others. In that case, that person may take a Post-Race Penalty in accordance with rules T1 or V2 if they apply. Note: If T1 or V2 apply, a boat may take the Post-Race Penalty at any time before the hearing begins, even if the arbitration meeting has not yet occurred or has already occurred.

An arbitration meeting is not a protest hearing, and the arbitrator may or may not be a member of the panel that hears the *protest* if it goes to a hearing. It is best practice when practicable for the arbitrator to not be a member of the panel that hears the protest if it goes to hearing). However, it is fine if the arbitrator is in the hearing room watching the hearing. Boats or competitors are not penalized at arbitration; Post-Race Penalties are optional and may be taken or declined by competitors. Arbitrators give their opinion regarding the *protest*, but that is not a “decision” as the term is used in the racing rules. There can be no reopening, redress or appeal stemming from arbitration.

When a competitor takes a penalty, either during or after the race, it is not necessarily an admission of fault for that incident. Often it is just protection against a possible unfavorable decision by the PC after the race despite the competitor’s belief that no *rule* was broken

Arbitration is technically optional to the competitors (just as protest hearings are), although competitors are strongly encouraged to participate when they are involved in a *protest*. It is generally in both parties’ interests to have the *protest* resolved at arbitration if possible. One party refusing to participate in the arbitration meeting or refusing to withdraw their protest after the arbitration meeting does not remove the option for either party to take the Post-Race Penalty before the start of the protest hearing. If a competitor takes the Post-Race Penalty prior to the hearing and is found to have broken a rule, and they are not subject to RRS 44.3(c), the decision would be, “[x] took an appropriate penalty and is not further penalized”.

An arbitration meeting should take no more than 15 minutes, and less if possible. Only the arbitrator, protestor and protestee attend. No witnesses are allowed. If a competitor believes the opinion of the arbitrator would have been different by witness testimony, the *protest* should be forwarded to the PC. However, before forwarding the protest to the PC, the arbitrator might offer an opinion as described in RRS T3 and ask if either party wishes to accept a Post-Race Penalty, if appropriate.

The *protest* should be sent directly to the PC for a hearing if:

- the incident involves possible injury, serious damage, or if one of the parties may have gained a significant advantage in the incident; or
- the arbitrator decides that a conclusion cannot be reached in a short time.

The Arbitrator

Arbitrators should be highly-qualified and experienced judges with a strong command of the *rules*. They must think and make decisions quickly and must command the respect of the sailors. A good arbitrator listens well, speaks confidently yet respectfully, and does not “talk down” to the sailors. Trained umpires often make excellent arbitrators. Some judges who excel at untangling complex protests make poor arbitrators, as they may be uncomfortable with the quick pace of the presentation and decision-making.

A good way to learn to become an arbitrator is to watch experienced arbitrators in action. Auditing an arbitration meeting as an observer is fine, as long as the *parties* and arbitrator agree.

Preparing for Arbitration

Before the arbitration meeting begins, the arbitrator should review the protest carefully. The arbitrator should explore any information relating to validity and think through possible rules (Part 2 and 31) issues that might arise. The arbitrator should also ensure that the protest is appropriate for arbitration. If the protest alleges serious damage, injury or the possibility that a boat gained a significant advantage by her breach, and the testimony in the arbitration meeting confirms this, the protest cannot be arbitrated and must go to a protest hearing. Arbitration is prohibited by RRS T1(a) if the incident involves rules other than the rules of Part 2 or rule 31. If the incident involves more than two boats, the complexity of the incident may render the incident inappropriate for arbitration. It is possible, however, that simple multi-boat incidents can be successfully arbitrated, so it is always good practice to hear the parties before sending the incident to a hearing.

Before beginning the meeting, the arbitrator should have a copy of the NoR and SIs and any amendments to them, a rulebook, boat models, and a watch to keep track of time. The arbitrator should also ensure that the parties have a copy of the protest and have had time to prepare.

If all boats involved in a *protest* are not represented at arbitration, there will be no arbitration meeting, and if the *protest* is not withdrawn, it will be heard by the PC. Note that any *party* involved in the incident can choose to take the Post-Race Penalty at any time until the protest hearing begins, even if arbitration is not held.

The Arbitration Meeting

Arbitration is held in a quiet location, well away from other competitors and observers. At the outset, the arbitrator will first identify the parties and confirm that the protestee has had an opportunity to read the protest. The arbitrator may then give a brief overview of arbitration so that the parties are comfortable with the process.

Validity

Before hearing the evidence, the arbitrator will inquire about the validity of the protest. If the arbitrator believes that the PC will find the protest invalid, he or she renders an opinion on this and gives the protestor an opportunity to withdraw the protest. If the protestor agrees to withdraw the protest, he or she will sign the “Withdraw filing” section on the Hearing Request form. Rule T4(b) permits an arbitrator to act on behalf of a PC and approve the withdrawal of a protest. The Arbitrator may then sign the Filing withdrawal approved on behalf of the PC.

If the arbitrator believes that the protest is not valid but the protestor declines to withdraw the protest, arbitration continues.

Contact, Damage and Injury

If the incident involves contact, the arbitrator should quickly establish that damage, if any, was not serious (see Case 141) and that there was no injury. To resolve this quickly, the arbitrator can ask each party if there was contact. If there was, then ask each party if they believe there was damage or injury. If either party contends there was damage, the arbitrator should ask for

descriptions and/or pictures of the damage. If all parties agree (without the arbitrator rendering an opinion) that there was no injury and that the damage, if any, was not serious, then the meeting will continue. If any party contends that there was injury or serious damage, the arbitrator should investigate any claims of injury, serious damage, or significant advantage.

- Competitors often believe damage to their boats is serious, but this is a determination of rules, guided by Case 141.
- Injury is bodily injury to a person (see Case 110). Typically, an injury is more than a minor hurt. For instance, a small paper cut that does not affect the sailor's ability to perform is not an "injury". However if the bodily harm reduces the ability of the person to perform as well as they can, or requires medical attention, it is an "injury."
- Often, a competitor may believe that the ability to take a 30% penalty is a significant advantage in itself because a DSQ would place the protestee behind them overall in the event. This is not significant advantage in the context of RRS 44.3.

If the determination of injury or serious damage is unclear to the arbitrator, the arbitrator may explain the opportunity for the post-race penalty or retirement while also sending the hearing to the PC. If the PC determines there was not injury or serious damage, the post-race penalty is an appropriate penalty for that incident.

If injury, serious damage, or significant advantage clearly occurred, end the meeting and forward the matter to the PC.

Taking Evidence and Rendering an Opinion

The arbitrator asks the protestor to present an account of the incident, using explanations or if necessary, boat models, and then asks the protestee to do the same. Often, using hands is sufficient for simple rules situations. The arbitrator may question the parties and may allow them to question each other, but only very briefly and under the arbitrator's firm control. Once the evidence has been given, the arbitrator decides whether or not the facts are clear enough to render an opinion. If the incident may require witnesses to clarify the incident, the arbitrator should forward the protest to the full PC. However, before sending the parties to a protest hearing, he or she may offer either party the option of accepting a Post-Race Penalty.

If the arbitrator offers an opinion, he or she should offer the opinion in terms of what the PC would likely conclude and lay out what options the parties have. It is important to keep in mind that, while the arbitrator should be confident in expressing an opinion, he or she should be careful not to appear to pressure either party into an action. It is up to the parties to choose the option they wish to take.

The arbitrator will give one of four opinions, based on the evidence given by the representatives:

- The protest is invalid.
- No boat will be penalized for breaking a rule.
- One or both boats will be penalized for breaking one or more rules.
- A decision cannot be reached or a Post-Race Penalty is not appropriate.

If the arbitrator believes that no rules were broken, he or she should render that opinion (without explaining why) and give the protestor the option of withdrawing the protest.

If the arbitrator believes that one or more boats broke a rule, he or she should say which boats may have broken those rules (again, without stating why), and then list the options available to each party, including:

- Taking a Post-Race Penalty,
- Retiring, or
- Not taking a Penalty

Table view of these options

Opinion	Options for parties	Penalty suggested
The protest is invalid	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protestor may withdraw the Protest 2. Protestor may decline to withdraw 	None
No boat broke a rule	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protestor may withdraw the Protest 2. Protestor may decline to withdraw 	None
One or more boats broke a rule, NO injury, serious damage, or significant advantage.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protestor may withdraw the Protest 2. Protestor may decline to withdraw 	Boat(s) that broke a rule accept the Post-Race Penalty
One or more boats broke a rule with POSSIBLE injury, serious damage, or significant advantage.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Party takes Post-Race Penalty 2. Party Retires 3. No penalty taken 	Boat(s) that broke a rule may take the Post-Race Penalty or Retire. If the PC determines there was injury, serious damage, or significant advantage, retirement is the only appropriate penalty.
One or more boats broke a rule with CLEAR injury, serious damage, or significant advantage.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offer retirement. 2. Send the matter to the PC for a hearing if there is no retirement. 	Boat(s) that broke a rule may Retire. If the PC determines there was injury, serious damage, or significant advantage, retirement is the only appropriate penalty.
An opinion cannot be reached in the arbitration meeting	Send the matter to the PC for a hearing	Boat(s) that broke a rule may take the Post-Race Penalty or Retire. If the PC determines there was

		injury, serious damage, or significant advantage, retirement is the only appropriate penalty.
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If a party accepts a Penalty, he or she writes on an alternative penalty form or the Hearing Request form a simple statement such as “I accept a 30% penalty in race [X]” or “I retire from race [X]” and signs the form. Once this is done, the arbitrator presents the option of withdrawing the protest to the protestor. If the protestor agrees to withdraw the protest, he or she will check “Withdrawal requested” on the back of the Hearing Request form and sign it. The arbitrator then checks the box “Withdrawal permitted” and hands the form to the jury desk. The matter is then closed, and if time permits, the arbitrator is free to discuss the issue more fully.

However, if a protestor insists on having a full protest hearing after the protestee has accepted an appropriate penalty, the arbitrator could note that one possible outcome of a full PC hearing might be that the protestor is penalized and the protestee cannot be penalized further. Knowing this, most protestors will withdraw their protests. Nevertheless, a protestor always has the right to a protest hearing under rule 63.1 even if an appropriate penalty has been accepted by the other party. It should be noted that if a party needs a written decision to clarify which party or parties were at fault in the incident, the protest should be forwarded to the PC for a hearing.

The arbitrator must not give a reason for his or her opinion or make a case for either side until the protest is resolved, either by its withdrawal or by a subsequent protest hearing. Once all protests involved in an incident are withdrawn after arbitration and the Hearing Request form is completed and handed into the protest desk, only then is the arbitrator free to discuss the incident and explain the reasons for his or her opinions to the parties. This session often turns into an excellent learning opportunity for the sailors and is one of the rewarding aspects of being an arbitrator.

If the protest is forwarded to the PC for a hearing, the arbitrator should not discuss the incident or the reason the protest was forwarded with any member of the hearing panel.

If the protest goes from arbitration to a protest hearing, best practice is to have an independent panel conduct the hearing. When that is not practicable, the arbitrator may be a member of the panel that hears the protest even though the arbitrator has already expressed an opinion about the incident.

PC Concerns on Changing Testimony

Since arbitration was first introduced in the early 1990s, there have been infrequent instances in which a party changed his or her testimony between the arbitration meeting and the full protest hearing. This problem, although not widespread, was difficult to deal with because conventional wisdom dictated that there could be no communication between the hearing panel and the arbitrator. There are several options to deal with this problem.

1. If an allegation of changed testimony is made by a party, the PC may call the arbitrator as a witness to clarify previous testimony.

Chapter 9 – Alternative Procedures for Dispute Resolution

2. Any instance of being intentionally changed or untruthful testimony in a hearing may be referred to an appropriate protest committee (see Section 10 in this manual about misconduct) for action under RRS 69.2 where the arbitrator and panel would give testimony about the untruthful testimony and the panel can decide if the *party* broke RRS 69.2.
3. To prevent such instances, make the Arbitrator a member of the protest committee.

10 – Misconduct Hearings

Rule 69 (Misconduct) is a rule Judges must be thoroughly familiar with before participating in any misconduct proceedings. The US Sailing Judges' Committee also recommends that protest committees consult World Sailing's Misconduct Guidance document, available on the World Sailing website.

Special Considerations for Rule 2 and Rule 69 Hearings

Hearings involving misconduct require an extra level of care and attention to procedures and rules for several reasons:

- The reputations of the sailors and of the sport are at stake.
- A sailor's right to compete can be suspended for misconduct by his or her national authority or World Sailing.
- Amateur athletes have rights that US Sailing must respect, including the right to a hearing when the right to compete may be suspended. Failure to satisfy these requirements may result in expensive and time-consuming grievances through the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) arbitration system.

The Ted Stevens Act, USOPC Bylaws and US Sailing Regulations

The Racing Rules of Sailing, the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act (variously referred to as "TSOASA" or "Amateur Sports Act" or the "Ted Stevens Act"), the USOPC Bylaws and the US Sailing Bylaws and Regulations all "...protect the opportunity of an amateur athlete, coach, trainer, manager, administrator, or official to participate in amateur athletic competition" (Ted Stevens Act - 36 U.S.C. Sec. 220501 *et seq.*). Primary among these safeguards is the right to a hearing, including "...a reasonable opportunity to present oral or written evidence, to cross-examine witnesses, and to present such factual or legal claims as desired" (USOPC Dispute Resolution Policy April 1, 2023, Section 1R Hearing). US Sailing's Regulation 15 establishes administrative, grievance and disciplinary procedures that must be observed.

These safeguards extend beyond the Olympic-path sailors to include most sailors in the United States. Since a penalty issued under rule 69 can lead to a sailor's loss of eligibility to participate in the sport, all rule 69 hearings in the United States must be conducted with scrupulous attention to due process and the following additional requirements in mind:

- The notification of hearing to the sailor must describe possible penalties.
- The sailor has the right to assistance at the hearing, including legal counsel.
- The sailor has the right to have a record made of the hearing.

A person who believes that his or her rights have been violated can file a grievance under US Sailing Regulation 15. If the grievance is not resolved, the party may demand a hearing through the USOPC Arbitration process. US Sailing may be required to pay the costs for conducting these hearings.

Mandatory Reporting: SafeSport and Allegations of **Physical, Emotional or Sexual Abuse or Misconduct**

Race officials are “mandatory reporters” under SafeSport, meaning that they have an affirmative duty to report any suspicion or allegation of misconduct or abuse.

The SafeSport program, which is mandated by federal law (P.L. 115-126, signed into law in February, 2018) established athlete protection and training requirements for all US Olympic sports and requires that NGBs identify individuals who are subject to SafeSport requirements. The US Sailing Covered Individuals List includes race officials.



If, during the course of a regatta or hearing, or through any other source, race officials become aware of a suspicion or allegation of physical or emotional misconduct (including bullying, hazing or harassment) or sexual misconduct or sexual abuse, they are required to report the suspicion or allegation.

To report sexual misconduct or abuse:

If you suspect or know of sexual misconduct or abuse in sailing, contact the US Center for SafeSport (“the Center”) immediately.

US Center for SafeSport Response and Resolution Office

[US Center for SafeSport.org Report-a-concern](https://www.safesport.org/report-a-concern)

Follow instructions on the website. You may report online or call to report.

Phone: 833-5US-SAFE (833-587-7233) Monday-Friday 8am-4pm MT.

You must also report abuse of a minor to local law enforcement:

In addition to mandatory reporting to the US Center for SafeSport, you must report any instance of possible sexual or physical abuse of a minor (under the age of 18) to local law enforcement. Reporting to US Sailing or to the Center’s Response & Resolution Office does not satisfy the legal obligation you may have to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect. If you have reason to suspect child abuse or neglect, report it immediately to the appropriate local law enforcement authorities.

To report non-sexual misconduct to US Sailing:

If your concern deals with a possible incident of other misconduct – i.e. emotional and physical misconduct, including bullying, harassment, and hazing – please report it to US Sailing. Please note that emotional misconduct does not include conduct between opponents or officials that occurs during or connected with a practice or race that is covered by *The Racing Rules of Sailing*. Such conduct should be addressed under *The Racing Rules of Sailing*.

US Sailing Reporting Channels:

Submit the online incident report form, found on the <https://www.ussailing.org/athlete-safety/>

Misconduct Hearings and SafeSport

It may be the case that an incident that is reportable to SafeSport will also necessitate a rule 69 Misconduct Hearing. In such cases, a race official's first responsibility is to report the incident as directed above.

Because the US Center for SafeSport (Center) has exclusive authority over incidents involving sexual misconduct – and may exert discretionary jurisdiction over any other reportable incident – there are limits on how US Sailing, US Sailing certified race officials, and a protest committee acting under *The Racing Rules of Sailing* can respond to such incidents. If the Center accepts jurisdiction over a reported incident, all other parties are prohibited from investigating and resolving the matter.

However, until the Center expressly exercises jurisdiction over an incident, race officials and protest committees have the authority to follow the processes and procedures in *The Racing Rules of Sailing* and to implement necessary and appropriate measures, up to and including a suspension, to address any allegations of misconduct. Accordingly, when the allegations presented fall within the Center's discretionary jurisdiction, a protest committee may investigate and resolve the matter pursuant to its authority under *The Racing Rules of Sailing* unless and until such time as the Center expressly exercises jurisdiction over the particular allegations.

In cases where the race official reasonably believes that the allegations or incident falls within the Center's exclusive jurisdiction (i.e. sexual misconduct), a race official and/or protest committee – while able to impose measures to protect the immediate health, safety, and wellbeing of sailors – may not investigate or resolve the incident through a formal misconduct hearing.

For more information about SafeSport programs and requirements, visit safesport.ussailing.org. Please direct any questions about reporting responsibilities to US Sailing at safesport@ussailing.org.

Fair Sailing Hearings

Rule 2 requires that a competitor compete according to recognized principles of sportsmanship and fair play. A protest under rule 2 is lodged against a boat and may be applied with or without another *rule*. A boat, the RC, TC or the PC may all initiate a protest under rule 2. The procedures governing protests under rule 2 are the same as for other protests, including validity testing.

When determining whether a boat broke rule 2, the PC should re-read the section at the beginning of the rulebook entitled *Sportsmanship and the Rules*. If a boat knowingly breaks a *rule* and does not promptly take a penalty or retire, she may break rule 2. Cases 34 and 65 in particular, as well as 27, 31, 47, 73, 74, 78 and 138 and US Appeal 42 all address rule 2.

Rule 2 requires that it be “clearly established” that the principles of sportsmanship and fair play have been broken. When in doubt, the PC must conclude that the *rule* was not broken. Disqualifications may not be excluded from a boat's series. A disqualification that is not excludable must be noted in the scores with the designation DNE per rule A10. Further, a boat whose score in a race or series may have been made significantly worse by a boat breaking rule 2 may be entitled to redress under rule 61.4(b)(2)5).

Allegations of Misconduct

When a competitor, boat owner or *support person* may have committed an act of misconduct through a breach of good manners or sportsmanship, or may have brought the sport into disrepute, a rule 69 action may be warranted. Rule 69 is conducted in a significantly different manner from the protest process of other rules. The rule describes how a hearing is initiated, as well as its special procedures and penalties. Otherwise, rule 63 Conduct of Hearings applies to a misconduct hearing conducted by a protest committee.

Unlike other rules, an allegation of misconduct is made against an individual competitor, boat owner or *support person*, not a boat. A hearing under rule 69 is initiated by a PC based on its observations or through a report received from any source concerning the action of a competitor, boat owner or *support person*, on or off the water (rule 69.1(a)). Only the PC may initiate a rule 69 hearing.

There are no restrictions on the source of a report, as there are for RC, PC, or TC protests under rule 60.4. A rule 69 action is not a protest but can be initiated based on information in a protest or discovered during the hearing of a protest. In this case, the committee should decide the protest first. After completing the protest hearing, the PC should dismiss the *parties* and decide whether to proceed under rule 69.

If a PC receives a report concerning a person affiliated with the event who is not a competitor, boat owner or *support person*, it cannot conduct a rule 69 hearing. It may, however, investigate and submit a report to US Sailing (or other relevant national authorities). In the United States, the report should be sent to compliance@ussailing.org pursuant to US Sailing Regulation 15.

Time and Place of Misconduct

Since a rule 69 hearing is based on alleged misconduct by a competitor, boat owner or *support person*, the misconduct usually occurs during a competitive event, which is generally considered to be from the time that sailors gather at the venue through the conclusion of the event. This usually coincides closely with the timing of a single event, but it may take place over a longer period, such as a series of races.

The time and place of an incident is irrelevant provided that the misconduct can readily be associated with the event. For example, a rule 69 hearing may be appropriate if a competitor was involved in a serious fight in a public place unrelated to the regatta venue during the time period of the event when that fight brings the sport into disrepute. On the other hand, a rule 69 hearing may not be appropriate where the fight takes place between the competitor and someone unrelated to the regatta, in private or in public, without the public knowing the competitor was competing in the regatta.

Parameters to Consider

When an incident of misconduct is alleged to have occurred, the Protest Committee must come to one of the following results using the test of “reasonable prospect” (World Sailing Misconduct Guidance, Section 19) as they decide if a hearing should be held:

1. A hearing is not pursued because the PC determines that there is not a reasonable prospect of

finding misconduct.

2. A hearing is not held, misconduct may have occurred, and the individual is advised of concern about the alleged misconduct. Reasons may include inexperience, or lack of intent.
3. A hearing about misconduct is not held because the matter was immediately reported to SafeSport, local police, and US Sailing and the incident is about known or suspected incidents of child abuse, including sexual abuse, or sexual misconduct at any age.
4. A hearing about misconduct is not held because the matter warrants immediate police notification and a report to US Sailing.
5. A hearing will be held.

And then, using the test of “Comfortable Satisfaction”, come to one of the following decisions: (RRS 69.2(g) and Case 122)

6. A hearing is held: There is insufficient evidence of misconduct and no further action is taken.
7. A hearing is held: Misconduct occurred and a warning is given.
8. A hearing is held: Misconduct occurred and a penalty is given.
9. It is impractical to conduct a hearing. With a variety of video meeting options this should rarely be the result. It is the responsibility of the Protest Committee to complete the hearing process, including rendering a decision.

Deciding to Hold a Hearing

When considering whether to proceed on a charge of misconduct, the PC should first carefully re-read rule 69, Appendix M, the Due Process Checklist and the World Sailing Misconduct Guidance.

On receiving the report, the PC must determine if the allegation is serious and credible enough to warrant a hearing or investigation under rule 69. The allegation needs to be credible, and it must allege a breach of good manners or sportsmanship, unethical behavior, or conduct that may bring the sport into disrepute.

Rule 69.1(b) speaks of bringing the sport into disrepute. A violation of the law involving private behavior that has nothing to do with sailing might not bring the sport into disrepute. On the other hand, a person known to be a competitor who displays obnoxious public behavior does bring the sport into disrepute. If the behavior remains undisciplined, the town, the sponsor and the local club may not wish to host the event in the future.

An investigation is important. When practicable, an investigation is strongly encouraged before a hearing is called. When the Protest Committee hears the results of the investigation, it may decide no hearing is warranted. An incident must be within the PC’s authority to investigate. Note that rules 69.2(c) and 69.2(d) have specific requirements for an investigation.

An Investigator’s qualities are important:

- No conflicts with any parties or likely parties
- Reputation for integrity
- Experience with investigations, does not need to be a law enforcement officer

- Lawyer
 - Manager or HR of an organization
 - Good questioner, good listener
 - Be knowledgeable in the RRS rules of sailing
 - Takes detailed notes
- Thorough but efficient with time
 - Thoughtful
 - Concise
 - Organized individual
- Prepares good factual reports without their opinion
 - Separately may provide their opinion
- Able to focus on the issues and not be distracted

The goal is to gather information to understand who, where, what, when and how the situation occurred and submit the report to the Protest Committee. The report will enable the PC to decide whether to hold a hearing or not.

Preparing for a Hearing

If the PC decides to hold a hearing, it must follow the procedures described below to protect the rights of the party.

Scheduling the Hearing

There is no time limit for calling a hearing under rule 69. In scheduling the hearing, the PC should balance priorities: if it is late in the day, it may well be wise to schedule the hearing for the following morning when tempers have cooled; the party must be given sufficient time to prepare his or her defense; and the hearing must be scheduled so that the *party* can reasonably attend. On the other hand, delaying the hearing more than necessary allows tension to grow and misinformation to spread. The hearing may be conducted via video conference, thereby permitting officials and persons of interest to participate, even if physically distant. If members of the PC are no longer available, after considering the video conference option, the OA may appoint a new PC for the hearing under rule 69.2(k).

Notification

While the report to the PC alleging misconduct need not be in writing, the PC is required under rule 69.2(e) to promptly notify the *party* in writing if it decides to call a hearing. The notification must include a statement of the alleged misconduct, the date, time, and location of the hearing. The TSOASA also requires that the notification state the possible penalties.

The notification must describe the allegations specifically enough that the *party* is able to adequately prepare his or her defense. However, the allegations also should not be too narrow, as the hearing should encompass the scope of allegations.

An allegation such as “regarding your behavior after racing last week” or “that you behaved in a fashion that brings the sport into disrepute” is insufficient. An allegation that “you cursed at an umpire on leg 3” might be too specific if the verbal abuse occurred during and after the race. An

appropriate statement might be “that you directed abusive and foul language at the umpires during and after race 5.” A sample notification letter is shown below.

This letter may be presented during the event or mailed to the *party* after an event has concluded. If the letter is not delivered in person, follow up to ensure that the *party* received the letter. The rules do not address whether email would be valid notification. If you use email to deliver the notice, again, be sure that the *party* receives it and consider sending a printed version of the email via US mail as well.

Sometimes the behavior that leads to a rule 69 hearing is linked to an incident involving a protest or request for redress under other racing rules. The PC should hear the protest or request for redress separately, and before the rule 69 hearing. If the evidence leading to a rule 69 hearing arises during a hearing, you can prepare the written notification as you finish the decision and give it to the *party* after delivering the decision.

Sample Rule 69 Notification Letter:

<Chief Judge Name>

<Address>

<Date of Letter>

<Name/Address of Party>

Dear <Name>:

The protest committee has received a report of an incident alleging <description of the charges>.

These allegations are sufficiently serious to warrant a hearing under rule 69, Misconduct, of *The Racing Rules of Sailing*.

If you are found to have broken rule 69.1(a), the protest committee may, under rule 69.2(h), issue a warning, disqualify you from one or more races of the regatta or take other actions described in rule 69.2(h)(3) and (4). You are strongly advised to review rule 69, with particular attention to rule 69.2(j), which describes the conditions under which your national authority and the World Sailing Federation (World Sailing) will be notified and may suspend your eligibility to compete in sailing under rule 69.3.

You have the right to be assisted in the presentation of your case at the hearing, including the assistance of legal counsel, if desired; you have a right to call witnesses (you must have them present at the hearing or readily available by telephone) and present oral and written evidence and argument; you have the right to confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses; you have the right to have a record made of the hearing. If you wish to exercise any of these rights, it is your responsibility to make necessary provisions.

The protest committee has scheduled a hearing to investigate the above allegations on <date> at <time> hours at <location>.

Sincerely,

<Chief Judge Name,>

Chief Judge, <Event> Protest Committee

cc: <other members of PC and others directly involved>

Setting up the Rule 69 Protest Committee

The requirements and recommendations for a rule 69 protest committee are more stringent than for a regular hearing. Rule 69.2(a) requires that the PC have at least three members. Adding additional members with expertise in rule 69 hearings to the protest committee is acceptable under the rules and may be accomplished by video conference if necessary. The PC may also consider adding a member who is familiar with libel laws.

In addition, because misconduct hearings have specific requirements for due process, and because the stakes are potentially high for the person accused of misconduct, investigations and hearings should be undertaken only by highly experienced, trained judges; prior experience conducting rule 69 hearings is recommended. US Sailing offers Misconduct clinics to help train judges in the misconduct process.

Both the actual and the perceived objectivity of the protest committee are particularly important. Take extra care when setting up the hearing panel that no member of the protest committee has a *conflict of interest*. Avoid including a member of the protest committee who has had significant conflict with the *party*. No one who serves as a witness to the alleged incident should participate in the decision in a rule 69 hearing.

During the Hearing

Party

In a rule 69 hearing, there is usually only one *party* to the hearing: the accused competitor, boat owner or *support person*. If multiple competitors or others are involved in the same incident, the rules allow you to hold a single hearing with all the accused persons as *parties*. Be extremely diligent in honoring the rights of all *parties*. This includes:

- Notifying each *party* in writing of the alleged misconduct.
- Allowing each *party* time to prepare a defense.
- Allowing each *party* to call witnesses to the hearing.
- Ensuring that each *party* is able to question every witness who gives testimony. In addition, the USOPC/TSOASA gives each *party* the right to counsel.

If the Party Fails to Attend

The rules for handling hearings when the party fails to attend are significantly different from those of a protest or redress hearing. The PC must try hard to ensure that the hearing is scheduled so that the *party* can attend. Due to the seriousness of the allegations, the PC should conduct a hearing without the *party* only if they are quite certain that he or she could attend but chose not to do so. Under rule 69.2(f), if the *party* has a good reason for being unable to attend, the PC must reschedule the hearing. Under rule 69.2(f), if the *party* does not attend the hearing and does not provide a good reason for failing to attend, the PC may hold a hearing without the *party*. If the PC decides that it cannot or should not conduct a hearing without the *party* present, it shall investigate, take evidence and, if the allegation seems justified, submit a written report to US Sailing. In conducting the investigation, use the same procedures and guidelines that you would use in a formal rule 69 hearing. The report should be sent to the compliance@ussailing.org.

The Hearing

The PC must maintain an atmosphere of calm formality and carefully comply with the rules and procedures governing rule 69 hearings. A calm, cool demeanor is essential, since the PC may find itself confronted with a case that stirs strong emotions. Significant responsibility for maintaining control of the hearing falls on the hearing chair. He or she must be skilled at keeping the tone business-like and defusing situations in which emotions threaten to flare up and derail the hearing.

The PC must be meticulous about following procedures, including making a complete and accurate written account of the proceeding, erring in favor of the *party* in case of doubt, and ensuring that he or she has ample opportunity to prepare an answer to the allegations.

Before the hearing begins, the entire PC should reread rule 69 and Appendix M. The hearing must be held in accordance with the procedures in rules 63 and 69. The hearing must not be hurried. The PC's careful attention to fairness and procedure is critical.

Due to the serious nature of a rule 69 hearing, the following key points should guide the process.

- A rule 69 hearing should be initiated only when there is evidence that indicates that there is a reasonable prospect that a finding of misconduct will be made.
- The *party* must be given the allegations in writing and a reasonable opportunity to prepare a defense.
- During the hearing, ample opportunity should be given to the *party* to present evidence and call witnesses.
- A record of the evidence presented must be kept. A high-quality audio recording will usually suffice. In addition, make copies of all written evidence and take careful notes.

Checklist: You may want to use the WS Misconduct Hearing Checklists found in the World Sailing Misconduct Guide and available on the Judges Page under Useful Protest Committee Documents.

Making an Audio Recording of a Hearing

Making an audio recording of a hearing can ensure that the proceedings are accurately documented in a simple and cost-effective manner. To make an effective recording:

- Use a digital recorder that allows you to download the recording to a computer and transmit it electronically. Make sure that the recorder has fresh batteries and the capacity to record the entire hearing.
- Assign one member of the PC to monitor the recorder throughout the hearing.
- Before the hearing, test the recorder in the room where the hearing will be held. Make voice samples from everywhere in the room where someone might speak. If the test recording is not clear and easy to understand, adjust as necessary.
- Inform all those present that you will record the hearing. Do not make a clandestine recording.
- At the start of the hearing, all persons should introduce themselves by name and state their role in the hearing. This ensures that each person's voice is recorded and linked to their name at the start of the hearing.

- Make sure each witness is aware that a recording is being made. If a witness objects, consider pausing the recording to understand what his or her concerns are and try to resolve them. Have each witness introduce himself or herself for the sake of the recording.
- Ensure that the recording is kept confidential. Providing copies to the *parties* and the PC members is appropriate. The US Sailing Review Board may ask to review the recording, so ensure that the parties to the hearing know this. Should the Review Board make such a request, the chair of the hearing should review the recording with the Review Board to ensure that the contents are clear and the identities of the speakers are correct.

Decisions

Refer again to the section above Parameters to Consider on page 77. Once the PC has heard all the evidence, it must reach one of three decisions: Dismiss, Warn or Penalize. The appropriate decision is a question of evidence, and the panel must be comfortably satisfied that misconduct has occurred. If they are not, the PC must **Dismiss** the allegation.

Rule 69.2(g) specifies the standard of proof to be used in misconduct hearings: “The standard of proof to be applied is the test of the comfortable satisfaction of the protest committee, bearing in mind the seriousness of the alleged misconduct.”

The *World Sailing Misconduct Guidance* (2021) and World Sailing Case 122 offer the following guidance for applying this test:

“The words ‘comfortable satisfaction’ must be given their ordinary and natural meaning. If a protest committee member is personally uncomfortable with a conclusion that misconduct occurred, then they are not ‘comfortably satisfied.’...

“The test requires the protest committee to consider the seriousness of the alleged misconduct. The more serious the misconduct alleged, the more unlikely it will generally be that a competitor will have committed it and therefore the greater the evidence needed to prove that it was committed. This reflects the starting position that competitors are assumed to comply with the rules and the Basic Principle.”

If the *party* is found innocent of the alleged misconduct, the PC should make this clear. The news of a rule 69 hearing will have spread throughout the regatta, and it is important to clear the person’s name publicly.

If the PC finds that the *party* committed a breach of good manners or sportsmanship, unethical behavior, or conduct that may bring the sport into disrepute, it must then decide whether to Warn or Penalize.

The jury should now contact the Race Administrator Director to see if the *party* has prior rule 69 infractions. If so, they may take them into account when deciding whether to Warn or Penalize. See full process explained in the Misconduct Information Guidance for US Judges on the [Judges’ page](#) found at Judge Guidelines & Documents.

If the *party* has apologized, paid for any damage and seems genuinely contrite, a warning may suffice. A warning is not a penalty. However, A *party* who receives a warning has still committed a breach of good manners or sportsmanship, unethical behavior, or conduct that may bring the sport

into disrepute and US Sailing guidance is to send the Warning information to the Race Administration Director so it is added to the misconduct database.

If the PC decides that the *party* has committed a breach of good manners or sportsmanship, unethical behavior, or conduct that may bring the sport into disrepute and does not give a warning, then it must issue a **Penalty**.

Penalties by the PC are limited to the OA's jurisdiction and usually apply to the race or regatta for which the PC has been appointed. A penalty under rule 69.2(h) may exclude a *party* from the venue, from a race, from the remaining races in a series, from an entire series or for a period of time.

Penalties Imposed on Support Persons

When the PC decides that a *support person* has broken rule 69.1(a), rule 62.3 and 62.4 applies (see rule 69.2(i)). For further information about hearings concerning support persons, see Chapter 8.

Guidance on Penalties

The appropriate penalty will vary for each incident, depending on the severity of the incident, the attitude of the *party*, whether the offense is repeated, and the presence of other aggravating or mitigating circumstances. Consistency in penalties for similar breaches is also important. (See World Sailing Regulation 35).

Disqualifications may or may not be excluded from a boat's series score at the discretion of the PC (see rule 69.2(h)(2)). If the PC assigns a disqualification that is not excludable, it must be noted in the scores with the designation DNE per rule A10.

Consider the table in Chapter 13 – Resources, "Guidelines for Ranges of Penalties for Misconduct," as advisory guidance from the US Sailing Judges' Committee in applying appropriate penalties. The table contains six levels of action:

Level 0 - Interview the *party* but do not hold a hearing.

Level 1 - Hold a hearing and warn the party but do not penalize.

Level 2 – Increase the boat's score.

Level 3 - Disqualify the boat or exclude the *party* from a race or races (and/or remove some privileges or benefits).

Level 4 – Disqualify the boat or exclude the *party* from the event or venue (and/or remove any privileges or benefits).

Level 5 - Disqualify the boat or exclude the *party* from the event or venue (and/or remove any privileges or benefits), and recommend further action by the national authority.

Note: This table is intended for decisions in a rule 69 misconduct hearing and is not to be used for rule 2 hearings. Penalties for rule 2 hearing decisions are DNE.

After the Hearing

Posting

The decision should be posted promptly on the notice board. The decision in the public posting must not go into detail as it could be considered libelous. No other publication of the outcome should be made. Further, the PC should not make any public comments about the hearing other than to state the penalty.

Notes for use of the following sample decision notice:

- Add relevant information in the square brackets.
- Omit wording in italics.
- Do not add details of the nature of the misconduct or include the facts found. Notify competitors only of the result of the hearing.
- If in doubt over the contents of the notice, do not post it. This may be particularly relevant where the competitor is found not guilty. However, posting may be necessary if the original rule 69 hearing was posted on the hearing schedule.
- Keep a copy of the notice.

Sample Rule 69 Decision Notice:

<Name of Event>

<date>

PROTEST COMMITTEE NOTICE [#] – RESULT OF RULE 69 HEARING

On [date], the Protest Committee conducted a rule 69 hearing against [name].

If the allegations were not proven:

[As a result of this hearing, the Committee has determined that [name] has not committed misconduct under rule 69.1(a).]

If the allegations were proven:

[As a result of this hearing, the Committee has determined that [name] has committed misconduct under rule 69.1(a).]

If only a warning was issued:

[The Committee has issued [name] with a warning for [insert details of warning]

[The penalty may be sent as Misconduct Information to [the national authority].

If a penalty was imposed:

[The Committee has penalized [name] by [insert details of penalty].

[The penalty will be reported to [the national authority].]

For the Protest Committee

<signed>

Chair

Threats of Litigation

In the past, competitors have threatened to sue PCs for libel, which is defined as “bringing someone into ridicule, hatred or contempt.” PCs should not let such threats deter them from making the appropriate decisions but should be meticulous in using correct procedures and following the rules.

US Sailing provides liability insurance to its certified officials only in specific situations at US Sailing Championships and US Sailing Event/Courses. This may change, so for current information, consult the insurance information on the US Sailing [Rules/Officiating Resources page](#). Also check with the OA to determine what insurance coverage it provides to the members of the protest committee. On the webpage is **an infographic on insurance** and a link to a template Race Officials may send to an OA asking about insurance coverage for the event.

Reporting to National Authorities

The full written report should be considered confidential and distributed only to the PC, the *parties* to the hearing and the relevant national authorities, if appropriate.

New in 2022 is US Sailing guidance that warnings and above penalties are all now sent to the Race Administration Director. This is explained in the Misconduct Information Guidance for US Judges on the [Judges’ page](#) under the section of Judge Guidelines & Documents.

1. *To submit to US Sailing a Misconduct Information or Report, the chief judge should complete the brief Misconduct Information or Report form, attach the PC’s Hearing Decision Form, and submit it to US Sailing.*
 - *If the protest committee issues a warning or imposes a penalty of one DNE or less, the information will be reviewed and stored in a confidential data base, where it will be available for review as needed in the future.*
 - *If the protest committee imposes a penalty greater than one DNE, the report will be forwarded to the Review Board for further consideration.*

2. World Sailing – for specific international events listed in the World Sailing Regulations

In the report, the PC should provide a detailed description of the incident, its findings and a copy of the written hearing record. This should include the facts found by the PC and any other information such as descriptions of provocation, behavior in the hearing, specific language used, restitution and the PC’s recommendation regarding any further penalty. A copy of any recorded evidence should also be included.

Action by a National Authority

For Warnings, the Race Administration Director adds basic information about the warning into the database and keeps the information in a folder.

For penalties greater than a Warning, (more than a single DNE Penalty), the US Sailing Review Board will proceed under rule 69.3 and may decide that no further action is necessary. It may also take additional action including conducting further investigation, holding hearings and, possibly, suspending a competitor’s eligibility to compete in its area of jurisdiction for a period of time per WS Regulation 19.

If US Sailing suspends a sailor’s eligibility to compete, it must forward a copy of its report to World Sailing and to the national authorities of a foreign competitor and/or boat owner.

Appealing the Decision

Appeals of rule 69 decisions should, like all appeals, be filed via the Appeals webpage at US Sailing. Appeals of rule 69 decisions are handled directly by the US Sailing Appeals Committee, not by Association Appeals Committees.

The US Sailing Review Board will not conduct a follow-up investigation until any action by the US Sailing Appeals Committee is completed. The Review Board's procedures are described in US Sailing Regulation 15.

As the governing body in the United States for an Olympic sport, US Sailing is legally bound by the TSOASA. This means that athletes may request binding arbitration before a USOPC arbitration panel. While such requests are extremely rare, they can occur and may do so on very short notice (if, for example, a rule 69 penalty eliminates a competitor from qualifying for a subsequent event that may only be a short time after the qualifying event).

The process to request such a hearing is documented on <https://www.usopc.org/athlete-ombuds> Search for Athlete Ombuds.

Action by World Sailing

World Sailing may also investigate and take further action under Regulation 35 when it receives a report from a national authority that has suspended a sailor's eligibility, or from an international jury acting under rules 69.2(j) or (k).

Chapter 13 – Resources includes a Due Process Checklist designed to ensure that PCs respect a party's rights during a hearing.

11 – Appeals

Protest committees are not perfect. The rules provide for appeals as a means to correct possible PC errors in procedure or interpretation of the rules. The RRS provide for a single level of appeals to the national authority.

US Sailing is the national authority in the U.S. and maintains a two-tiered system for most appeals, consisting of an Association Appeals Committee (AAC) and the US Sailing Appeals Committee (AC). There are over 31 lower-tiered AACs, each covering a specific geographic area of the country.

There are no appeals to World Sailing. World Sailing publishes and maintains *The Case Book* that is a collection of appeals decided by various national appeals committees. These cases are “authoritative interpretations of the *rules*.” World Sailing selects appeals for inclusion in *The Case Book* from appeals submitted by national authorities that “clarify an important meaning of a *rule* or increase the understanding of a complex rule” (World Sailing Regulation 28.3.3(a)). *The Case Book* and its annual supplements can be found at www.sailing.org/inside-world-sailing/rules-regulations/racingrules/. The Case Book is a valuable tool and reference for judges at all levels.

US Sailing publishes and maintains *The Appeals Book*. This is available at appeals.ussailing.org.

US Sailing receives approximately 25 appeals each year, with approximately 5 reaching the level of the AC. Of those, there may be 1-2 requests for confirmation or corrections and interpretation of the rules. After receipt by the Race Administrative Director at submitappeal@ussailing.org, appeals are forwarded to the AAC corresponding to the place the event was held. However, a different AAC may be substituted if there is good reason to do so. For an event conducted under the procedural rules of the Intercollegiate Sailing Association (ICSA) or the Interscholastic Sailing Association (ISSA) the appeal is forwarded to the appropriate appeals committee under the appropriate association.

A PC whose decision is being appealed should carefully review the pertinent *rules* in Part 5, Section D (Appeals) and the US Sailing prescription to Appendix R (Procedures for Appeals and Requests), when providing documents, comments or additional information to an appeals committee.

A useful FAQ on the appeals process can be found on the Appeals page of the US Sailing website (appeals.ussailing.org).

Right of Appeal

Under rule 70 (Appeals and Requests to a National Authority), only the PC’s decision or its procedures may be appealed, but not the facts found. A *party* may also appeal when a PC has failed to hold a hearing, make a decision or respond to a request for redress (rule 70.1)

It is common for competitors who are unhappy with the decision of a PC to appeal based on an improper determination of the facts. In such cases, rule 70.1 directs the appeals committee to deny the appeal.

Who may appeal? Rule 70.1 allows a *party* to the hearing to appeal. The definition *party* includes the protestor, protestee and a boat requesting redress, but also a technical *committee*, acting under rule 61.1(b), a *support person* subject to a hearing under rule 62.1, and persons alleging and being accused of having broken rule 69.

A PC may request confirmation or correction of its own decision under rule 70.2 and an AAC may request confirmation or correction under rule R7.1(b). This does not happen often, but it can be very useful when the case is complex or the decision is controversial.

Requests for confirmation or correction of a decision by the PC or AAC must be sent no later than 15 days after making its decision. This is to keep the process moving toward closure as quickly as possible. *Parties* to the hearing may also appeal the decision of the PC or AAC, and they also must send their appeal no later than 15 days after receiving the written decision. If an appeals committee receives an appeal and a request for confirmation or correction from the same decision, it will simply consider them together.

A club or other organization affiliated with US Sailing, but not an individual, may request an interpretation of the *rules* under rule 72, provided that no protest or appeal is involved. This is another way for a PC or OA to deal with a difficult situation. The primary difference between a referral in rule 70.2 and a question in rule 72 is that the AC can correct the PC's or the AAC's decision in a referral under rule 70.2. The answer to a question submitted under rule 72 has no effect on a protest decision.

When applicable under J2.2(24), the sailing instructions for an event should specify the national authority to which appeals should be sent as required by rule 70.4.

Denial of the Right of Appeal

The *rules* provide for the denial of the right of appeal when one of four conditions are met. They are detailed in rule 70.3.

- If the protest committee is a properly constituted international jury under Appendix N (International Juries). The three other conditions under which the right to appeal may be denied If the NoR or SIs so state, are:
 - The event qualifies competitors for a subsequent event, under rule 70.3(b) (US Sailing prescribes that its approval is required for such events desiring this procedure);
 - US Sailing approves the denial of appeal and the event is not open to competitors from other national authorities, under rule 70.3(c), and;
 - US Sailing and World Sailing agree, provided the PC includes at least two International Judges, under rule 70.3(d).

The right of appeal may be denied when it is essential that the results of a race, series of races be final to qualify a boat in a later stage of the event. Such events could include qualifying events of a US Sailing Championship, where the winner of a regional event advances to the finals. However, US Sailing has prescribed that it must approve the denial of appeal for any of these events. Details on obtaining such approval can be found on the Rules page of the US Sailing website (rules.ussailing.org).

Rule 70.5(b) allows an OA and RC (being responsible for the NoR and SIs) to petition US Sailing to deny the right of appeal for an event open only to entrants under their jurisdiction. It would be exceptional for US Sailing to approve such a request.

Except in the case of an international jury, whenever the right of appeal is to be denied it must be so stated in the NoR or SIs.

Unless at least one of the conditions in rule 70.3 is precisely met, the right of appeal cannot be denied. Anything in the NoR or SIs that suggests that appeals will not change the race results or affect the awarding of prizes is invalid unless one of the conditions in rule 70.3 applies (see Appeal 22).

Appeal Procedures

Rule 70.5 directs a *party* to Appendix R for the requirements of appeals and requests. Appendix R (Procedures for Appeals and Requests) is a US Sailing prescription that replaces World Sailing Appendix R. This US Sailing *rule* establishes a two-tiered appeals system.

US Sailing Appendix R cannot be changed by the NoR or SIs (rule 86.1(b))

The *rules* do not provide for the conduct of a “hearing” when processing an appeal. Only the interpretation of the *rules* by the PC or Association AC or its procedures can be appealed. Under rule 70.1, an appeals committee deliberates based on the facts found by the PC and cannot take additional testimony. If additional facts are required, the appeals committee, under rule R5.4 (Facts and Other Information) must get them from the PC.

The US Sailing Appendix R (Procedures for Appeals and Requests) states:

- Appeals and requests for confirmation or correction together with the Appeals & Requests Information Form are sent to the Race Administrative Director at US Sailing at submitappeal@ussailing.org. Go to ussailing.org/appeals to find the form and information on filing it. R1.2 covers what is required.
- Appeals of PC and AAC decisions, and PC and AAC requests for confirmation or correction of their decisions, are covered in R1.1).
- The US Sailing AC acts as the national authority (preamble to Appendix R).
- Appeals of PC decisions or procedures or those of an ACC are to be submitted no later than 15 days after receiving the written decision (R1.1(a))
- When a hearing required by rule 63.2(a) has not been held within 30 days after the hearing request, the appellant has 15 days to appeal.
- Appeals of AAC decisions are forward by US Sailing to the AC (rule R1.3).
- Requests by PCs for confirmation or correction of their decisions are forwarded to the AAC (rule R1.3).
- Requests by AACs for confirmation or correction of their decisions are forwarded to the AC (rule R1.3).
- Requests for interpretations of the rules (rule 70.4) are forwarded to the AC (rule R1.3).
- Appeals from a decision of a protest committee acting under rule 69.1, or the finals of US Sailing championships and requests for confirmation or corrections of PC decisions at such events are forwarded to the AC (rule R1.4).

- The appellant's responsibilities (R2).
- The 15-day (non-extendable) time limit from the appellant's receipt of the written decision for appealing (rule R2.1).
- The requirement for appellants to complete the Appeals and Requests Information Form (rule R2.2).
- The requirement that PCs and AACs, when requesting confirmation or correction of their decisions, must complete the Appeals and Requests Information Form (rule R2.3).
- The 15-day (non-extendable) time limit from the day its decision was made for requesting confirmation or correction of its decision (rule R2.3).
- The fees for appeals, referrals and questions to US Sailing (rule R3.3).
- The requirement that appeals committees must notify the committee whose decision is being appealed and ask for missing documents (rule R4).
- The requirement that PCs must provide missing documents, facts or other information requested by the AC (rule R5.1).
- The requirement that a PC must conduct a hearing or re-hearing as directed by the AC (rule R5.1).
- The requirement that an AAC must provide missing documents (rule R5.2 (a)).
- The requirement that an AAC must send its decision in writing to all parties to the hearing and the protest committee (rule R5.2(b)).
- The requirement that an AAC must consider an appeal if so directed by the AC (rule R5.2 (c)).
- The requirement that the AC must send copies of the relevant documents to all concerned who do not already have them (rule R5.3).
- The requirement that the appeals committee must accept the facts found by the protest committee (R5.4).
- The requirement that the PC must provide requested facts in writing or reopen the hearing (rule R5.4).
- The fifteen-day time period for parties, the PC, and the AAC to make comments on an appeal to the appropriate committee (rule R6).
- That additional actions are allowed under the provisions of rule 71 (rule R7).
- An expedited appeals system for NGB (National Governing Body) Qualifying Competitions or US Sailing Selection Competitions (see US Sailing Regulation 12.02 and 12.03) (rule R8).

Appeal Decisions

A person who has a *conflict of interest* or was a member of the protest committee shall not take part in the discussion or decision on an appeal or a request for confirmation or correction (rule 71.1). The involvement of any such person could be the basis for another appeal.

The AC may return the protest for a new hearing by the same PC, or for a new hearing by a different PC (rule 71.3(c)). If the AC orders a reopened hearing, it may limit the scope of the reopened hearing to such issues as it considers appropriate (rule 71.4). As is true for PCs (rule 60.5(c)), the AC may penalize any *party* to the hearing, based on any *rule* that it finds to be

applicable (rule 71.5). Decisions of the AC are final, and all concerned (competitors, PC, RC and OA) are bound by those decisions (rule 71.6).

Comments on an Appeal

The *parties* and committees involved in an appeal are permitted, but not required, to comment on appeals. It is their responsibility to initiate comments. There is a 15-day time limit from the *parties'* or committee's receipt of the appeal. Comments sent later than the time limit, or comments on comments, may be ignored (R6). Comments are not facts and therefore do not have the same significance as facts to an appeals committee. If the PC reviews its decision and decides that more facts are needed, the committee should reconvene and add the necessary facts to its decision. If more testimony is required, then all the *parties* must be notified of the time and place of the reopened hearing and be given the opportunity to attend (rule 63.1(a)(1) and 63.1(a)(4)).

Expedited Appeals

An expedited appeals process has been established for NGB (National Governing Body) Qualifying Competitions or US Sailing Selection Competitions. These competitions are defined in US Sailing Regulation 12.02 and 12.03 (accessible from the About tab, Bylaws & Regulations on the US Sailing website) and apply to very specific cases of high-level competition. For the expedited appeals process to be available, the NoR must include the following language:

The right of appeal will not be denied under rule 70.3 (a), (b), or (c), but an expedited appeal process may be used that balances the needs of the competitor for certainty with respect to berths in future competitions and sufficient time to prepare the arguments and evidence for the appeal.

More information about the expedited appeals process can be found on the US Sailing website on the Appeals page in the ON THIS PAGE section.

12 – Judge Certification

When the US Sailing judges program began in 1977, application for certification was by resume and supported by personal references. RAJs handled applications for judges in their geographic area.

In 1995, the US Sailing Board of Directors asked the JC to improve the quality of the judges program by reviewing the procedures for appointing judges and by instituting a training and testing program. In 1998 a new training and testing process was initiated.

The standards for judges require racing and race management experience, protest committee experience, a high degree of personal integrity, attendance at educational programs and a written test. A seminar or equivalent continuing education offerings and test must be taken every four years, and each judge must pass the online judge certification test.

Judges are expected to uphold the highest standards of personal conduct and integrity, and to be excellent role models and representatives of US Sailing. Those seeking certification as a US Sailing judge must meet the standards found in this manual and in the Judges Program section of the US Sailing website (judges.ussailing.org).

When a protest committee is on duty afloat or ashore and the Chief Judge is a US Sailing Judge, members may display the US Sailing Judges flag.

These standards also recognize that individuals may follow different judging paths based on their experience and abilities. The Judges' Committee has established qualifications and certification standards for Club Judges, Regional Judges and National Judges, as well as a nomination procedure for World Sailing International Judges.

Judges' Committee

Purpose and Functions

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

- Develops, supports, and certifies judges in the US and oversees judge training, testing and certification.
- Assists sailing organizations in obtaining qualified judges for events.
- Provides support and advice on the roles and conduct of judges at US Sailing events.
- Submits well-qualified US judges for endorsement by the Board of Directors as candidates to be World Sailing International Judges.
- Honors retired judges who have provided long and extraordinarily distinguished service to the Judges Program with the designation of Judge Emeritus.
- Handles complaints about a Judge per the Race official Reports and Complaints policy. The [Give Feedback on a Race Official page on website](#) has a Commend a Race Official form. It also has the Report or Complaint About a Race Official form. The Race official Reports and Complaints policy link is on the webpage, and it explains how complaints are handled involving the conduct of Race Officials, including judges.

- Usually, meets in person annually and by online meetings throughout the year; maintains meeting minutes on the JC webpage.
- Publishes the Judges' Committee newsletter RRS 68 to help communicate with Judges.

Composition

The JC is composed of a JC Chair, a Regional Administrative Judge (RAJ) from each US Sailing Area, the Chair of the Umpires Committee (ex-officio), the Chair of the Judges Education Training and Testing Subcommittee (JETTS), and optionally a Vice Chair, and optionally a Secretary. Other members may be added to the committee at the discretion of the Chair as needed. Appointment of the JC Chair is made by the President of US Sailing. Other members of the JC are appointed by the Chair and confirmed by the Board of Directors. The JC Chair serves on the Race Administration Committee and as an ex-officio member of the Umpires Committee.

Regional Administrative Judges (RAJ)

Each US Sailing Area is represented by a Regional Administrative Judge. RAJs should be highly experienced judges with strong management skills and familiarity with the judges in his or her area. RAJs are appointed by the JC Chair for one or two three-year terms. A RAJ's intended successor should serve as an apprentice, if possible, for at least one year.

The JC administers the Judges certification program. The RAJ reviews and makes recommendations to the JC regarding applicants, annually reviews judges' SOARS logs and recommends certification level upgrades. For the Club Judge program, the RAJ is authorized to grant certifications. The RAJ may also respond to informal rules questions, assist Organizing Authorities (OAs) in obtaining qualified judges for an event and investigate reported misconduct of judges.

An important duty of the RAJ is encouraging capable sailors in the Area to become certified judges. This is done primarily in two ways:

- Identifying, encouraging and mentoring potential applicants.
- Encouraging clubs to host judge seminars throughout an Area, assisting with scheduling, and identifying qualified instructors.

The RAJ Guide is a helpful reference for RAJs. It is on the US Sailing website [Judges page](#) in the Judge Guidelines & Documents section.

Judge Certification Qualifications

The following section summarizes the qualifications and procedures for US Sailing judge certification. Specific information about Judge qualifications is posted on the US Sailing Judge web pages).

Certification Levels

Club Judge - for those who seek to judge primarily at their own club and would like to have a solid understanding of how to officiate a consistently fair and efficient protest hearing as well as stronger rules knowledge

Regional Judge - for those who seek to judge anywhere in a region of the country in addition to serving their club

National Judge - for those already certified at the Regional Judge level who seek to officiate at any event in the country, including as Chief Judge of a national championship regatta.

Additionally, US Sailing nominates highly qualified candidates to World Sailing for certification as an **International Judge (IJ)**. Candidates for international certification must be approved by the Judges' Committee and endorsed by the US Sailing Board of Directors. For information on becoming an international judge, visit the World Sailing website ([sailing.org](https://www.sailing.org)).

Rule 42 Endorsement

This is designed to designate who is qualified for Rule 42/Appendix P as an on-the-water judge. The requirements are:

1. Be certified as a race official at any level.
2. Attended an Advanced Rule 42 Seminar with positive references from the instructors.
3. Pass the Rule 42 examination.
4. Have served as an on-the-water judge for Rule 42 / Appendix P for at least four events of which two shall be regional or national events during the past four years.
5. Receive two references from a Rule 42 event Chief Judge or their designated representative.

Renewal is not required.

All are required to meet the above requirements with the exceptions of International Judges and International Umpires.

The initial Advanced Rule 42 Seminar was on May 20, 2025 and following good suggestions, version 10 of the material is now incorporated. The first Advanced Rule 42 seminars are expected in late fall 2025.

General Qualifications

- Be a member in good standing of US Sailing.
- Be willing to serve actively for a four-year term.
- Maintain an up-to-date Sailing Officials Automated Reporting System (SOARS) log.
- Submit an application to US Sailing for initial and renewal certification.
- Abide by US Sailing's Personal Attribute Standards, SafeSport Code, Bylaws, Regulations and Conflict of Interest policies.

Personal Attributes, Sound Judgment and Maturity

Because race officials play an important role in ensuring the fairness and quality of competition, racing sailors and US Sailing expect a high level of personal integrity and judicial temperament of certified race officials. The ability to treat each situation and competitor with fairness and impartiality should be second nature.

In addition to the required knowledge and skills related to sailboat racing and SafeSport competency, all people certified as Race Officials shall have the highest personal and professional attributes as evidenced by the following:

- i. Have one or more references addressing any knowledge of items iii-vi, as well as technical skills references as required for the particular certification. US Sailing may request additional references.
- ii. Have a favorable review according to US Sailing Policy on Background Checks for Race Officials.
- iii. Have no record indicating lack of *honesty, integrity, and fairness*.
- iv. Have no record indicating an inability to maintain confidentiality.
- v. Have no record of *misconduct*.
- vi. Have demonstrated *judicial temperament*.
- vii. Attestation that I have not been denied participation in, or resigned from, any organization or professional association because of unprofessional, improper, or unlawful conduct.

Judges abide by the **US Sailing's Personal Attributes Standards for Race Officials**, located on the [Judges page](#). Please refer to them for a detailed discussion of these requirements and the definitions of the italicized terms above.

Judges must keep in mind that the sailors are our customers, and that we are there to serve them and our sport. All judges, certified or not, should strive to meet the highest standards in both personal and professional life.

Sound Judgement and Maturity

A US Sailing judge must strive at all times to conduct themselves with Sound judgment and maturity:

- Treat others with respect and courtesy.
- Maintain a calm, professional demeanor even in the midst of vigorous disagreement.
- Acknowledge and correct mistakes graciously and in a timely manner.
- Understand the roles and respect the authority of others, such as the race committee and organizing authority, and work collaboratively with them.
- Do not expect special treatment or privileges.
- Refrain from the use of medications which might impair judgment or alertness, and abstain from the use of alcohol or other substances that may alter judgment until protest committee duties are complete.
- Care for the property of others, including boats, equipment and housing.
- Honor commitments, accept the assignment of tasks willingly and cheerfully, follow through on them conscientiously, and understand that PC work comes before social obligations.
- Obtain permission from the chief judge and the organizing authority prior to communicating, via social media or in any other form, about an incident, decision or any other action taken by those acting in an official capacity; be discreet and considerate in discussing the actions of others.
- Take care to represent the judge corps, US Sailing and the sport of sailing in a manner that is worthy of respect.

Technical Skills and Physical Attributes

A judge must have thorough knowledge and understanding of the RRS, US Sailing Appeals and World Sailing Cases and the ability to use them appropriately. Judges are expected to:

- Apply the RRS and other rules as they are written and authoritatively interpreted.
- Review the notice of race and sailing instructions and make constructive suggestions about them to the RC and OA.
- Observe racing on the water and record critical events accurately.
- Conduct hearings according to the Racing Rules of Sailing; see Appendix M (Recommendations for Protest Committees).
- Desirable Skills: Apply Appendix P (Special Procedures for Rule 42) as needed.

Physical Attributes

Judges must be able to (as applicable):

- Perform the essential functions of a judge, using natural or assisted physical abilities.
- Go 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.
- Operate small motorboats safely in close proximity to racing sailboats.

SafeSport Training and Background Screening

Under federal law (Public Law 115-126), the US Center for SafeSport (the “Center”) has authority over all national governing bodies (NGBs) of Olympic and Paralympic sports in the United States to investigate and resolve claims of sexual misconduct or abuse. As the NGB for the sport of sailing, US Sailing is responsible for administering the SafeSport program and implementing disciplinary decisions issued by the Center.

The Center’s SafeSport training curriculum (“SafeSport Training”) is mandated by US Sailing for all certified race officials, coaches, instructors, instructor trainers and Safety at Sea moderators, as well as Directors, staff and members of the Olympic Sailing Committee. SafeSport Training is an online training curriculum that consists of the core “SafeSport Trained” course and three “Refresher” courses. Certified race officials must complete one course each year, starting with “SafeSport Trained.” In each of the three years following completion of “SafeSport Trained,” certified race officials must complete one “Refresher” course. At the conclusion of a four-year SafeSport Training curriculum, the cycle starts over.

All US Sailing officials have a **mandatory reporting duty** – that is, officials must report any suspicion or allegation of violations of the US Sailing SafeSport policy. An allegation or suspicion of sexual misconduct or abuse of an athlete, official, coach, volunteer, or organizer must be reported to the Center. Additionally, officials must report suspicions or allegations of sexual or physical abuse of a minor to local law enforcement authorities.

Suspensions or allegations of non-sexual misconduct (including bullying, hazing or harassment) must be reported to US Sailing. However, please note that this does not include conduct between opponents or officials that occurs during or connected with a practice or race that is covered by *The Racing Rules of Sailing*. Such conduct should be addressed under *The Racing Rules of Sailing*.

To make a report of abuse or misconduct to the Center or to US Sailing, or for more information about the SafeSport program, visit the SafeSport pages on the [US Sailing website](#).

You can also find reporting information in the “Mandatory Reporting: SafeSport and Allegations of Physical, Emotional or Sexual Abuse or Misconduct” section of Chapter 10.

Background checks are now required for periodic criminal background screening for covered individuals. More information on this requirement can be found on the website page [SafeSport & Race Officials - US Sailing](#).

Certification Requirements

The following is a general description of the requirements for judge certification. Specific requirements vary by certification level – see the Judges section of the website for specific information and the current **Judges Certification Requirements** document on the website.

A. For all certifications (initial and renewal):

- Participate in an appropriate number of protest committee hearings, in which facts were found and a decision rendered, for the certification level desired.
- Maintain required periodic SafeSport training and background screening.
- Maintain an up-to-date SOARS log (soars.ussailing.org).
- US Sailing membership is current.
- Submit an online application for the certification desired ([Certification Programs - US Sailing](#)).
- Possess the current editions (electronic or print) of: *The Racing Rules of Sailing*, US Sailing *Judges' Manual*, and US Sailing Appeals Book and World Sailing Case Book.
- Pass the US Sailing Judges exam applicable to the certification level desired. Exception: After serving as a National Judge for three full four-year terms, the requirement to take a test is waived.

B. For initial certification:

(In addition to the requirements of section 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 Judge Seminar within the past four years applicable to the certification level desired.
- Obtain references: For Club Judge, two references from Regional or National certified judges. One may be from Protest Day training. For Regional Judge, you need three references as above. For National Judge, three from National Judges, of which one may be from Protest Day training.

C. For renewal of certification:

(In addition to requirements of section A)

- Accumulate sufficient Continuing Education Units (CEUs) from US Sailing’s race official continuing education program over the four-year period of certification. CEUs may be used in place of a seminar, but applicants always have the option to attend a seminar.

Protest Committee Classification

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

- a protest committee appointed by the race committee.
- a protest committee that is separate from and independent of the race committee.
- an international jury meeting the requirements of RRS Appendix N.

Procedures for Certification

Candidates for initial certification or upgrade should discuss their qualifications and experience with their RAJ before submitting an application. The RAJ may also suggest additional training and help applicants gain more experience should it be needed.

The steps for certification are:

1. The applicant shall complete an online application for the certification level desired under [Online Certification Forms](#). The application normally is automatically forwarded to the RAJ, but it never hurts to send them a copy of the email you get saying your application was received.
2. If references are required, see the References section in the Judges Certification Requirements document (<https://www.ussailing.org/news/document/us-sailing-judge-certification-requirements/>) on the website. Note requirements on who, how and when the reference should be submitted. It is encouraged that any reference is turned in within 30 days of the event. It is the applicant’s responsibility to make sure that the people recommending him or her submit their references. The RAJ will confirm that the references have been submitted.
3. Once all requirements have been met, the RAJ will move the application forward for review. Club Judge applications are reviewed and approved by the RAJ.
4. The JC periodically reviews applications for all other levels of certification. The RAJ will communicate the final status of the application.

Renewal certification:

1. The certification term length for all judges is four years. A judge’s initial term ends on December 31 of the fourth full year. For example, a judge who was initially certified in August of 2020 would be due for recertification on December 31, 2024. Renewal terms begin on January 1 and end on December 31.
2. The applicant shall complete an online application for the certification level desired at [Online Certification Forms](#). The application will be automatically forwarded to the RAJ.
3. During the last year of a judge’s term, the RAJ will verify that he or she has satisfied the CEU requirement and passed the exam within the last 18 months and under the current quad version of RRS (e.g. 2025-2028). The RAJ will review the judge’s SOARS record and other pertinent information, such as comments or evaluations from competitors or others regarding his or her skills and judicial temperament. When the judge has met all the

requirements for recertification, the RAJ will forward the recommendation to re-certify to the Judges' Committee.

4. If a judge has not met some of the recertification requirements, the RAJ will work with him or her during the last year of the term to complete the missing requirements.
5. A judge who does not complete the recertification process by the end of his or her term will have a six-month period to meet the requirements. However, when the term expires on December 31 of the fourth year, the judge is not certified until he or she is recertified by the JC. If a judge fails to complete recertification during the six-month period following expiration, he or she may be required by the JC to start again with an initial application.

Procedures for Unsuccessful Applications

If an applicant's application or background check returns documentation of conduct that may adversely affect an application, US Sailing's Compliance Manager may send the matter to the US Sailing Ethics Committee for an assessment. If the Ethics Committee determines that the application should be denied, then the US Sailing Race Administration Office will issue a written decision notifying the applicant of the Ethics Committee's decision, of the reasons for the decision, and of any recourse available to the applicant pursuant to US Sailing Regulation. See the [US Sailing's Personal Attributes Standards for Race Officials](#).

If the JC becomes aware of any issues with the applicant's personal attributes that calls the application into question, the JC will send the matter to the US Sailing Ethics Committee for review and assessment. If the Ethics Committee determines that the application should be denied, then the US Sailing Administration Office will issue a written decision notifying the applicant of the Ethics Committee's decision, of the reasons for the decision, and of any recourse available to the applicant pursuant to US Sailing Regulation. See the same link as above [US Sailing's Personal Attributes Standards for Race Officials](#)

If an applicant's application is denied by the JC based upon a failure to meet the technical requirements for certification, the JC will issue a written decision notifying the applicant of its decision, of the reasons for the decision, of an opportunity to be heard by the JC regarding the denial, and of any recourse available to the applicant pursuant to US Sailing Regulation and US Sailing's Personal Attribute Standards for Race Officials.

A candidate whose application is denied may appeal to the [US Sailing Review Board](#).

A candidate who fails the certification test may re-take the test after a waiting period of seven days and after completing a debrief of the failed test with the course instructor or the RAJ.

A candidate who fails the certification test three times must obtain the approval of the JC before taking any further tests. The JC may condition its approval upon completion of a plan of improvement.

SOARS Reports

Certified judges are required to log their judging activities throughout the year on the SOARS system on the US Sailing Website.

SOARS reports are an important component of the certification process. The RAJ will examine a judge's or candidate's log to evaluate his or her events and may use it to identify other officials

who worked events with the candidate. RAJs may use this information to seek other judges' feedback on the candidate's performance. An applicant whose SOARS log is incomplete will not be considered for certification until he or she meets this requirement.

Judges who serve on Association Appeals Committees or the US Sailing Appeals Committee can receive Continuing Education credit (20 units per appeal) for appeals they participate in deciding. Please read about recording [SOARS credit for AAC or AC service](#).

Confidentiality

RAJs and other members of the JC will treat applications, references and any discussions concerning these topics with the candidate or any other person providing information about the candidate as confidential. This information will be shared only with other members of the committee, except that information will be shared with the Review Board if the applicant appeals a decision to decline certification.

Only the RAJ responsible for reviewing an application or the appropriate Committee Chair shall discuss the application with the candidate.

When issues concerning a candidate's performance or character are raised in references, the identity of the person providing this information will be kept confidential if he or she so requests. The substance of the issue will be shared with the candidate if it is found to be credible. Individuals providing references are encouraged, but not required, to share their comments with the candidate directly.

Judge-in-Training Program

US Sailing offers a Judge-in-Training (JIT) [designation](#) to candidates who have attended a seminar and completed the coursework therein, created a SOARS account, and have SafeSport certification. Passing the test is not required and a background check is not required. The candidate requests JIT designation from their RAJ. Candidates may be identified as a JIT and are listed in the Find a Race Official list on the website (findofficial.ussailing.org). JITs may be recruited by organizing authorities looking for judges to sit on their protest committees. Candidates interested in this learning path should contact their RAJ for more information.

Judge Emeritus

US Sailing has established a Judge Emeritus program to recognize judges who have given many years of distinguished service to the sport and have demonstrated significant leadership in the judging community.

A RAJ may nominate a retired National Judge or International Judge whom he or she feels is deserving of the distinction. A description of the judge's activities and proposed presentation language for the award are required and a form for supplying these are located in the Trophies and Recognitions section of the website. The JC will review the nomination and, if approved, grant the designation and arrange for a certificate to be presented to the honoree at a suitable occasion.

Chapter 12 – Judge Certification

Judge Emeritus is a lifetime designation and awarded at the discretion of the Judges' Committee. Names of judges honored with Emeritus status are published on the US Sailing Website and forwarded to the US Sailing Board of Directors for recognition.

13 – Resources

[2025 Changes-to-the-RRS-that-Affect-Judging-effective-January-1-2025-1.pdf](#). This is a Dave Perry guide to 2025 -2028 rule changes that affect judges.

The following resources are available on the Judges page of the US Sailing website [Judges page of the US Sailing](#) unless another location is given:

Checklists and Forms

- Useful Event Checklists
- Useful Protest Committee documents
- Suite of PC Forms
- Due Process Checklist (below)

[Various Race Officers Forms Webpage](#), Diagrams, Equipment and Other Items Useful in Race Management

[Notice of Race Template and Sailing Instructions Template in Word](#)

Other Guidance Documents

Note: We update documents from time to time, so use the [Judges Page](#) link to be sure you are getting the latest version. See website for all the Guidelines and Documents available.

Judges' Manual. To find updated versions of this manual, look [on Judges Page in the Judge Guidelines & Documents Section](#)

[Regional Administrative Judge – Guide \(RAJ Guide or RAJ-GU\)](#)

[US-Sailing-Judge-Certification-Requirements](#)

[Judges Continuing Education Events and CEUs Table](#)

[US Sailing's Personal Attributes Standards for Race Officials](#)

[Misconduct Information Guidance for US Judges](#)

For WS Misconduct Hearing checklists Find under [Useful Protest Committee Documents](#)

[Guidelines for Difficult Conversations and Using RO Reports and Complaint Policy](#)

[US Sailing Regulation 15 is found on the Resource Library page](#)

[US Sailing Review Board page](#)

[Insurance Information page](#) NOTE: Below the graphic is the [Insurance Option for Certified Race Officials from NASO](#) [US Sailing Race Officials – NASO Insurance portal](#)

[Recording SOARS Activity for Area Appeals or US Sailing Appeals Committee Work](#)

[Hearing Request Form \(Fillable\)](#) Hearing Decision Forms See [USEFUL PROTEST COMMITTEE DOCUMENTS](#) Section of the Judges Webpage. We have multiple ways to fill out the form

[Scribing Guide during Hearings \(under Guidelines and Documents\)](#)

[Guidelines for Online Hearings \(Zoom or video hearings\)](#)

[Guidance for On the Field of Play Decisions \(Proposed Appendix\)](#)

[US Sailing Appeals Book and Appeals webpage](#)

[2025-2028 US Sailing Prescriptions](#)

[Addendum of Minimum US Prescriptions for International Events](#)

[Notice of Race and Sailing Instructions Guides and Templates](#)

[SafeSport on US Sailing Website](#)

[Athlete Safety Policy Handbook](#)

[Gender Identification Interim Policy](#)

To report sexual misconduct or abuse of a minor athlete (under age 18):

If you suspect or know of sexual misconduct or abuse of a minor athlete, contact the US Center for SafeSport immediately. US Center for SafeSport Response and Resolution Office

[US Center for Safeport.org Report-a-concern](#)

Royal Yachting Association

[RYA 2025-2028 Casebook](#)

World Sailing Documents

The following resources (and many others) are available on the [World Sailing RRS page](#) and the [International Judges Resource Centre](#) on the World Sailing website

The World Sailing Casebook is found under the header [Case Book 2025-2028](#)

[Team Racing and Match Racing call books, Rapid Response Calls, Radio Sailing](#)

World Sailing Call Books for Team Racing

WS Rapid Response Calls – Match Racing and Team Racing

World Sailing Call Books for Match Racing

These documents are under the header **Test Rules & Additions to the Racing Rules of Sailing**

[2025-2028 Appendix WP – Rules for Waypoints \(Jan 2025\)](#) This is how to run a race with only waypoints on the water.

[2025-2028 Appendix TS – Traffic Separation Scheme \(Jan 2025\)](#) Important Appendix for sailing in VTS areas.

These documents are found under the header [International Judges Documents](#)

World Sailing International Judges Manual (2025)

PowerPoint Guide for Umpired Fleet Racing – August 2021

These documents are found under then header [Official's Documents](#)

[World Sailing Misconduct Guidance 2021](#)

[World Sailing Race Officials Guidelines for the use of Social Media](#)

[Race Officials Roles, Qualifications and Competencies Document \(ROC\)](#) This is updated each year and is the document on how to become an International Judge or other Race Official.

These documents are found under then header [Duties & Procedures](#)

Q&A Service World Sailing Racing Rules Q&A Service

World Sailing Rule 42 (scroll down a bit on Duties & Procedure page)

Rapid Response Calls for Match and Team Racing

Other Useful Documents

Due Process List



Due Process Checklist

The Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act (TSOASA) requires that athletes, coaches and officials have a hearing before being declared ineligible to participate [§220522 (a)(8)]. The following should be included in any hearing that may result in a person being declared ineligible to participate:

- Notice of the specific charges or alleged violations in writing, and possible consequences if the charges are found to be true.
- Reasonable time between receipt of the notice of charges and the hearing in which to prepare a defense.
- The right to have the hearing conducted at such a time and place so as to make it practicable for the person charged to attend.
- A hearing before a disinterested and impartial body of fact finders.
- The right to assistance in the presentation of one's case at the hearing, including the assistance of legal counsel, if desired.
- The right to call witnesses and present oral and written evidence and argument.
- The right to confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses.
- The right to have a record made of the hearing if desired.
- The burden of proof shall be on the proponent of the charge, which burden shall be at least a "preponderance of the evidence" unless the NGB requires or provides for a higher burden of proof.
- A written decision, with reasons therefore, based solely on the evidence of record, handed down in a timely fashion.
- Written notice of appeal procedures, if the decision goes against the person charged, and prompt and fair adjudication of the appeal.

Protest Hearing Procedures



Protest Hearing Procedures

(Consult Appendix M and the US Sailing Judges' Manual for more detailed guidance.)

1. Protest hearing scheduled and posted? (63.1(a)(1))
2. Judge saw incident? (63.4(d))
3. Judge with *conflict of interest*? Assess conflict. (63.3)
4. Could redress affect other boats? Add as a party? (61.4(c) 63.1+USRx)
5. Only one person from each boat is present? (63.1(a)(4))
6. Introduce PC and parties. Be sure protestee has a copy of the protest and reasonable time to prepare. (63.1)
7. Party object to member of PC based *conflict of interest*? (63.3(b))
8. Was protest timely? Is there good reason to extend? (60.3(b))
9. Did protestor notify RC at finish (if required by SI)? (App B, E or SI)
10. Are protestor, protestee and incident identified in protest? (60.3(a))
11. "Protest" hailed (within hailing distance?) or notified at first reasonable opportunity? (60.2)
12. Flag flown (if >6 m) at the first reasonable opportunity? (60.2(a)(1))
13. Decide if protest is valid (deliberate if necessary). (60.4, 63.4(a))
14. If valid, take evidence from parties:
 - a. ask the protestor to tell their story
 - b. ask the protestee to tell their story
 - c. protestee questions protestor
 - d. protestor questions protestee
 - e. PC questions protestor, then protestee
15. Take evidence from witnesses (protestor's first):
 - a. set the stage and ask, "Tell us what you saw."
 - b. protestee questions protestor's witness first (and vice versa)
 - c. PC questions witness
16. Invite each party to give a brief summation.
17. Excuse parties and deliberate: (63.5)
 - a. find facts and write them down
 - b. decide what rules apply to whom
 - c. decide which boat (if any) broke a rule
 - d. decide the relevant penalty (DSQ or other)
18. Recall parties, announce decision. (63.6(a))
19. Written copies of decision to parties, if requested. (63.6(b))

Presented by US Sailing Judges Committee

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Detailed Protest Hearing Procedures (2025-2028)

(Consult Appendix M and the World Sailing & US Judges' Manuals for more guidance.)

These references are to WS Cases, RYA Cases and US Appeals.

- NOTE: Case Numbers are still based on 2021-2024 Cases**
1. Before The Hearing (Parties Not Present) (M1, M2)
 - a. Chair appoints scribe, procedural judge & usher.
 - b. Protest hearing scheduled and posted? (M1, 63.1(a)(1), [US69](#))
 - c. Judge saw incident? (M2.2, 63.4(d), [1981/10](#))
 - d. Judge with *conflict of interest*? Assess conflict. (M2.3, 63.3, [137](#), [1981/10](#), [1984/2](#), [2007/1](#), [2011/2](#), [2024/1](#), [US22](#), [US39](#), [US42](#))
 - e. No Appeal PC or Int Jury properly constituted? (70.3, App N [2005/2](#), [2014/1](#), [US22](#), [CAN23](#))
 - f. NoR comply with J1, SIs comply with J2? If not ask OA/RC to change? (89.2(a), 90.2(a), [98](#), [US93](#))
 - g. Contents; identifies protestor, protestee, and incident? (60.3(a), [US46](#) or 62.261.2(a), [102](#) [1989/9](#), [2021/1](#) [US90](#), [US94](#), [CAN 60](#))
 - h. Could redress request affect other boats' score/place? Make them a party? (63.1(b)+USRx, 61.4(c) [1981/14](#), [1987/1](#))
 2. Hearing Preliminaries (Parties Present) (M2)
 - a. Correct hearing and participants. "This is an incident between [who] at [where] [when] is this correct?"
 - b. Offer the opportunity to take a post-race penalty if they apply and 44.1(b) does not apply. (App T1, US Rx V2)
 - c. Observers present, provide rules, policy on recordings, cannot be a witness. (63.4(e), [49](#))
 - d. Introduce PC & parties. Record the names of parties. Names of witnesses? (63.1(a)(2), 63.1(a)(3))
 - e. Disclose if any member of PC saw the incident? (M2.2, 63.4(b))
 - f. Objection to PC member on grounds of *conflict of interest*? (63.3(d) [1984/2](#), [2007/1](#), [2011/2](#), [US22](#), [US39](#), [US42](#))
 - g. Each party has a copy of the protest? Had time to prepare? (M2.1, 63.1(a)(2), 63.1(a)(3), [48](#), [1981/14](#))
 - h. One representative per boat (unless interpreter)? (M2.1, 63.1(a)(4), [US8](#), [US62](#), [US69](#), [US112](#))
 - i. Parties present? If not proceed under 63.1(b)? (M2.1, 63.1(b), [49](#)) Witnesses available? (M3.2, 63.4(b) [1984/14](#), [US8](#))
 - j. "What was your position on board?" Must have been on board for Part 2, 3, or 4. (M2.1, 63.1(a)(4) [US8](#), [US62](#), [US69](#), [US112](#))
 - k. Were any penalties taken? (60.5(c) [99](#), [107](#), [1986/7](#), [2005/5](#), [US56](#)) Any injury or damage? (60.2(c) [19](#), [141](#), [1986/7](#), [US56](#))
 3. Check the Validity of the *Protest* or Request for Redress. (Deliberate?) (M3.1, 63.4(a), [19](#), [22](#) [US69](#))
 - a. If relevant to validity of Part 2, 3 or 4 protests, ask conditions at time of incident.
 - b. Contents; protestor, protestee, and incident identified? (60.3(a), [22](#), [US46](#), [US65](#))
on; identify the reason for requesting redress (61.2(a), [102](#) [1989/9](#), [2002/1](#), [2010/1](#) [US90](#), [US94](#))
 - c. Was protest timely? Good reason to extend? (60.3(b) or 61.2(a), [102](#), [128](#), [US41](#), [US90](#), [US94](#))
 - d. Hail "Protest" at first reasonable opportunity? (60.2(a)(1), [US61](#), [US65](#), [US122](#))
 - e. Red flag (hull >= 6m) at first reasonable opportunity until finish? (61.160.2(a)(1), [72](#), [85](#) [1981/7](#), [1996/2](#), [1999/1](#), [2001/13](#) [US66](#), [US67](#), [US82](#), [US124](#))
 - f. If no hail/flag, injury/serious damage? responder properly informed? (60.2(b), [19](#), [112](#), [141](#), [2001/15](#), [2008/2](#) [US65](#), [US84](#))
 - g. Protestor involved in or saw incident? (required part 2, rule 31) (60.4(a)(2), [102](#) [1982/3](#), [1986/7](#), [1993/5](#), [1999/2](#), [2002/9](#) [US42](#), [US116](#))
 4. If valid, Take Evidence from parties and witnesses. (M3.2, 63.4(b), [104](#), [136](#), [1984/14](#), [1990/3](#), [1992/7](#), [1994/8](#), [2008/4](#), [2014/3](#) [US102](#))
 - a. Take evidence and hearsay of initiator, then responder or, Redress requestor states request. (63.4(b))
 - b. Ask parties to describe the conditions, the incident and what they saw. (distinguish hearsay). (63.4(b))
 - c. Protestee questions initiator & vice versa. (63.4(c))
 - d. Witnesses (initiator's 1st); set the stage. "Tell us what you saw." (63.4(b), [US8](#))
 - e. Protestee questions initiator's witness first (and vice versa). (63.4(c))
 - f. PC questions witness.
 - g. PC questions initiator, then responder. (M3.2)
 - h. Invite each party to give brief summation. (M3.2)
 5. Deliberate (Parties Not Present (M3.3, M3.4, 63.5(a), 63.5)
 - a. Excuse parties and deliberate.
 - b. Scribe reads facts. PC agrees or amendments are made. (M3.3, (63.5(a), [104](#))
 - c. Scribe reads conclusions and decision. PC agrees or amendments are made. (M3.4)
 - d. Redress affects other boats' score or place? Is further evidence needed from affected boats? (M3.4, 61.5(c))
 6. Inform the Parties. (M3.5, 63.6)
 - a. Recall parties and announce decision. (M3.5, 63.6(a))
 - b. Give any party a copy of the decision on request. (M3.5, 63.6(b), [US8](#), [US94](#))
 - c. Inform parties the decision will be published, unless 1) good reason not to do so, or 2) party objects. (63.6(c))
 - d. Post written decision on official notice board. (63.6(c))
 - e. Scoring changes to race committee. (90.3(d))

Seconds to go one hull length

Seconds to go one hull length

(Based on the formula: distance = rate x time)

Speed kts	Distance	
	m/sec	ft/sec
1	0.5	1.7
2	1.0	3.4
3	1.5	5.1
4	2.1	6.8
5	2.6	8.4
6	3.1	10.1
7	3.6	11.8
8	4.1	13.5
9	4.6	15.2
10	5.1	16.9
11	5.7	18.6
12	6.2	20.3

LOH		Seconds to travel one hull length at x knots											
(m)	(ft)	1	2	3	4	5	6	8	10	12	14	16	20
2.4	8	4.7	2.4	1.6	1.2	0.9	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.2
3.0	10	5.9	3.0	2.0	1.5	1.2	1.0	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3
3.7	12	7.1	3.6	2.4	1.8	1.4	1.2	0.9	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.4
4.3	14	8.3	4.1	2.8	2.1	1.7	1.4	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.4
4.9	16	9.5	4.7	3.2	2.4	1.9	1.6	1.2	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.5
5.5	18	10.7	5.3	3.6	2.7	2.1	1.8	1.3	1.1	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.5
6.1	20	11.8	5.9	3.9	3.0	2.4	2.0	1.5	1.2	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.6
6.7	22	13.0	6.5	4.3	3.3	2.6	2.2	1.6	1.3	1.1	0.9	0.8	0.7
7.3	24	14.2	7.1	4.7	3.6	2.8	2.4	1.8	1.4	1.2	1.0	0.9	0.7
7.9	26	15.4	7.7	5.1	3.9	3.1	2.6	1.9	1.5	1.3	1.1	1.0	0.8
8.5	28	16.6	8.3	5.5	4.1	3.3	2.8	2.1	1.7	1.4	1.2	1.0	0.8
9.1	30	17.8	8.9	5.9	4.4	3.6	3.0	2.2	1.8	1.5	1.3	1.1	0.9
9.8	32	19.0	9.5	6.3	4.7	3.8	3.2	2.4	1.9	1.6	1.4	1.2	0.9
10.4	34	20.1	10.1	6.7	5.0	4.0	3.4	2.5	2.0	1.7	1.4	1.3	1.0
11.0	36	21.3	10.7	7.1	5.3	4.3	3.6	2.7	2.1	1.8	1.5	1.3	1.1
11.6	38	22.5	11.3	7.5	5.6	4.5	3.8	2.8	2.3	1.9	1.6	1.4	1.1
12.2	40	23.7	11.8	7.9	5.9	4.7	3.9	3.0	2.4	2.0	1.7	1.5	1.2
13.7	45	26.7	13.3	8.9	6.7	5.3	4.4	3.3	2.7	2.2	1.9	1.7	1.3
15.2	50	29.6	14.8	9.9	7.4	5.9	4.9	3.7	3.0	2.5	2.1	1.9	1.5
16.8	55	32.6	16.3	10.9	8.1	6.5	5.4	4.1	3.3	2.7	2.3	2.0	1.6
18.3	60	35.5	17.8	11.8	8.9	7.1	5.9	4.4	3.6	3.0	2.5	2.2	1.8
19.8	65	38.5	19.3	12.8	9.6	7.7	6.4	4.8	3.9	3.2	2.8	2.4	1.9
21.3	70	41.5	20.7	13.8	10.4	8.3	6.9	5.2	4.1	3.5	3.0	2.6	2.1

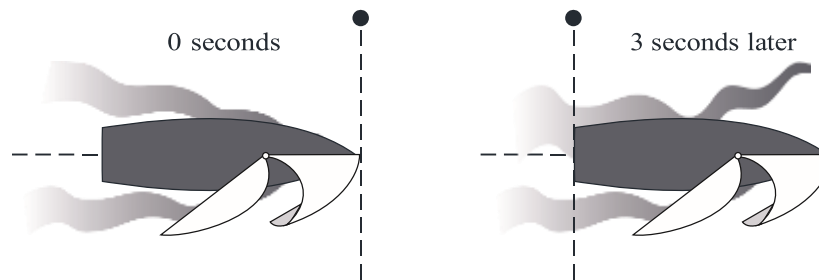
Speed, Distance and Time Table

Speed, Distance & Time Table

(based on the formula: $\text{distance} = \text{rate} \times \text{time}$)

(1 knot = 6076 feet per hour)

Boat speed	Feet per second	Meters per second
1 knot	1.7	0.5
2 knots	3.4	1.0
3 knots	5.1	1.5
4 knots	6.8	2.1
5 knots	8.4	2.6
6 knots	10.1	3.1
7 knots	11.8	3.6
8 knots	13.5	4.1
9 knots	15.2	4.6
10 knots	16.9	5.1



In other words, if your boat is going 4 knots, you will travel 6.8 feet per second. One way to determine your boat's speed is to sail by a buoy or other fixed object and count how many seconds it takes for the buoy to go from your bow to your stern. If in a 24-foot boat it takes 3 seconds to go by the buoy, you are going 8 feet per second, or just under 5 knots.

It's very useful to know your boat's approximate speed on all points of sail in all wind and wave conditions, particularly in a protest hearing. For instance, in the above example you know that a *zone* that is three lengths wide is about 9 seconds worth of sailing before the *mark*. You also know that if you tack in front of another boat and she claims to have hit you only 3 seconds after you became close-hauled, you can point out that, by her own testimony, she held her course for a full boat-length after you were close-hauled.

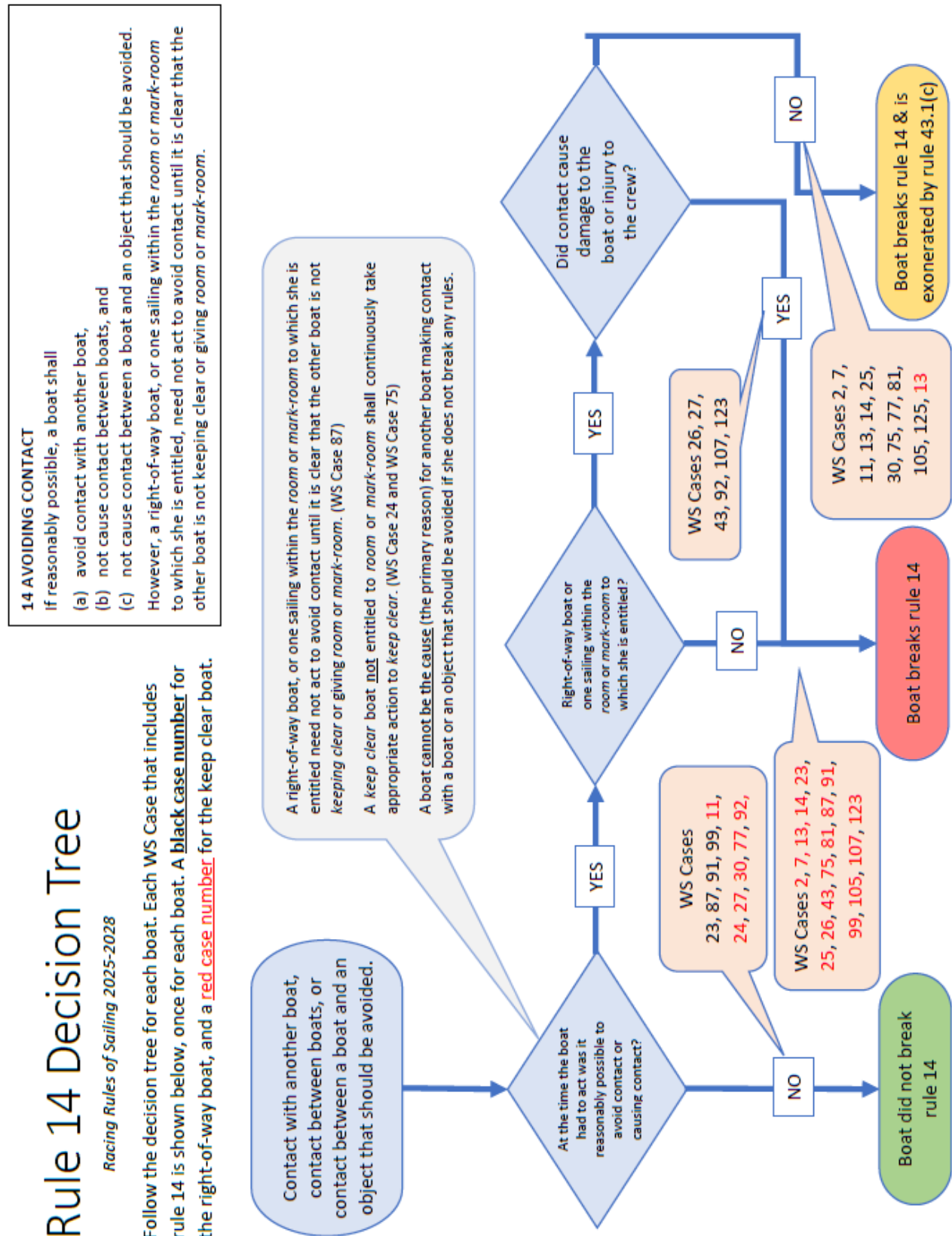
Adapted from Dave Perry's *Understanding the Racing Rules of Sailing*.
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Guidance on Damage

The following table, which attempts to define levels of damage, has been used at a variety of high-level events, including the 2017 International Women’s Keel Boat Championship and the 2017 US Sailing Championship of Champions. It is included here for reference and should be considered advisory.

Level	Extent	Effect
Level A: Minor Damage	The damage does not significantly affect the value, general appearance or normal operation of the boat.	The boat may race without repair, although some minor surface work may be required after the event. Repairs should not normally require more than 1 hour of work.
Level B: Damage	The damage affects the value and/or general appearance of the boat.	The damage does not affect the normal operation of the boat in that race but may require some (temporary) work before racing again. Requires more than 1 hour of work but should not normally require more than 3 hours of work.
Level C: Major Damage	The normal operation of the boat is impaired and its structural integrity may be compromised.	The boat will need significant repair work before racing again. Requires more than 3 hours of work.

Rule 14 Decision Tree



Guidance on Penalties for Misconduct

This table is intended only for decisions in a rule 69 misconduct hearing and is not to be used for rule 2 hearings. The penalty for rule 2 hearing decisions is DNE.

LEVEL 0	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
Interview the party but do not hold a hearing <i>A hearing is not required</i>	Hold a hearing and warn the party but do not penalize <i>A hearing is required</i>	Increase the boat's score <i>A hearing is required</i>	Disqualify the boat or exclude the party from a race or races (and/or remove some privileges or benefits) <i>A hearing is required</i>	Disqualify the boat or exclude the party from the event or venue (and/or remove any privileges or benefits) <i>A hearing is required</i>	Disqualify the boat or exclude the party from the event or venue (and/or remove any privileges or benefits) and recommend further action by the national authority <i>A hearing is required</i>
Breaking one or more racing rules, or behavior that is sufficiently serious that the normal penalty may be inadequate					
	Foul or abusive language that is intended to intimidate or offend or that is inappropriate for the occasion or location				
		Refusing to comply with a legitimate request from the organizing authority or race officials			
			Abuse of officials		
		Bullying, intimidating, or discriminatory behavior			
			Repeatedly committing the same measurement infraction		
			Fighting or physical or sexual assault		
			Lying in a hearing or to officials		
			Theft, damages or abuse of property		
Committing an act of misconduct that is a breach of good manners, a breach of good sportsmanship or unethical behavior; or conduct that has or may bring the sport into disrepute					