

RRS 68

The Latest News from the Judges' Committee

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WELCOME TO THE JUDGES' NEWSLETTER 2025!

Sarah Ashton

The Sailing Season is winding down, and the Judges Educational Training and Testing Subcommittee (JETTS) is filling up the [Find a Seminar calendar](#) with excellent learning opportunities for the off-season. You can also sign up to get notified of any new seminar postings. Race Administration has created a seminar/ course map; there is more information on the [From Race Administration](#) RRS 68 page

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



CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Wayne Balsiger

Wow, September already. Time flies as we have fun and serve the sport. Thanks for all you do as a Judge and Race official.

Education: The school year starts, and so we are gearing back up for education events as well. See the seminar list for Round Tables, Club Judge Seminars and Advanced Judge Seminars, as well as Protest Days. We also offer other educational events and topics. There is a roundtable focusing on redress on the schedule as well as an AJS.

Judge Certification Requirements: Recently, at a regatta, I was chatting with a Club Judge hesitant to become a Regional Judge because of the Race Management requirements. The chart says "Major" Race Committee roles. We are changing the wording of that soon. What we mean is get on a race committee in a role. It can be the flags, timing, scorer, on a mark set boat or finish boat, recording finishes, calling the start/finish line, and such. The purpose is so you have an idea of what a Race Committee does. Many sailors have not been on RC duty and may know the flags but not some of the many details needed to run a successful race. This helps if you are in a redress hearing involving the RC. So don't worry about not knowing how to be PRO of a major regatta. That is not the requirement. Go sign up and serve. And in the SOARS comments, note what role(s) you did.

Insurance: If you want insurance, you can sign up or renew for \$79 for the National Association of Sports Officials (NASO) insurance. If you had it, it expired August 4th. This is a good deal. Your need for insurance may depend on what kind of officiating you do. If you work mainly at your own club and are comfortable with the club's insurance program, you may not need additional coverage. If you officiate at multiple venues or feel you need more coverage than your home club provides, it may make sense for you to join NASO.

The NASO annual membership fee is \$79 for US Sailing members and is renewable annually in early August. This is a heavily-discounted annual membership - the standard rate for NASO membership is \$129 for one year or \$214 for two years.

To renew your membership, call 1-800-733-6100. To join NASO for the first time, please [click here](#). If you have questions about NASO membership and liability insurance, please review this [FAQ document](#) and the [NASO website](#).

The World Sailing 2025-2028 Case Book is out. World Sailing also released a **Discretionary Penalties Guidelines** that is on our Judges page under Guidelines and Documents.

Judges' Manual update soon. With the Casebook now out, we are updating the Judges' Manual to reflect the changes. Keep your eyes out for a notification in September that the JM has been updated.

Minutes of the Judges' Committee meetings and past copies of the **RRS 68 Judges' Newsletters** are on the Judges' page.

Best wishes for smooth sailing always, and if not, the rough patch ends soon.

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



DANGER IN THE WATER

James H. Hunter, MD

We are all aware that there can be danger whenever we go out on the water. But we may not be aware of danger from the water. In the Gulf Yachting Association, we have now lost two members to *Vibrio Vulnificus*, one a judge and the other a former Commodore of the GYA. *Vibrio Vulnificus*, although related to *Vibrio Cholera*, is one of the “flesh eating bacteria” that can enter the body through any break in the skin and lead to a necrotizing wound that progresses rapidly and has a mortality rate of 25 to 50%. *V. Vulnificus* is found primarily in brackish or salty coastal waters, especially in the summer months. It is being found more widely with increasing water temperatures, and reported infections have increased eight-fold since 1988. *V. Vulnificus* infections are most common on the Gulf coast with four deaths in Louisiana this year, four in Florida, and now one in Bay Waveland, Mississippi. However, it is increasingly found up the Atlantic coast and has been found in oysters as far North as Long Island Sound.

Although the most common portal of entry is any break in the skin, infection can also occur by eating uncooked seafood, especially oysters during the summer months. Factors that increase the risk of infection include older age, diabetes, liver disease and any immunocompromised state. Men seem to be more at risk than women but that may be because they are more likely to get skin trauma and water exposure.

As judges at events, we are most likely to see someone infected through a traumatic skin break after exposure to *Vibrio* in the water. People have been infected by fish spines, metal wire such as in crab traps, or anything that can cause trauma. Our former Commodore scraped his leg on a boat trailer and was deathly sick three days later. Of course, racing sailboats never causes any cuts or abrasions, except every time we sail. If you see someone at an event where there is risk for *Vibrio*, who develops a red, spreading infection from a minor skin break, get them immediately to a hospital ER. Do not go to an Urgent Care or doctor’s office as that will delay treatment, which in addition to IV antibiotic, involves extensive surgical debridement with possible limb amputation.

Fortunately, *Vibrio* infections are not common, but they are increasing. We need to be aware of the risk and be careful not to get any cuts or skin breaks exposed to our warm coastal waters. It is not time to say, “don’t go in the water”, but we need to be aware of the unseen dangers and prevent exposure if possible and act quickly if there is any evidence of *Vibrio* infection.



TECH CENTER: THE CLUB SPOT NOTICE BOARD

Giff Constable

At a major US championship earlier this year, two situations unfolded that led to 34 scoring inquiries and 17 requests for redress, and they exposed some weaknesses in the Clubspot notice board that judges should know about. Firstly, the regatta scorers were struggling to set up Clubspot correctly for split fleets in qualifying rounds. Secondly, a ton of boats missed an offset mark leading to quite a few boats scored NSC. Due to the first problem, those NSC scores were showing up wrong, causing sailors to panic.

Because redress time limits were being reset as various scoring fixes were attempted, there was considerable activity on the notice board. What we realized is that if two different people are editing the Clubspot notice board at roughly the same time, with both people keeping the edit window open on their phones or laptops, some edits can get overwritten and lost.

A recommended solution for judges is to limit the amount of text you are directly editing/adding to the notice board. Instead, link or embed one or more external documents on the notice board. You and the judge team can make your edits in those external documents (most commonly Google Docs or Google Sheets). The results show up as view-only on the notice board. An example of this can be seen with [the 2025 Optimist US National Championship](#).

While hyperlinking to external documents gets the job done, it's more sailor-friendly to embed the documents right onto the notice board, as you can see if you followed that link. Here's the basic steps:

Step 1: Create and format your Google Doc or Sheet as desired

Step 2: Under "Share", choose "Publish to Web" and then Embed. Copy the iframe hyperlink.

Step 3: In Clubspot, choose the "Insert/Edit Media" icon from the toolbar. Paste the link on the Embed tab.

Step 4: Now you should see an embedded iframe with your document. Select it and click the "Insert/Edit Media" icon once again. On the General tab, set the dimensions to "100%" (width) and "400" (height in pixels). This is an important step to make the iframe work properly on a sailor's mobile phone.



FROM RACE ADMINISTRATION

Insurance for US Sailing Race Officials

US Sailing and the National Association of Sports Officials (NASO) have partnered again to offer an optional NASO membership for certified officials that includes liability insurance. If you officiate at multiple venues or feel you need more coverage than your home club provides, you may want to consider joining NASO.

The discounted annual membership fee is \$79 for US Sailing officials and is renewable annually in early August.

To renew your membership or join NASO for the first time, please [click here](#).

If you have questions about NASO membership and liability insurance, please review this [FAQ document](#) and [the NASO website](#). If you have questions about your own coverage, please consult with your insurance advisor.

US Sailing will continue to evaluate the changing insurance landscape. We are pleased to have this option for those who want additional race official insurance, and we invite you to explore whether the NASO program is right for your situation.

New Ways to Find a Course or Seminar on the US Sailing Website

US Sailing has added an additional option for you to find a course near you. A map with location pins has been added to the [Race Administration Find a Seminar](#) page and to the US Sailing/[US Powerboating Keelboat, Powerboat, or Small Boat Instructor Course Calendar](#) page. A great feature is that you can register for a course directly from the map by clicking on the course icon. The seminar description will open, then scroll to the bottom to click the registration link.

The maps are updated weekly to add new courses and remove any that have filled. You still have the option to search within the individual calendar listings for the most up-to-date course listings.

View Race Administration Seminar Map:

<https://www.ussailing.org/competition/rules-officiating/resources/find-a-seminar/>

View Keelboat, Powerboat, and Small Boat Instructor Course Map:

<https://www.ussailing.org/education/resources/course-calendars/>



HAPPENINGS IN AREA B

Giff Constable

The New York/Connecticut area has 32 certified judges, with 4 JITs, 13 Club, 8 Regional, 5 National, and 2 International Judges (who are also National Judges). It's been a busy sailing season with plenty of local, youth, and national-level regattas to keep us busy. I've been particularly happy to see the ongoing teamwork between Areas A, B, and C to ensure that events have effective coverage.

While we have judges renewing at all levels, I want to particularly welcome our new Club Judges. So far this year, that includes Bob Cashman, Harlan Fredericksen, and Teresa Laughlin. Also, congrats to Lisl Dunlop for becoming a National Judge in August. I also became an NJ.

The most important thing for Area B is common to all Areas: we need to identify talented racers who have the quick mind and steady temperament needed to be a good judge and bring them into the fold. Sometimes a friendly invitation to the protest committee is enough, but sometimes it takes a more determined, and repeated, pitch. Many people are intimidated by the thought of being a judge and worried about the responsibility that comes with finding facts and drawing conclusions. This can be overcome by encouragement, time, and training.

While we want to develop individuals, this can also happen at a club level. All it takes is a determined volunteer. A number of years ago, my home club American Yacht Club had a desire to host big regattas but very few certified judges. NJ John Fryer and RJ Rob Fear set out to change that. They actively recruited more racers into the protest committee and asked NJs and IJs from around the Northeast to come help with training. Fast forward to today: we have 3 NJs, 2 RJs, and 2 CJs, with an additional strong bench of uncertified but knowledgeable sailors.

This can happen at any club, so if you're motivated to do the same, reach out to me at giff.constable@gmail.com.

Finally, as we enter into the cooler months and things slow down, we'll try to make sure to get a Club Judge seminar on the calendar and we are planning a few evening Zoom get-togethers for Area B judges (and our neighbors).



USEFUL LINKS

- [US Sailing Judges' Page](#)
- [Racing Rules of Sailing 2025-2028](#)
- [US Sailing Appeals](#)
- [World Sailing Cases](#)
- [SOARS](#)
- [Safesport](#)
- [World Sailing](#)

RESOURCES

- [Find a Seminar](#)
- [US Sailing Judge Certification Requirements](#)
- [2025-2028 US Prescriptions to The Racing Rules of Sailing](#)
- [2025-28 RRS Changes that Affect Judging](#)
- [The Judges' Manual for 2025-2028](#) - **Latest version 06/20/25**
- [Guidelines for Online Hearings](#)
- [Continuing Education Events and CEUs Table](#)
- [Race Officials Certification Forms](#)
- [Race Officials Insurance Information](#)
- [Race Official /Organizing Authority Connection Page](#)
- [New Hearing Request Form](#)
- [A Quick Overview of the Significant Rule and Game Changes in the 2025-28 RRS](#)

