

RRS 68

The Latest News from the Judges' Committee

In This Newsletter:

[Chairman's Corner](#)

Page 02

[Join the Protest Committee](#)

Page 05

[Happenings in Area E](#)

Page 06

[Useful Links](#)

Page 07



WELCOME TO THE JUDGES' NEWSLETTER 2026

Sarah Ashton

I apologize for the delay in publication. Your Judges' Committee had a very stimulating in-person meeting in Austin, TX the last weekend of February. I waited to add information from that meeting to this newsletter.

It is finally time to blow the pollen off your boat, check your rigging, and get your crew ready for racing!

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

Edith Collins

The Judges' Committee had its annual in-person meeting on February 28th in Austin, Texas. We had 14 folks attend in-person. We also streamed the meeting via Zoom for those who could not attend in person. This meeting acts as a "State of the Union" for US Sailing Judges.

In addition to the members of the Committee, we also had several guests: Henry Bauer, President of US Sailing; Peter Wilson, Chair of the US Sailing Rules Committee; Sandy Grosvenor, US Sailing rep to the World Sailing Rules Committee; Fred Hagedorn, US Sailing Rep to World Sailing; and Wayne Balsiger, Chair US Sailing Race Administration Committee.

Henry Bauer stated that US Sailing is in a stronger position than it was a year ago. Charlie Enright has been the new CEO since May 1st and has been focusing on the following issues:

- Fill key seats, including CFO, communications director, and membership director.
- Get US Sailing back on a solid financial footing. To that end, a balanced budget was approved, and the line of credit has been paid off.

There is a new Olympic program director, Molly Vandemoer. She will focus on training ahead of the LA 2028 Olympics.

A new strategic plan has been adopted, which will focus on "operational excellence, inspire members, and compete on the world stage".

John Porter asked Henry when updates to information technology were planned. Henry said that the new software had been identified, but US Sailing needs about \$1.2 million to implement it. The estimated time frame is 1-2 years. Matt Hill also advised that CANVAS, the software used for online classes, would continue to be used for the near future.

Peter Wilson let us know what rule changes the US was proposing to World Sailing:

A rewrite of RRS 14 fixing unclear language, and a rewrite of RRS 60.4 (a)(2), which will allow protests from boats that saw but were not involved with an incident. They have also submitted proposals to change rule 35, which would make it more consistent with Appendix A, and rule 62, to make protests against a support person consistent with other protests. Finally, they are working on a proposal to define validity and address unclear language.

Sandy Grosvenor explained how changes were submitted to World Sailing. Proposals can be seen [here](#).

Fred Hagedorn answered questions about the newly approved working policy for automated race management systems (ARMS). The system will detect OSC and take finishes. He let us know what to expect for the 2028 Olympics, including efforts to make it more entertaining for non-sailors.

Mark Townsend asked what the penalty would be for OSC at the Olympics. Fred said that the current plan is to restart. No UFD or BFD.

Shannon asked what tracking software would be used. Fred said that that had not been determined yet, but the 49'ers, ILCA, and IQ foils would all be testing Vakaros at events this year.

Wayne Balsiger talked about what the Race Administration Committee does. They are currently working to make the certification requirements for the different roles more similar, though not necessarily identical.

They would like to upgrade SOARS to handle more useful information, such as the Rule 42 certification, and to automatically generate reports for race officials who are renewing. They are working on how to get more certified race officials. There are two paths: certify experienced race officials who have not bothered to certify, and recruit and train more new race officials. Wayne is also planning to send thank you notes to retiring race officials.

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER cont.

Matt Hill let us know that although dues are increasing, the discount to race officials is still being offered.

The following trophies have been awarded:

- The Harmon Hawking trophy was awarded to Don Becker
- The St Petersburg trophy was awarded to Edgewater YC for the Ensign Nationals

The "Join the Protest Committee" publication is now on the website.

He also asked that courses be put on the calendar at least 6 weeks in advance.

He also has "J" flags available at a 15% discount.

The number of Judges

JiT, CJ, RJ, NJ By Area

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	J	K	L
42	28	39	63	22	28	14	3	34	35	18

US Judge Certifications

Club Judge	113
Regional Judge	46
National Judge	102
Total US Judge Certs	261

Other Certs and Designations

Judge in Training	63
International Judge	27

Judge Certification Courses and CE Offerings Completed and Scheduled (as of 2/19/2026)

	2026 (YTD)	2025	2024	2023
Club Judge	4/10	8/96	17/142	10/94
Advanced Judge	0	2/28	2/36	1/16
Continuing Ed	13/229	20/405	27/383	19/244

US Judge Certs Lapsing by Year

2026	2027	2028	2029
53	71	77	60

Mark Townsend, the Chair of JETTS, went over the current continuing education requirements document. We updated the document with a few changes.

The new training preparation includes: Updated Advanced Judge Seminar, RRS for beginning racers, and "how to be a jury secretary".

There are 4 online Club Judge seminars in preparation through June.

Bruce Martinson, Club Judge Program, reminded us that the best seminars are small in-person seminars, but online seminars are an effective way to reach a broader audience.

Bruce can update the CANVAS presentation materials as needed.

Getting hearing practice for new judges is still challenging.

Mark Townsend, Advanced Judge Seminars, stated that demand will support 1 or 2 seminars a year, and that CANVAS is the best delivery system for many of the study materials.

Nancy Glover, Roundtable Presentations: "Pop-up" roundtables are particularly helpful if protest committees are not on the water or ashore due to bad conditions. They can cover technical issues, best practices, or how-to-do-it discussions. For participants to receive CEUs, Nancy needs a list of participants' names and US Sailing ID numbers, the instructor's name, and the topics discussed.

If anyone wants to host a roundtable, please contact Nancy.



CHAIRMAN'S CORNER cont.

Bruce Cook, Protest Days, stated that there are 5 new arbitration cases and 3 new protests in the updated class. He is also preparing an "Advanced" protest day for NJ's and IJ's. Please send any protests that you think are interesting to Bruce.

Jerry Thompson, Rule42 Certification and Judges' Rule Clinic: Three Rule 42 classes have been taught. John Porter developed an on-the-water evaluation form. There has been demand for the class from high school and college sailors as well as dinghy sailors. The evaluator at the event will be the Chief Judge or another judge appointed by the CJ.

Wayne presented the report from the Umpires' Committee: There will be 5 "RAU" and a new certification process. An important activity is to determine where the demand is. Darryl Waskow, IJ Mentor, mentioned that there was a seminar in September at Macatawa YC. 3 US judges are being recommended to World Sailing. If you are interested in becoming an IJ, please contact Darryl.

Congratulations to Ed Cassidy (area C) for his upgrade to Regional Judge, and to Carol Barrow for being named Judge Emeritus.

The RAJ's gave their "State of the Area" reports.

In the business portion of the meeting, Wayne discussed his article on how to obtain a protest hearing when an incident caused damage and neither party protested at the time. There will be an update to the Judges' manual, including a section on "Offshore" racing and the special consideration it brings.

Mark expressed concern over the no-test policy for veteran National Judges. A committee was formed to look into ongoing policies for evaluating these judges.

The biggest item of concern for the whole committee was how to attract new Judges and retain the ones we have. A committee was formed to investigate trying to get coaches and younger competitors interested in becoming Judges. Another problem is getting hearings particularly for those folks who are starting out. To this end, a "pop up Protest Day" is being developed to better use the "waiting" time at some regattas when there is no wind and everyone is ashore. A committee has been formed to flesh this idea out. We also discussed the "no test" policy for veteran judges and a committee has been formed to look at various options including continuing education opportunities.



After the meeting we were treated to a trip to *El Patio*, a decade's old TexMex restaurant downtown. Thanks to Shannon for being the tour guide. To quote singer Guy Clark, "Oh my Momma, 'ain't that Texas Cookin' something!"

JOIN THE PROTEST COMMITTEE

Giff Constable

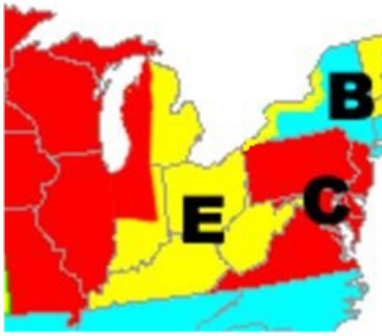
The US Sailing Judges Committee recently published the booklet *Join the Protest Committee Team!*, which you can find on the Judges web page or directly here. The short publication is designed to help individuals start their journey as members of a protest committee, or act as a refresher for those who haven't sat on a hearing jury in a while. It concisely covers the characteristics that make a good judge, and then takes the reader through a hearing at keelboat regatta, weaving tips into the storyline. Finally, it has practical information on how to get started as a judge.

Judges of all levels might enjoy the read, but we're particularly hoping that you all pass it on to aspiring judges or competitive sailors whom you think would make a great judge. Suggestions for improvement are welcome — just send your comments to raceadmin@ussailing.org.



HAPPENINGS IN AREA E

Clark Chapin



Area E includes the eastern half of Michigan as well as Ohio, Kentucky, West Virginia, the eastern portion of Indiana and the Great Lakes portions of Pennsylvania and New York. The major areas of activity are along the lower Great Lakes as well as the inland areas of Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana. Our largest events each year are along the Great Lakes (Bayview Mackinac Race (Lake Huron), Helly Hanson Sailing World Regatta Series - Detroit, Mills Trophy (Lake Erie), I-LYA Junior Bay Week (Lake Erie), and Cleveland Race Week (Lake Erie) plus a veritable plethora of junior and high school events throughout the area.

Certification	No.
Judge Wannabe	2
Judge-in-Training	8
Club	5
Regional	1
National	4
International	0
Emeritus	2
TOTAL:	22

Our current Judge Cadre stands at 22, but we often use judges from the eastern portion of Area K to the west. The "Judge Wannabes" are folks who have evinced an interest in becoming judges and are working to complete the seminar and testing requirements to become Judges-in-Training.

The judging season starts at the end of this month with collegiate and high school events. Those events often include on-the-water experience in both rule 42 as well as team racing. They are excellent opportunities to gain experience in hearing procedure as well as boat handling and umpiring.



Remember, not every early spring regatta includes the opportunity to get hailed-on, like this one from 2023. Remember the words of Lyndon Johnson: "Sometimes you just have to hunker down like a jackass in a hailstorm and take it."

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 10/11/25**](#)
- [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](#)

