

Judges' Committee Minutes

Austin, TX February 28, 2026

Meeting called to order by Edith Collins at 8:30 AM

Attendees

Chair: Edith Collins in person

RAJs:

Bill Collins, Area A	in person
Giff Constable, Area B I	in person
Harry Foote, Area C	in person
Jerry Thompson, Area D	In person
Clark Chapin, Area E	in person
Shannon Wood, Area F	in person
Don Wieneke, Area G	Zoom
Tom Pochereva, Area H	in person
Steve Holmstrom, Area J	not here
John Porter, Area K	in person
Barbara Belt, Area L	in person

Members at Large

Mark Townsend, Chair Judges Training and Testing Subcommittee	Zoom
Bruce Martinson, Chair Club Judge Program	Zoom
Bruce Cook, Protest Days Coordinator	Zoom
Nancy Glover, Round Table Coordinator	in person
Craig Daniels, Rule 42 Coordinator	Zoom
Sarah Ashton, RRS 68 Newsletter	in person
Steve Schupak, Chair, Umpires Committee	not here
Darryl Waskow, IJ Candidate Mentor	in person
Matt Hill, Race Administration Director	Zoom

Guests

Henry Bauer, President US Sailing	Zoom
Charlie Enright CEO US Sailing	not here
Peter Wilson Chair US Sailing Rules Committee	Zoom
Fred Hagedorn US Sailing Rep to World Sailing	Zoom
Sandy Grosvenor World Sailing Racing Rules Committee	Zoom
Wayne Balsiger Race Admin Committee Chair	in person

I. Approval of Minutes

December minutes were approved as distributed.

II. Welcome and Announcements – Edith Collins

III. Guests

1. Henry Brauer, President, US Sailing

Henry presented the following update:

Thanks to all of you for what you do for sailing.

US Sailing is in a stronger position than 1 year ago.

Charlie Enright started as CEO, May 1 2025.

He brings enthusiasm, leadership, and a critical eye for organizational improvement.

Charlie focused on the following key issues:

- a. Fill key seats including CFO, communication director and membership director
- b. Get US Sailing back on solid financial footing by energizing past donors and reducing costs. US Sailing has decreased its revolving line of credit to zero. A balanced budget was approved for 2026 in Dec 2025.
- c. Focus on Olympic and high-performance training ahead of LA 2028.
New Olympic program director Molly Vandemoer. (Past Olympic match racer, recently a youth sailing director, from the SF Bay area.) Past high performance director Marcus Lynch will continue to provide support in his expertise areas (Nacra, for example).
- d. Create and adopt new a strategic plan.
In summary: operational excellence, inspire members, and compete on the world stage.
First, they surveyed membership and other active sailors, created a committee and advisory panel including a variety of interests, and organized a staff conference to work on it. USOPC provided a moderator.
Changes are planned to improve the way they work with members. For 2026, there will be 6 regional symposiums instead of 1 big one, and a coaches symposium in Florida. US Sailing and Annapolis YC Sailing Foundation co-hosted a sailing foundation summit in Annapolis, and a second one is scheduled for 2027 to focus on funding.

Questions from John Porter:

Q: When are information technology updates planned – when do we need to be ready to help members figure out the new system? Currently using a 25-year-old data base, clunky.

A: US Sailing has identified new software, currently used by other NGBs. However, US Sailing needs about \$1.2 MM in order to implement it. Estimated time frame for implementation is 1-2 years.

Q: Are there plans for a change in the Canvas digital learning and training program?

A: Matt Hill acknowledges a different long-term solution is needed but has no plans right now for implementing a change. We should plan to continue using Canvas until that solution is identified.

Question from Edith Collins:

Q: Is there any info about a new insurance product for race officials?

A: The NASO program is available, since about 2 years ago. Have identified a multi-sport product that provides some coverage, Matt Hill has details. (NASO, which many of us have already).

2. Peter Wilson, Chair of the US Sailing Rules Committee

2 proposals from US Sailing were reviewed and accepted by World Sailing in 2025.

1. Rule 14 rewritten to move the “However,” to indicate that it applies to parts a, b, and C. This fixes unclear language.
2. Rule 60.4a2, rewritten to allow protests by boats that saw an incident but were not involved in it. This fixes unclear language.

World Sailing will write cases to explain this before updating rules for 2029. They didn’t think an immediate rule change was needed.

Recently US Sailing submitted 2 more proposals:

1. Rule 35, recommendation to fix unclear language to be consistent with Appendix A, which allows RC to assign scores other than finish position.
2. Rule 62: recommendation to require that support person hearings have written protest form submitted. This makes support person hearings consistent with other hearings.

US Sailing is working on proposals to World Sailing for the following:

1. Rule 60.4, recommend changing to define to Validity, not Invalidity, to fix unclear language.

2. Rule 32, recommend change to allow the Race Committee to define the new finish line when shortening course.
3. Rule 63.3b, recommend change to require Protest Committee members to declare if they are going to testify in a hearing at the beginning.
4. Rule 18, recommend adding “does not include room to pass head to wind while tacking” to part c, to eliminate a conflict with the rest of rule 18
5. Definitions:
 - a. Recommend adding Waypoint to definition of *Mark*
 - b. Recommend adding “then room to leave it astern” to part b of *Mark-Room*

3. Fred Hagedorn, US Sailing Rep to World Sailing

World Sailing approved a working policy for automated race management systems (ARMS). For the 2028 Olympics, expect no postponements (but what about wind??). An ARMS system will detect OCS and take finishes. Expect more social media info about athletes for LA 2028 to make it more interesting for non-sailors.

Q from Mark Townsend: what will penalty be for OCS at Olympics?

A: Current plan is to re-start, not a time penalty. No UFD or BFD.

Q from Shannon Wood: what software to be used?

A: Not yet determined. 49ers will test Vakaros at Palma this year, ILCAS will test Vakaros at Worlds. IQFoils will test Vakaros this year at OCR in Long Beach.

Comment from John Porter about categorization: he submitted a question 204 days ago, why no answer yet?

A: Fred will check.

4. Sandy Grosvenor, World Sailing Racing Rules Committee

Today, Feb. 28, is the deadline for May consideration of rules updates for World Sailing. World Sailing will update and publish the changes for the next quad twice a year. November 2026 is the deadline for substantial proposal for rules changes for 2029. Any changes to be made for 2029 will be published in 2028 so case books can be updated and published with the 2029 rules. US Sailing needs any recommendations for change by September 2026 in order to have time to prepare the submission to World Sailing.

You can find the proposed changes on the World Sailing website rules page. Go to sailing.org, select the proposals tab at the top of the home page. Here's the link.

[World Sailing - Proposals](#)

You'll see accepted proposals and proposals under consideration. Sandy is working on a proposal to make protest validity language clearer. simpler.

5. Wayne Balsiger, US Sailing Race Administration Committee Chair

The Race Administration Committee is responsible for Judges, Umpires, Race Officers, Classification, Measurers, Appeals, and race official certification requirements.

The committee plans to increase to 3 meetings a year.

They are working on how to make certification requirements for the different roles similar, although not necessarily identical.

They would like to upgrade SOARS to:

- a. Be capable of handling more useful information (for example, add the Rule 42 certification).
- b. Generate reports automatically for race officials who are renewing or want to upgrade to a higher certification level.

They are working on how to get more certified race officials. Two paths: certify experienced race officials who haven't bothered to get certified, and recruit and train new race officials.

Wayne plans to send thank you notes to retiring race officials.

6. Matt Hill, Race Administration Director

Dues are increasing, and race officials will still get a discount on dues.

3 IJ candidates are in progress with World Sailing

Harman Hawkins trophy was awarded to Don Becker

SPYC trophy awarded to Edgewater YC in Cleveland, Ensign Nationals

Join The Protest Committee publication is now available on the US Sailing website, and will be added to the Rulebook app (like the Join the Race Committee publication).

Clarification: Judges who hear appeals get 20 CEUS per appeal.

Please ask to put courses on the calendar 6 weeks in advance. Nancy & Judy are working on how to get roundtable topics available so people will know whether they are interested in a particular topic and be able to sign up 6 weeks in advance.

Please be patient with Judy as she updates training data entry like test scores.

Matt has J flags available, and you get a 15% discount.

IV. Reports from the RAJs

See attachments

Bill Collins, Area A

Giff Constable, Area B

Harry Foote, Area C

Jerry Thompson, Area D

Clark Chapin, Area E

Shannon Wood, Area F

Don Wieneke, Area G

Tom Pochereva, Area H

Steve Holmstrom, Area J

John Porter, Area K

Barbara Belt, Area L

V. Newsletter – Sarah Ashton 10:40

The next edition, to be published in mid-March, will feature Area E by Clark Chapin, and Edith's meeting summary. Sarah needs articles! Send pictures! The deadline for the mid-March publication is ASAP after this meeting.

John Porter suggests using a US Sailing distribution list to get it to all the judges easier.

VI. JETTS-Mark Townsend 10:50

Continuing education requirements for recertification document has been updated and provided to the Judges' Committee for review. Mark has made some corrections and clarifications based on JC members' feedback.

Appeals committee membership was always intended to be 20 CEUs per appeal, not per year. Mark will make that correction.

Safe Sport training is not sailing specific, and is required by law. JC recommends no CEUs for Safe Sport training.

Judge Committee membership is currently enough to recertify – should that count at all? JC recommends no. (We all have plenty of other training!)

JC recommends that the coordinator role for seminars not earn CEUs. (This role is registration and meeting room arrangements etc.)

JC recommends no CEUs for watching replays of webinars. Can't verify people watch the webinar, not just turn it on and go get dinner.

Mark will update the JETTS Educational Offering document to match the CEU recommendations from this meeting.

New training in preparation:

1. Updated Advanced Judge Seminar
2. RRS for beginning racers, an in-person or Zoom class with an instructor. Not self-study.
3. How to be a Jury Secretary. There is a Jury Secretary manual that needs to be updated.
4. John Porter suggests another presentation of "How to do remote hearings" training. John can do the training. John also suggests including online hearing training as a requirement for NJs.
5. There are 4 online Club Judge Seminars in preparation through June. The first is on the Judge Seminar calendar.

VII. Club Judge Seminars – Bruce Martinson

Bruce reports that the best seminars are a small group in person. But online training reaches people very effectively.

Bruce can update the Canvas presentation whenever needed and has already updated the practice test questions in Canvas. He is keeping material in development in Drop Box so it can be updated easily.

How to get hearing practice is a challenge for certifying club judges.

VIII. Advanced Judge Seminars-Mark Townsend

Demand will support 1 or 2 a year online; more if we do them in person locally.

Canvas is the best delivery method for a lot of the study material.

IX. Round Tables- Nancy Glover

Round Tables are alive and healthy! Nancy thanks to the whole JC for support.

Shannon, Jerry, & Daryl will be hosting roundtables this spring.

Any judge can host a pop-up roundtable at an event – especially helpful if judges are sitting around while the fleet waits for wind. There are 2 kinds of topics – technical rules discussions, and best practices and how-to-do-it discussions. To get CEUs for participants, the roundtable leader should provide a list of topics discussed and names participants to Nancy after the pop-up. The duration can be anything longer than an hour depending on time available and interest.

If you host an online roundtable, Nancy recommends inviting 2 NJs to answer questions. (They can keep each other from making mistakes!)

Annual Dave Perry discussion (there used to also be an annual Pat Healy discussion)

Can have up to 100 people in an online roundtable, using the US Sailing Zoom account.

Nancy also recommends local in person roundtables as a great way to get to know other judges and sailors. For example, the Davis Island Rules Book Club gets together once a week to talk about rules, using the 100 Best Racing Rules Quizzes book.

Nancy can help finding facilitator if you want one!

Nancy will send her list of topics of interest to Matt Hill.

X. Protest Days-Bruce Cook

Bruce currently has 77 updated cases to use in Protest Days: 5 arbitration cases, 69 protest day cases, and 3 advanced protest day cases.

He trialed the advanced protest day program twice with positive feedback. The target audience is NJs and IJs.

If you have a protest or redress request you think is interesting, send it to Bruce!

XI. Rule 42 certification and Judges' Rule Clinic – Jerry Thompson

Three Rule 42 Certification classes have been taught. The first was open to JC members only and the following classes were open to all judges. John Porter prepared on-the-water evaluation form and he has already received several evaluations. Jerry and John have received positive feedback. There is lots of demand from youth, high school, and college events as well as dinghy sailors. Especially ILCA sailors, who are looking for where the edge is! The evaluator is the chief judge at the event, or another judge designated by the chief judge.

Judges' RRS Clinic

This clinic covers rules of Part 2 in 2 3-hour sessions. Find dates on the judge's seminar calendar.

XII. Umpires Committee – Wayne Balsiger

Umpires will form into 5 regions and organize using RAUs. There will be a new certification process. Craig Daniels adds that an important activity is to figure out where demand is, especially for high school and college team races, and where to find potential umpires to staff these events.

Wayne requests Matt Hill to let the UC know when IU seminars are available in North America.

XIII. IJ Candidate Mentor – Darryl Waskow 12:05

US IJ Seminar Update:

[International Judge seminar September 25-27, 2026, at Macatawa Bay YC.](#)

[Dale Gort](#) (MBYC) and [Cliff Black](#) are the local contacts.

Applications through World Sailing at this link: <https://forms.gle/5degSetyzexQwcKc6>.

The application deadline is March 6.

This year there are 3 US Judges recommended to World Sailing for IJ (including Shannon). Several other judges are interested; let Darryl know if you have a suitable event for them to judge at.

XIV. Judge Certification Upgrades 1:00

Ed Cassidy, from CJ to RJ

Ed had a recommendation from two Charleston Race Weeks, in 2024 and 2025. Only one recommendation per event is allowed. The same named event in 2 different years is 2 different events. Approved.

Carol Barrow Judge Emeritus

Bruce Cook and Mark Townsend abstain. No “no” votes. Approved.

XV. Old Business

Veteran National Judge No Test Policy for recertification (discussion requested by Mark Townsend). Motion passed in December 2024.

Mark is concerned about people who couldn't pass the test serving on hearings with significant consequences. Several other JC members agree. All other requirements for renewal must be met, which is intended to provide quality control to exclude judges who haven't kept current with rules updates. Suggestion: substitute extra rules education for

the test. JC will consider making the change for 2027. Edith, Shannon, John, Mark, and Matt to prepare proposal for April meeting.

“Popup” protests (discussion requested by Edith Collins)

Mock hearings held at regattas where there aren’t real protests or requests for redress. What are criteria for making these qualify for certification? Giff, Mark, Darryl, Craig to prepare proposal for April meeting.

Sailor Athlete (action requested by Edith Collins)

Wayne reminds the JC that each committee needs 33% sailor athletes. 10 year sailor athletes turn into 10+ year sailor athlete and qualification lasts forever. AE qualification lasts 2 years. Action needed: Our AE members need to re-submit the form every 2 years.

XVI. New Business 2:10

Insurance claims and the future of the sport (Wayne Balsiger)

Wayne wrote an article for judge’s newsletter in December. The article is also available on the Judges’ page on the US Sailing website. Insurance companies usually require a protest hearing decision or a police report to make payment. Remember the PC can initiate a hearing in case of injury or serious damage even if the sailors don’t. Also note that Sail Canada prescriptions are different from US Sailing, should you be judging or racing in Canada.

Judge certification renewals (Edith Collins)

Edith suggests we send renewal documentation when complete rather than waiting for the rush at the end of the year. Wayne reports the RO’s review renewals quarterly to spread the load. John Porter suggests reviewing completed renewal documentation when available, noting “good to renew”, and renewing the whole slate in December. JC recommendation: stick with December renewals, and only discuss those who haven’t met requirements.

Judge Application (Giff Constable)

Respecting peoples’ time: everything you need to know for renewal is in SOARS. Why duplicate this with the application? John thinks there is an easy way to solve this with information technology.

Ways to get more Judges, based on feedback to Scuttlebutt article by Steve Schupak (Edith Collins, Wayne Balsiger).

Comments include the application form is tedious, nobody thanks you, insurance costs, insufficient respect. John suggests a mini-judge course to help a good sailor become a PC member. Club Judge was intended for this, and its scope grew. Shannon suggests targeting coaches since they are first in line to complain. And targeting sailors on the Olympic path and high school age sailors (as a side benefit, they'll really learn the rules). Darryl suggests counting cross-training as umpires of race officers for some of the judge certification requirements. Darryl points out that we don't emphasize education, we emphasize "start the certification process". What most people want is the education. Invite sailors to participate on a panel to help give back to the sport and learn something, rather than overwhelm them with a long list of certification requirements.

Add offshore section to Judges' Manual (John Porter, Nancy Glover)

John observes a discrepancy between events for things like discretionary penalties and redress. Guidance is unclear. John volunteers to assemble a group with offshore experience to develop best practices for DPs and redress. Proposes a round table in April or June, prepare it to add to the Judges' Manual.

Race Official renewal (John Porter) Closed Session

Wayne requests an update about the question on the judge application and renewal form that says "I have never been denied participation in, or resigned from, any organization or professional association because of unprofessional, improper or unlawful conduct." State laws vary and US Sailing is waiting for a legal opinion about whether to include this question.

Setting up the meeting schedule (Edith Collins)

Every 2 months.

Edith will start an email discussion shortly to develop the 2026 meeting schedule.

Other Questions:

How long can you be a JIT before you must fish or cut bait?

Right now, there is no time limit. It's RAJ discretion.

Safe Sport reminders are difficult to understand what is required. How to figure it out?

US Sailing doesn't know which class you need to take. Log in through US Sailing and Safe Sport should take you to the correct module. Alas, Safe Sport won't tell you you're done. Encourage people to do Safe Sport near the deadline because renewal lasts one year from the date of taking the class. Also, Matt says read the directions, it helps.

Any thoughts on automated race management systems like Vakaros, from a judges' perspective.?

OCS boats can return to start a lot faster than without Vakaros. This could be faster than the Rule 42 judge boat expects. CAUTION!

Any other issues to note? Consider adding to technology night roundtable and judges' manual.

Insurance update from Matt:

There have been very preliminary discussions about captains' insurance from a different provider covering race officials.

Items for April JC meeting:

Proposals on certification (John Porter)

Consider setting a deadline to changes to requirements – potentially the annual meeting.

Suggestions for 2027:

Add competence in remote hearings for NJs: need to be able to log into Zoom and run a hearing.

Add a problem-solving test and an interview for NJ (can partially replace hearing requirements)

Add a procedural question hearing discussion for NJ

Consider how to handle the distance-from-home criterion for snowbirds who officiate in two locations.

Tech Committee (John Porter)

John recommends forming a nerd subcommittee to work on information technology improvements like adding roles in SOARS (for example, the Rule 42 certification). What can we do with SOARS right now to improve it, like adding ability to pull out event reports?

Race Official complaint procedure (John Porter)

John recommends looking at World Sailing rule 69 hearing guidance, it might be more efficient. Consider the rights of the parties. (Note that Edith and Barbara used the new guidance for difficult conversations in December 2025, and it went reasonably well.)

Matt thanks the JC again!

XVII. Meeting Adjourned at 3:25 PM CST, 1:25 PM PST

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Belt