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Race Management Newsletter

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Services

The Race Management Group is always available to give you help and advice on any aspect of Race Management, from helping you to check your Club or Open Meeting Sailing Instructions or advising you on what you need to do to run a major event.

Do not hesitate to ask for help. Contact Gordon Stredwick at the RYA or any of the Committee members listed on page 1 or your Regional Race Management Co-ordinators listed below.

Your Regional Race Management Co-ordinator can also arrange training seminars for your region. Contact them for dates and times.

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EDITOR'S NOTES

My third newsletter coincides with the start of the sailing season, except for the hardy ones who get wet in winter, and we wish you good sailing in 2007.

Two particularly relevant articles, which some will have seen at regional conferences, refer to conduct and competence of race officials and rules disputes best practices for which the RYA have now appointed rules advisors charged with running club level courses to train members as rules advisors. The list of advisors around the country can be obtained from Hamble or you could contact your regional RM co-ordinator.

We also have the first of what I hope will be regular articles from our judge/umpire colleagues, and I would like to thank them in anticipation.

I am still very keen to get more feedback on any topic or your own thoughts on RM matters and these could be anonymous if you so wished.

Finally, my thanks to contributors many of whom are now 'regulars' and a request for more to join in perhaps with reports of your trials and tribulations this season.

(This may be the first newsletter with an illustration!!!!!!)

David Shepherd

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

In the last year a great deal of work has been done on the National Race Officer scheme by the Race Management Group by the RYA Race Officials Education Officer, David Campbell-James and by the RYA Performance Manager, Gordon Stredwick. In future the requirements qualification for all RYA Race Officials (Judges, Umpires and Race Officers) will be similar and also relate to the ISAF scheme for International Officials.

The revised scheme is now approved. An exam is no longer needed for NRO renewal and there are other smaller changes. The matrix of Race Official Qualifications is elsewhere in this magazine and also can be found on RYA website at www.rya.org.uk/WorkingWithUs/raceofficials/Howtobecomearaceofficial.

The expanded detail behind the Race Management scheme will be placed on RYA website in due course. This will include a new simpler application form.

The U.K. Race Team now comprises 106 Club Race Officer Plus's, 293 Regional Race Officers and 115 National Race Officers of whom 22 are also International Race Officers - a formidable force to undertake the aims of running more and better racing. National Race Officers are now eligible to receive a special RYA Race Officials shirt that which will enhance their appearance on duty.

This year the Eurosaf scheme gave opportunities to four of our Race Officers to travel abroad. RMG is very grateful to those overseas clubs who have offered these positions. It would greatly help enlarge the availability of such posts if UK clubs offered more A.R.O (Assistant Race Officers) positions at their major events. Please consider this if you are involved in the organisation of such an event. It would be good if the UK could offer 10 such events for overseas Race Officers to come and take part in. This would enable the reverse flow to take place.

Internally there are opportunities for UK Race Officer's experience to be broadened. Openings for UK Race Officers to gain experience are advertised on the Race Officials section of the RYA website. Please take advantage of these and also add your club's Open events to this section. URL <http://www.rya.org.uk/WorkingWithUs/raceofficials/opportunities.htm>. For new opportunity offers, please contact David Campbell-James on raceofficials@rya.org.uk.

A mark-laying scheme for training mark-layers throughout the UK is being developed. More news after a pilot scheme to train future instructors has taken place in the Autumn.

A Code of Conduct for Race Officers is being developed to go with the Disciplinary Process, a measure essential for resolving the very occasional disciplinary problems that arise in our sector.

The main aims for RYA Race Management Group for 2007 are as follows:

- Regional Conferences - Carry out the planned programme as efficiently as possible.
- RRO Courses - ensure these are given publicity and have all materials.
- Ensure that lessons learned from past events are incorporated into best practice documents and also in (where appropriate) CRO/RRO course instruction.
- RYA Website RM pages try and improve content and presentation of the web site which should be an invaluable tool and a ready reference section for all UK race officers.
- NRO exam - inaugurate at Regional conferences above, assess the effect. Review.
- Carryout response to routine enquiries on NOR/SIs and sailing matters in an efficient and useful manner.
- RYA Race Management Newsletter - produce and publish a steady stream of these.
- Directory of products and services - expand and keep current.
- RYA Mark-layer course and qualification, bring to fruition.
- Race Officers disciplinary process procedure is ongoing.
- Review and revise Race Management advice for running Handicap Racing.

The RYA Race Management Group has changed this year as the current term for some long serving members has come to its close. David Lees, Mike Pearson and Jamie Wilkinson have retired from the Group and in their place Tony Lovell, IRO, from the Hamble and Brian Anderson, NRO, from Largs bring their expertise to the Group.

Thank you to those departed for all their hard work and welcome to the new members.
Best wishes to all Race Officers for a successful sailing season.

Roger Palmer

Appendix LE Version October 2006 - What's New?

Appendix LE is the expanded sailing instructions guide with a number of extra provisions over and above those suggested in the Racing Rules of Sailing Appendix L.

Many of the suggested new Sis start with being printed in Appendix LE. Appendix LE has the advantage of being updated at intervals during the four year duration of Appendix L.

New this year are the following: -

1.5 References to medal races. These races in which the top ten in fleet racing in an important regatta compete as a separate unit on the last day of racing. From the top ten the medal positions will be awarded. The Addendum Q regulates such a competition.

8.4 The SI for the use of an orange flag as an attention flag has been reworded. It is noted that 'F' flag SI, also an attention flag instruction, has been discontinued.

14.5 V Flag SI. This instruction is missing pending a debate on the situation just before and immediately after the start.

24 Advertising. This is a new one and deals with obligations of boats issued with advertising material supplied by the National Authority.

31 Radio Communication. In addition to the standard SI to restrict communication to and from a boat, a separate SI prohibits a boat from carrying the means to communicate. Not to be used for cruiser racing! It might upset the owners.

Course Diagrams. New this year in the course diagrams are the neat little flag-masts and flags on the committee boats. Full text is available on <http://www.sailing.org/?cm=z/vFGipCCLnzFw>

Roger Palmer.

RYA RACING BEST PRACTICES - RULES DISPUTES

INTRODUCTION

If an incident on the water in fleet racing is not resolved by a boat taking a penalty (one turn for touching a mark, two turns for breaking a rule of Part 2 of the Racing Rules of Sailing, retiring in other cases), then the normal outcomes are:

- a protest hearing which may result in a disqualification: this appears to be becoming less common
- a boat retires after finishing: this can happen
- nothing happens, because there is no protest, and no retirement: this is becoming too frequent

The RYA understands a reluctance to take matters to protest hearings, but no one in the sport should condone disregard of the rules. The RYA therefore wishes to recommend that clubs should consider adopting:

- (a) an Exoneration Penalty which is less severe than disqualification, and is available after racing for many infringements; and
- (b) An Advisory Hearing and RYA Arbitration, two new quicker ways of resolving disputes.

EXONERATION PENALTY

- a 20% scoring penalty as stated in rule 44.3(c) (except that the minimum penalty is two places)
- it may be accepted after finishing and before the start of any protest hearing
- when it is accepted, a protest committee cannot penalise that boat further over the same incident
- once accepted, it cannot be withdrawn even if a protest committee later decides no rule was broken
- It is available for breaches of the rules of Part 2 (rules 10-22) and of rule 31.1, if a penalty could have been taken for the infringement at the time of the incident: and for breaking rule 42.

PUTTING THE EXONERATION PENALTY INTO EFFECT

Adopting the Exoneration Penalty does not need either the Advisory Hearing or RYA Arbitration to be adopted, but the Exoneration Penalty is an essential part of RYA Arbitration. It may be decided that making the Exoneration Penalty available for a boat to accept will be sufficient. However, the use of one or both of the two new methods for resolving disputes is recommended, and can be stated to apply in the notice of race and in the sailing instructions. They are:

1. AN ADVISORY HEARING

Its purpose is to discuss incidents with an advisor and resolve them promptly in an informal but positive way, so that competitors understand the rules better. It is available only where there is no related protest or RYA Arbitration.

When an Advisory Hearing is requested, and if all parties agree to attend, an advisor will quickly hear what the parties have to say, decide whether the issues are clear enough without further evidence, and, if so say whether any boat broke a rule, and, if so, which and why.

Redress is not available, but a race committee may agree to correct a mistake if it comes to light.

2. RYA ARBITRATION

Its purpose is to decide simpler protests and simpler requests for redress more quickly.

When a protest form is lodged, a boat may request RYA Arbitration, or the protest committee may suggest it. If the boats and a member of the protest committee or race committee agree that RYA Arbitration is suitable because it appears that the facts are likely to be clear, or the issue is not complex and that witnesses may not be essential, a single arbitrator (who may be that member of the protest committee) hears the evidence of the parties and decides whether any boat broke a rule, and, if so, which and why. The arbitrator will then invite a boat that appears to have broken a rule to accept an Exoneration Penalty. When a penalty is accepted, this will conclude the matter. When it is not accepted, the protest hearing will follow. The arbitrator may decide that in fact the matter should be heard as a full protest, but a boat may still accept an Exoneration Penalty before the hearing which will avoid the possibility of disqualification.

When redress is offered and accepted, the protest committee or race committee may ask for a full hearing. When it is offered and not accepted, or not offered at all, the boat may proceed with her request at a full hearing before a protest committee.

SUMMARY - ADVISORY HEARINGS, RYA ARBITRATION AND PROTEST HEARINGS

	ADVISORY HEARING	RYA ARBITRATION	PROTEST HEARING
Initiation	Oral request	Protest form	Protest form
Validity of Protest notification	Not required	Required	Required
Time Limit for a boat to ask for a hearing	Normal protest time limit	Normal protest time limit, arbitration request may be made on the protest form related to the incident	Normal protest time limit
If one boat does not agree to participate -	- the hearing will not take place	- the arbitration will not take place, and it will be heard as a normal protest	- the protest committee will normally proceed if one party decides not to attend
Penalty	A boat may voluntarily accept an Exoneration Penalty if it is available for the rule broken, but she is not required to do so.	Arbitrator may invite (but not require) a boat to accept an Exoneration Penalty if it is available for the infringement, or, if it is not, to retire (RAF)	Normal disqualification or other applicable penalty
If there was damage or a boat gained a significant advantage	Exoneration Penalty not available, the boat should retire	Exoneration Penalty not available, the boat should retire	Disqualification for not retiring
Redress	Cannot be awarded, but a Race Committee may correct an error that is identified	Full range of redress options where the issue is not complicated	Full range of redress options
Further options	None	Any party may seek to have the decision reviewed by calling for a full hearing of the protest or request by a protest committee.	The decision may be appealed
Paperwork	Club log	Completed protest form	Completed protest form

ADVISORY HEARING PROCEDURE

1. Competitor asks the race office for an Advisory Hearing, and tells the other competitor(s)
2. The race office logs the request, and tells the advisor, who checks that all competitors concerned are willing to attend and do not intend to lodge a protest or ask for redress. A hearing is convened
3. Each competitor takes a few minutes to say what happened. Normally, no other witnesses are called
4. The advisor asks questions and announces the outcome. If the facts are clear, the advisor uses the rule book to explain the rules that apply, and whether a rule was broken. If a rule was broken, and a boat accepts this, she should consider accepting an Exoneration Penalty if it is available for the rule considered broken, or otherwise consider retiring. She is not obliged to do this.
5. If the facts are not clear, the advisor will try to advise how the rules would apply to varying possible facts.
6. This procedure can be used instead of a request for redress to seek correction of a boat's score, in which case a race committee representative will attend. The race committee is not obliged to accept the decision of the advisor.

RYA ARBITRATION PROCEDURE

1. A boat will lodge a protest form in the normal way, and within the normal time limit
2. When RYA Arbitration is provided for in the notice of race and sailing instructions, its use may be initiated by any party (the protest form may provide for a protestor to ask for this) or by a member of the protest committee or race committee. The protest committee appoints an arbitrator, who will first establish that there was no injury or serious damage, that the issue is not complex and that witnesses should not be needed. If the arbitrator is satisfied, and if all parties agree, an arbitration hearing will be called, to take place as soon as possible in a quiet place, but with observers permitted to attend.
3. If the arbitrator judges the issue too complex, or if a party does not agree to arbitration, the issue will be heard as a normal protest. Any boat may accept an Exoneration Penalty before the start of a full protest hearing (or retire if she caused damage or gained a significant advantage).
4. The arbitrator follows the same procedure as for a protest hearing (see Appendix M), starting with establishing whether the protest was valid. If it is, the parties then briefly state their case. They may question each other, and the arbitrator will question them.
5. The arbitrator may decide at any time during the hearing that the issue would in fact better be heard by a full protest committee, and may suspend the arbitration. Any boat may accept an Exoneration Penalty before the start of a full protest hearing (or retire if she caused damage or gained a significant advantage). However, the arbitrator may instead decide that hearing other witness evidence immediately will enable an immediate and clear decision to be made.
6. The arbitrator establishes and summarises the facts, and states the rules that apply and the conclusions. A boat adjudged to have broken a rule is asked to accept an Exoneration Penalty (or retire if she caused damage or gained a significant advantage).
7. When a protestee accepts an Exoneration Penalty or decides to retire, the protestor is invited and allowed to withdraw the protest.
8. No party is obliged to accept an Exoneration Penalty or retire, and no party is obliged to accept that another party did not break a rule. In either case, the party is entitled to have the matter heard as a normal protest. So if a boat does not agree to accept a penalty or retire, the other party has the option of a full hearing.
9. The arbitrator completes the protest form and returns it to the race office. If a full protest hearing is to follow, no new protest form from the party is needed, and the protest committee will attach a fresh second page to the protest form for its own hearing.
10. If for any reason RYA Arbitration does not or can not resolve the issue to the parties' satisfaction, and it then proceeds to a protest hearing, any party may accept an Exoneration Penalty at any time before the protest hearing starts. An Exoneration Penalty, once accepted, cannot be withdrawn or removed, even if a protest committee later decides that a boat that accepted an Exoneration Penalty did not in fact break a rule.

11. When a boat accepts an Exoneration Penalty at the arbitration or at any time before the start of a protest hearing, she will not be penalized further at the protest hearing if the protest committee decides that the penalty she has already accepted was appropriate to the facts it finds.
12. When redress is offered and accepted at the RYA Arbitration, the protest committee or race committee may ask for a full hearing. When redress is offered and not accepted, or not offered at all, the boat may have her request heard before a protest committee.
13. When RYA Arbitration proceeds to a full protest hearing, there is no objection in principle to the arbitrator being a member of the protest committee, but a protest committee may decide not to have the arbitrator as a member.

PUTTING THESE PROCEDURES INTO EFFECT

Add to the notice of race:

The Exoneration Penalty [and the Advisory Hearing and RYA Arbitration] of the RYA Rules Disputes Procedures will be available.

AND EITHER

Post these procedures on the official notice board, and add as applicable to the sailing instructions:

The Exoneration Penalty [and the Advisory Hearing and RYA Arbitration procedures] of the RYA Rules Disputes Procedures will be available. See the official notice board for details.

OR

Add as applicable to the sailing instructions (choose a different percentage or minimum if desired, consider adding a maximum as well):

X Exoneration Penalty

- x.1 A boat that may have broken a rule of Part 2, or rule 31.1 or 42, may, after finishing the race concerned and before the start of a related protest hearing, notify the race committee that she accepts a 20% scoring penalty as stated in rule 44.3(c), (except that the minimum penalty is two places if that does not result in a score worse than DNF). This penalty does not reverse an OCS score, a disqualification under rule 30.3 or a penalty under Appendix P. It is not available for a breach of rule 2 or of class rules or for gross misconduct under rule 69. Nor is it available to a boat that caused injury or serious damage, or gained a significant advantage by her breach: in these circumstances, her penalty is to retire.
- x.2 When an Exoneration Penalty is accepted,
 - (a) neither the boat nor a protest committee may then revoke or remove the penalty.
 - (b) the boat shall not be penalized further in a protest hearing when the protest committee decides that it was appropriate to the facts found and the applicable rules.

Y Advisory Hearing

When there is an incident that will not result in the lodging of a protest or a request for redress, a boat may, within the protest time limit, lodge a request for an advisory hearing with the race office, and notify any other boat involved in the incident. An advisor will then call a hearing to learn what may have happened and will state whether any rule appears to have been broken, and by which boat. A boat may as a result notify the race office that she accepts an Exoneration Penalty when it applies to the incident, or choose to retire.

Z RYA Arbitration

- Z.1 When a protest or request for redress is lodged, a boat may at the same time request RYA Arbitration, or the protest committee or race committee may offer it.
- Z.2 If the parties and a member of the protest or race committee agree that RYA Arbitration is suitable because it appears that the issue is not complex and that witnesses may not be essential, an arbitrator (who may be that member of the protest committee) will call a hearing conforming to Section B of Part 5 of the Racing Rules of Sailing, except that rule 64.1 will not apply. Instead, when the arbitrator decides that a boat that is a party to the arbitration hearing has broken a rule for which the Exoneration Penalty is available, the party will be invited to accept that penalty, and, if it is accepted by a protested boat, the protesting boat will be allowed to withdraw the protest, changing rule 63.1.

- Z.3 When there is not an agreement to use RYA Arbitration, or when, after RYA Arbitration, a protest is not withdrawn or the Exoneration Penalty is not applicable to the facts, there will be a normal protest hearing, at which the arbitrator may be a member of the protest committee. Rule 66 will not apply to the arbitration decision. A boat may still accept an Exoneration Penalty at any time before the start of a protest hearing and receive its protection from further penalization. She may also retire.
- Z.4 When redress is offered and accepted at the RYA Arbitration, the protest committee or race committee may seek to have this reviewed by asking for a full hearing. When redress is offered and not accepted, or not offered at all, the boat may have her request heard before a protest committee.

NOTE TO SCORERS

When an Exoneration Penalty is accepted by a boat, the designation XPA (Exoneration Penalty Accepted) is recommended. If she retires, she is to be scored RAF.

COMMITTEE BOATS

Tony Lockett and Roger Palmer in their contribution to the November Newsletter raise the same pious hopes for purpose built Committee Boats Armed with the Newsletter I raised the question at last weeks Board meeting at WPNSA , only to be told in no uncertain manner that the provision of CB`s was down to LOCOG , not to the Academy or to the RYA

So if and when LOCOG decide to hire , build , beg, borrow or steal the committee boats what will they be like ? Who decides what is a good or a bad CB ? Is there a basic design to suit all waters and types of racing ? Has that design been decided upon ? And if so by whom ? And do you like what you may get ?

In 1985 we decided to commission a design for a CB and approached David Thomas, against whom I had raced many times in the Soling Class . We held meetings and drew up a list of requirements for a self build steel boat . Why steel? Partly because we had enjoyed the pleasure that year of starting a highly competitive J24 event in turbulent waters just offshore from Lee on Solent . Fan starts on the transom of our grp Fjord 33 motor sailor convinced me that one heavy strike would see Sorebones 2 on the bottom ! Without the skill to build in wood , with little confidence in ferro cement , and with no suitable grp hulls for self build we settled on welding steel .

First consideration was motor cruiser or sailing boat ? We settled for a yacht since tall spars would make for good flag display . Sailing being an option if the engine failed or a rope tangled the prop . Then we compiled and agreed a list of essential requirements for a CB ,. Now , having launched Sorebones 3 in April 1987 , we can look back on a total of 278 events completed , each ranging from the basic two days to week long annual championships or 10 day Olympic Trial / World Championship duration . I thought maybe now was a good time for readers of the RMN to put together their own list of desirable features for their idea of an ` ideal committee boat` So here are some requirements that I have remembered from the preparation of the David Thomas design brief:

- 1 The boat at anchor should provide a stable working platform
- 2 There should be a good well elevated viewpoint for the race officers
- 3 There should be tall masts with a solid horizontal connecting spar upon which to display flag signals. We have 14 halliards spaced along our spar .
Two masts would provide a semi permanent structure that was more suitable than a single spar supporting only one end of the flag display .
The mizzen mast to have mast furling so that in adverse tide that sail can rapidly be pulled out to keep the CB square to the line . At the World Youth Ch I was asked to deploy a stern anchor by the ISAF official in charge . I declined and pulled out the mizzen sail . From then on I was asked to pull out the sail each day!
4. The vessel; must be fit to remain on duty in all but the most severe conditions of wind and waves If the competitors are still trying to race we must be able to remain on duty to serve them
- 5 There must be a good anchoring system with a robust powered winch . A system that is safe to operate on a pitching fore deck . The vessel should have adequate speed to get to and from the race area in good time , and to enable a swift move to a finish at another (? windward) mark if required.

- 6 There should be adequate instrumentation with True Wind Direction , and True wind Speed to be recorded as the CB motors to and from the Race area.
These to be replicated on instruments up on the RO`s start position
A second anemometer , either hand held or fixed , to give wind speed at deck level . Or the height of the sailsof the competitors . A Wind Speed at 40 ft mast head for the Opi Fleet also requires a lower reading . Depth reading is a given , but water temperature now that winter training goes on all year round is maybe wise .
- 7 A large wheel house with a wide view over the race area . Within this should be a large chart table so that the race area can be seen without the RO having to dive below decks Instruments to be readily observed from the chart table area .
- 8 There should be a large sheltered cockpit for the race team . Somewhere between races to double check results between teams and to listen to tape recorders . Or just to get warm again out of a chill wind .
- 9 A decent sized galley to prepare warm drinks to the team , or to rescued cold competitors .
- 10 There should be easy access from a RIB without climbing over sagging guard rails . Also may be required to take on board injured or sick competitors or officials.
- 11 A built in PA system for making sound signals , but also for passing information to competitors Too often competitors may be left in ignorance of the RO`s intentions
- 12 The CB should have at least two radio base stations , as well as the usual hand held sets . In working in a commercial shipping area it may be essential to have one set listening for advice of movements from the local harbour master
- 13 Afore compartment with its own hatch for the `Gunner ` A place where he/she can keep the ` powder ` dry and a position at the very bow where cannon may be safely used without risk to the premature starters A place where he/she can shelter if required

I am sure there were other requirements that have escaped me .

Race Officers may wish to contribute their own ideas as to the ideal CB so that in the unlikely event that the RMG is asked how it wished to best spend LOCOG`s money there is a consensus of opinion .

ISAF`s requirement for flags to be 2ft hoist x 3ft fly puts pressure upon the spacing of halliards.

But do we really have to have a 3 metre high orange flag with battens , reading START downwards in large letters on a mast that is already orange coloured ? . Have we not gone too far? .

I am thinking of marking Mark 1 with lettering that read - with a pointing finger

“ TURN LEFT HERE “ ↵

Sorry we looked a mess Tony ! Given another 20 years we may get it right

In my experience all Race Officers are disparate ,though we all have a common aim.

Frank Newton

RYA CLASS JUDGE SCHEME

The RYA Class Judge scheme was established, with little fanfare outside the judging community, just over two years ago. It is now perhaps appropriate to set out, to those involved in race management, what are its aims and to see how it is starting to impact on regatta activity in the UK.

The initial activity was within the RYA Pathway Junior classes – Cadets, Mirrors Optimists & Toppers. If we are going to keep our leading edge in Olympic dinghy sailing then our sailors have to not just sail fast, they have to sail fairly and within the rules. So, to inculcate rules awareness and good behaviour from the outset should help junior sailors outperform in international competitions. There should be less time in the protest room, less risk of yellow flags when sailing under Appendix P and better chances of success in defending themselves from unfair behaviour or when a genuine dispute leads to the Jury Room.

The objectives of the scheme are:

“To make sailing more fair and more fun by providing classes with:-

- 1. Consistent application of the Racing Rules of Sailing and RYA Best Practices in Rules Disputes.*
- 2. Support for initiatives leading to high standards of compliance amongst competitors*
- 3. Training and education in the Racing Rules of Sailing for sailors and others involved with the administration of the class*
- 4. Training in protest procedures and administration when appropriate”*

Each of the Junior classes appointed a judge who committed to attending a minimum of five regattas a year plus being available for a training weekend with the class and attending the annual Class Judge review meeting.

The regattas involved are the selector trials for GBR squads, the inland and open national championships. The judges involved are IJ or NJ, trained in Rule 42 with powerboat 2 qualifications as a minimum. Given that they are working with children, they are also required to apply for Criminal Records Board enhanced disclosure. A good technical knowledge of the class they are judging is required. Sensitivity and high diplomatic skills are needed in dealing with children and their parents. As Class Judges are normally parachuted into clubs hosting regattas, further diplomacy is needed when liaising with club personnel. A Class Judge appointment is probably the most challenging job available to judges in the UK.

Looking then at how the scheme is meeting its objectives, and referring to the items numbered above.

1. The consistency of rules application is certainly benefiting competitors. Interestingly, because there is a cadre of judges interested and committed to working at the highest level of competition, there is an instant test bed for initiatives such as advisory or arbitration hearings. The fact that judges are developing these skills and taking them to clubs around the country is helping educate clubs.
2. The fact that judges are working closely with classes enables patterns of behaviour to be identified. Classes have, whether through hearsay or experience, often identified their own black sheep but have been unable or hesitant to act. The appointment of a Class Judge has enabled recurring issues to be highlighted. When appropriate, judges have been able either to act to curb improper behaviour via rule 2 or 69 or to guide classes in their own internal disciplinary hearings. But, more importantly, because the sailors feel that they can approach judges for advice, it is so much easier to educate them not just in the rules but the whole ethos of sailing within the terms of the RYA Charter.
3. Much closer links are developing with coaches so as to enable rules education programmes to be implemented. Coaches, class committee members, parents and sailors are invited onto judge boats so that the judging process and methodology can be better understood.
4. Judges can and do get involved in rules education. The close liaison between judges, classes and clubs is acting as a natural recruitment and training ground as judges for parents or others involved.

There are negatives – although judges are not paid, they do get expenses, need to be provided with RIBs for on the water work and need a layer of administrative sport in the RYA and the classes. For judges, the role is not easy and judges can be vulnerable to criticism – unlike being a relatively anonymous target on a protest committee, a Class Judge is highly visible and can be an easy target. Class Judges of the requisite quality and prepared to commit the time are not easy to recruit.

However, if acceptance by the sailors and classes is seen as a sign of success, then the evidence is that more classes are looking to the Class Judge scheme. Finns, 420's, RS200s now all also have Class Judges, and the 29ers are about to advertise for one.

As we enter the third season of the scheme, then it would seem that there is real progress. The scheme is by no means perfect, but the feedback we get via race officers, sailors, classes, judges and the RYA will hopefully maintain the momentum.

So how is this impacting on regatta activity? It is certainly making the sailing fairer and more fun for the sailors. There have been some dramatic improvements in rules understanding and on-the-water behaviour in certain classes.

But there are other benefits. We (hopefully) never try to tell race officers how to do their job. But we can be a sounding board to best practice for race officers in clubs that haven't previously been exposed to the effect of a well attended, highly competitive RYA pathway event.

We can showcase the advantages of advisory or arbitration hearings. It's much more fun for everybody if disputes can be sorted out on the water or in the boat-park rather than in the protest room. But if disputes do go to formal protest hearings, then clubs would normally be asked to provide additional protest committee members and this also enables best practice to be reinforced.

Feedback from race officers who have had contact with the Class Judge programme has been universally positive.

Generally, then, the effect is to bring a wider range of skills and experience to all those that the scheme comes into contact with. This is reinforcing the message of the RYA Charter and hopefully will contribute to the sport in years to come.

David Brunskill

RACE MANAGEMENT GROUP and JUDGING AND UMPIRING GROUP **GUIDELINES** **THE CONDUCT AND COMPETENCE OF RACE OFFICIALS**

1. These Guidelines are published to set out the powers and obligations of the RYA administration, the Race Management Group, the Judging and Umpiring Group and the Racing Committee in dealing with complaints received concerning the conduct and competence of certified race officials.
2. When comments of whatever nature are received by the RYA administration, they will be considered by the staff member responsible jointly with the Chairman of the Race Management Group or the Judging and Umpiring Group as appropriate. If the comment is especially complimentary, the race official should be informed immediately. If it is critical, it should be classified as either insignificant, minor, major or urgent and serious on the following basis:-
 - (a) Insignificant Reports – reports which are considered not to be of any significance in relation to the competence or conduct of the certified Race Official concerned.
 - (b) Minor Reports – reports which are relevant to the conduct or competence of the Race Official and may be passed to him to assist in improving his technique, but which are not serious enough to warrant any disciplinary action.
 - (c) Major Reports – reports which disclose a lack of competence or conduct serious enough to warrant a formal investigation and possible sanctions. These may include a series of minor reports commenting on the same or similar problems.
 - (d) Urgent and Serious Reports – reports which disclose a lack of competence or conduct so serious that it would be appropriate to consider immediate suspension of the Race Official and subsequent termination of his appointment.
3. Reports will be categorised as insignificant unless they are in writing and made by either a Race Official, a competitor or another party with first hand contact with the Race Official involved.
4. Where a report or complaint is categorised as insignificant or minor, no further action shall be taken except as provided in Paragraph 5.
5. Where a report or complaint is categorised as minor, it shall be recorded by the staff member responsible.
6. If a number of similar reports or complaints are received, they should be passed on to the Race Official concerned for his information. The purpose of doing so will be primarily to educate him, and advice and assistance will be provided by the RYA to help overcome any problems that he may have.
7. Where a report or complaint is categorised as major or as urgent and serious, formal action by the RYA will be taken. The matter will be reported to the Chairman of the relevant Group, who will be responsible for initiating all further action, having taken such advice as he considers appropriate.

8. If the conduct alleged is so serious that it is considered that it comes within the ambit of RRS 69.2, the matter shall be dealt with under that provision.
9. Where formal action is to be taken outside Rule 69.2, the Chairman of the relevant group shall appoint a panel to investigate the report. The panel shall comprise up to three experienced and independent race officials in the discipline concerned, appropriate to make a timely investigation (normally within three months). The Race Official concerned shall be informed of the investigation at its inception, and of the complaints made, and shall be supplied with all relevant documents. He shall be entitled to answer the allegations in writing and orally before the panel if he so elects.
10. The panel shall investigate the report and recommend to the Chairman that no further action is taken, or that sanctions shall be imposed, or that that matter shall be referred to the Racing Committee. If appropriate and if it so decides, the panel may recommend that such sanctions remain in force either permanently or for a stated period. The Chairman shall confirm the recommendation or decide that the sanction to be imposed shall be less than that recommended. On confirmation, the Chairman shall report the decision to the Race Official concerned and to Racing Committee.
11. The panel may recommend the following sanctions:
 - that a verbal warning be given
 - that a written warning be given
 - that the Race Official shall not be appointed to or approved for events of a specified grade or type
 - that the Race Official be supervised when attending an event
 - that the Race Official attend a seminar before attending a further event
 - that the Race Official take a test in the discipline concerned
 - that the Race Official be suspended from his appointment for up to one year
 - that the appointment of the Race Official be terminated
12. If the recommendation is that the appointment be terminated, the matter will be referred to the Racing Committee which shall be the only body with power to terminate an appointment.
13. If the recommendation is for any action other than suspension or termination, the Race Official concerned may appeal against the recommendation to the Racing Committee, whose decision shall be final.
14. If the recommendation is for suspension or termination, the Race Official concerned may appeal against the recommendation to the RYA Tribunal, whose decision shall be final.

CLUBS, CLASSES, CASH - CLASH

I have been a member of several class associations and several clubs. What I have never done is be a member of a class association committee in any way except for a four-year stint as Racing Director of the International 49er Committee.

What amazes me is that every class association committee member is a club member somewhere. So why do I get the impression that classes frequently take clubs for a ride when it comes to the entry fees for championships and open meetings?

A very controversial statement! But lets look at a few hard facts.

Way back in the early 70's, I trailed the open meeting circuit with my Fireball, mainly in North Wales. For a weekends sailing, usually four races of around 2 hours each, I paid between £4 and £5. Multiply that figure by inflation to today's situation and the equivalent is around £40. So why are class associations telling me that they have a fixed rate for all their open meetings of between £20 and £25 irrespective of the costs?

To add further to my concerns about the way Open Meetings are financed is the refusal of many classes to put a closing date on weekend events. Net result is a club committing itself financially (food in the galley; fuel in the tanks) and because the weather does not suit a heavy crew or a light crew, boats don't arrive in the numbers suggested by the Class!

Finally. Classes rely on volunteers from the club to run 'their' event. Those volunteers provide their services because they hope to see some financial reward for the club, which might help to replace an engine, a new boiler or many of the other things that a club needs. No profit, no volunteers! Just think what it would cost if each volunteer were paid the minimum hourly wage!

Llandudno Sailing Club, my club, have recently stepped back into the weekend championship market after several years of saying no for the very reasons above. How long we stay there is dependent on the classes being realistic and giving a fair return for a fair days work.

Just think! A ticket for a Premiership football match varies between £30 and £40 for 90 minutes spectating.

Isn't it time we got realistic?

Tony Lockett

ASYMMETRIC YACHTS – COLOURS & CIRCLES

I was at a catamaran event in Hyeres last year (F18) Worlds and on some of the days there were large waves. These cats were very fast and they had difficulty picking out the "gate" behind their sails. I had been at the 49er Worlds and seen similar difficulties with the boats blasting into the gate marks.

With the gate separation of 8 – 10 lengths there seemed to be an additional difficulty for the crews, WHICH GATE WAS IT!

Once they had located the gate they had to decide if it was left to port or to starboard, this was often not easy. I was asked, why do race committees not mark the gate marks port or starboard, either by having them red and green or with coloured bands? I thought this was a good question, but I had no answer - Do you?

Any comments to Mike Butterfield pmbutterfield@msn.com

With the speed of these boats do you think that rule 18.2(e) could apply often. This is the part of Rule 18 where it says "If the outside boat is unable to give room when an overlap begins, then" ... it does not have to. With the speed of the boats this could be a problem, have any of you encountered this? Do you think a move to a three boat length zone might be an advantage here?

Any comments as above.

Mike Butterfield IRO IU NJ
Royal Dee Yacht Club
07973 228636
01248 810300

WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND – THE VENUE

`What a difference a day makes` - or so the song tells us . Certainly the day London was awarded 2012 made a difference to the `perception` of the Weymouth sailing venue. But apart from the new WPNSA facility nothing has changed. The tide has not gone further out . The winds are as they were . Global warming has not yet made a capsized any more a comfortable experience . So for those who do not know our waters I offer a few words about the sailing to be found there.

Weymouth Bay has long been a sailing and racing area. In the days of the J Class these yachts would depart the Solent for the West Country on a cruise taking in racing in Weymouth Bay en route .Race Management being provided by The Royal Dorset Yacht Club ,who are now based on the Custom House Quay in Weymouth outer harbour . Weymouth Sailing Club across the other side of that harbour was founded at the turn of the 19th century . Castle Cove Sailing Club enjoy their base on the North shore of Portland Harbour , now occupying the site of what was Weymouth Sailing Centre . Phil and Sandra Gollop who owned that centre are now running the new Weymouth & Portland National Sailing Academy on the Portland side of that harbour. The club under whose burgee events are sailed at WPNSA is The Portland Castle Sailing Club . The RNSA are based on swinging moorings just off WPNSA.

So that's a lot of clubs , and this implies that the waters sailed and raced upon are very much busy and shared waters . Competition for water upon which to race can be as hot as the competition between the competitors . The expansion of activities at WPNSA has placed further pressure upon organisers . Fortunately the big asset of the area is that there is plenty of suitable water upon which to race . With care and consideration we can all fit in . So what are these waters ? They are the two sailing areas of Portland Harbour and Weymouth Bay

Portland Harbour is roughly a 2 mile diameter lake Bounded to the North by the town of Weymouth , to the West by Chesil Beach , to the South by the mass of the `Isle of Portland` , and on the East by four lengths of massive harbour walls erected to keep Napoleon at bay.

This wall is pierced by three harbour entrances . The Northern Entrance is the one that sailing vessels transit on entering and leaving the harbour . The Eastern Entrance is a no go area for sailors being the working entrance / exit for vessels using Portland Port . The Southern entrance is a no go area for everyone since a warship , the Hood , was scuttled there to prevent enemy submarine attacks . At the North West corner of the harbour is the bridge over the flow of water in and out of The Fleet , a long stretch of tidal water separated from West Bay by the long mass of Chesil Beach

Of course the tide does result in a flow of water into and out of Portland Harbour , and there are some small tidal effects close to the entrances . But in practice marks are not laid , and Committee Boats are not anchored ,close to the entrances since there are regulations applied by Portland Harbour Authority . Portland is an increasingly busy working harbour .

Bunkering of , often quite large , ships takes

place both inside the harbour and out side in a designated area of Weymouth Bay . Despite this activity it is possible to set two championship courses in the harbour , whilst at the same time running Match Racing and visiting dinghy training groups

It follows that there are some wind directions that cause problems .

A wind from the North results in shifty conditions at Mark 1 if a course is set closer to Weymouth , whilst a Southerly wind can curve round the hump of Portland at times resulting in a race course close to the harbour walls to the East enjoying a different wind to a course closer to the West of the harbour . But with experience most directions result in a useful area of water being available. Consideration has of course to be given to CCSC whose racing area is to the North of the harbour and to the tripper boats who transit the harbour with their loads of holiday makers. They , like this RO , can sometimes be confused by the direction taken by racing dinghies!

During the summer what had seemed a large area of water is reduced when the keel boats take to their moorings , which are spread alongside Chesil Beach and the North shore by CCSC . Windsurfing and Kite Sailing also have their stamping ground along the Chesil Beach shoreside . The advantage of the enclosed Portland waters is most appreciated by the various skiff classes , and the foiling Moths , when these craft can race in much stronger winds and at higher speeds than would be the case were they to be taken into Weymouth Bay .Also by the various Youth Classes in training. At the Topper Nationals last year 300 boats were raced in two groups over one course in the harbour fitting in with no difficulty.

The harbour also comes into its own when there is little wind in the Bay .Frequently whilst boats in the Bay are struggling for a decent wind a breeze will fill in from over the Sailing Academy . Boats on the RNSA moorings will be observed to be swinging to point to the SW and in a short time the wind will fill in across the harbour . Whilst an hour later nothing has yet reached into Weymouth Bay

It is usually possible to set a trapezoid course with a windward leg to Mark 1 at up to 0.8 NM , longer in some wind directions .

The depth in the harbour in the racing areas will vary from 8 to 12 metres . The holding is good but the bottom is thick mud , and at times old cables and junk can cause difficulties . With experience one learns where not to go !

Weymouth Bay is well sheltered from the `prevailing South Westerly winds` Though some years we seem to have had `prevailing North Easterlies` However strong winds from the South East and East are the bad news . In no time a large swell develops and this can make passage from Weymouth Harbour into Portland Harbour, and v v , a very uncomfortable experience . It follows that in these conditions the Committee Boats have to be well anchored with decent hooks and plenty of chain / rope . Depths in the race areas in the Bay can be up to 20 metres , more than this if the race area is set out to sea where there is also much more tidal effect .

There are no go areas close to the Weymouth `sea side` shore These are reserved for bathing etc . The Weymouth SC has its race area in the inner part of the Bay . This is marked with a ring of dark red spherical buoys which have identification letters . When there is WSC club racing a RO setting up a course should liaise with WSC on Ch 37 to determine where that club is setting its course and which marks are being used.

There is plenty of space in the Bay for four courses . However in a sea breeze situation with the wind swinging it is essential to check that no course overlap will develop. It is the case that the Bay is not an area where `first come first served` is the golden rule . Many experienced RO`s have blotted their copybooks even at major events . Allowance has also to be given to the well charted line of approach for commercial ships into Portland Harbour`s Eastern entrance , and to allow room for such vessels on the bunkering stations and on the Pilot station .

There is some tidal effect in the Bay , the movement being clockwise or counter clockwise , and visiting RO`s would be well advised to purchase locally one of the booklets showing such tidal flow . In the usual racing areas this will probably be up to 1 Kn on Spring tides , but further out to sea there will be a much stronger effect up and down the Channel. The summer sea breeze can often be noted by the development of cumulus clouds along the Weymouth shore towards St Albans Head . These may start by about 10.30 hrs with a few wisps and in no time there will be as good line of clouds . Most visiting classes try to opt for a 12.00hrs start of their first race of the day . Big mistake ! If the wind had earlier been from the east or south east at mid day it will start to follow the sun round the clock . The start line has frequently to be re laid with more and more port bias to persuade the competitors away from the CB . Courses may have to be adjusted frequently during racing . A problem if the wind is SW is that the competitors will have no good transit out to sea when timing their start . If there is a West going tide under them then this is a recipe for Gen Recalls . It is better to try to persuade visiting classes to start at about 11.00hrs

However Portland Harbour being 2 miles across and there being a wide shipping channel for Condor Ferries , fishing boats and tripper boats along the Eastern side of the harbour walls , it follows that the Windward Mark 1 will be at least 3 miles from WPNSA . That the start area will be at least 4 miles away , and that due time has to be allowed to get the competitors to the start area . this will entail releasing them by 10.00hrs . Some classes may feel this is early to be out of bed!

So welcome to Weymouth and Portland . Like all race areas it has its good and its bad points . With its Olympic status it has not suddenly changed because the finger now pointing.

O it`s Weymouth this , an` Weymouth that , an” Weymouth go away”
But it`s “ Thank you Mister Portland “ when the band begins to play
The band begins to play , my boys , the band begins to play
O it`s “ Thank you , Mr Portland “ when the band begins to play .

With apologies to Mr Kipling - who does after all bake exceedingly good cakes.

Sorebones.

SITTING THE NEW NRO EXAM.

For the cheery ranks of the vast majority of aspiring Race Officers, certification as a Regional Race Officer is the ‘end’ goal. There are some though, who want to push on further, taking on bigger, more high profile events and for those hardy souls accreditation as a National Race Officer is the ultimate accolade.

During the past year, news from the RYA Race Management Team has been that for 2007, new criteria would be in place for those wishing to take this next step. With the intention of ensuring that their NROs would really be competent to run the ‘top’ events, the RYA introduced a new range of requirements. Just to be considered, you had to be a well established RRO, have your performance at a major event assessed and then sit a ‘closed book’ exam. This exam covers not only Race Management, but a number of secondary subjects, including: Questions on Meteorology, Rules of the Road, Navigation, Tides and Anchoring.

After a busy summer in 2006, in addition to numerous Open Meetings, I was PRO for 64 competitors at the Sprint 15 Nationals. However, this alone would not have put me in the running for a shot at the NRO exam. After responding to an advert posted on the RYA Race Management Website I spent 2 weeks as ARO to Paul Carpenter at the 505 pre-Worlds and Worlds at Hayling Island SC. This fortnight spent with 119 505s, in changeable and often trying conditions, qualified me for the exam, but as I was the first candidate to sit the new exam, preparation proved to be a little.

challenging as I was unsure which topics would be covered in detail. As the first candidate taking the exam, pass or fail, the Race Management Team was very interested to receive feedback.

Having now taken the exam (and passed!), the best advice I can offer to a future candidate is to know, and know well, the content of the RYA Day Skipper syllabus. This will help you cover the non Race Management part of the exam. For the rest of the Paper, it is not dissimilar to the one used to assess RROs, except of course it is a 'closed book' examination. What I did find different and challenging, was answering 40 varied questions in the time allowed which was only 40 minutes. Some of the questions on the more general topics were quite detailed and needed an element of calculation.

To summarise, you need to draw upon your in depth Race Management expertise to answer these questions quickly, allowing yourself more time to complete the rest of the paper. I was 'stressed', but not 'distressed', by the experience and after analysing post exam feedback, I believe the errors I made, came more from lack of time, rather than a lack of knowledge.

For all RROs looking to sit the exam, my advice is - preparation is the key and know your subject! When you are positioned as a Race Officer on the end of a start line, you often have to react quickly and accurately to changing situations, a situation not dissimilar to sitting the NRO exam.

David Henshall
Netley Sailing Club

THE ROLE OF THE RYA RACE OFFICIALS EDUCATION OFFICER

Courses and Conferences

Organising

- Judge Courses
- Umpiring Courses for Match Racing and Team Racing
- Alternate years: a Combined Race Officials National Conference, or a National Conference for Race Officers or Judges and Umpires

Supporting

- Regional Race Management Coordinators with their Regional Race Officer courses and Regional Race Management conferences

Communication

- Better and more regular communications with all race officials via regular email "briefing notes" – these have highlighted decisions made at RMG meetings
- Working to ensure the RYA database information on all Race Officials is as up-to-date as possible. This data is used to produce the Race Officials booklet with correct contact details for all qualified race officials and is also the basis of the emailing system for communicating with race officials
- A small stand and a presentation to the Club Commodores at the Dinghy Sailing Show at Alexandra Palace has generated lots of interest from clubs for the Club Race Officer course and the new Rules Disputes course

Meetings

- Attend and take minutes at RMG and JUG meetings;

Insurance Scheme

- Improvements to the Race Officials Insurance Scheme
- Promotion of the Race Officials Insurance Scheme
- There have been a number of changes and production of a leaflet is underway which will explain details of the cover, the policy and the countries that are covered. The most important point is that it does NOT cover damage to the Committee boats and Umpiring or Judge boats that we use as Race Officials

Leaflets

- Simplification of the Race Officials Schemes by comparing Regional, National and International qualifications across Judging, Umpiring and Race Management. We have produced a more consistent, simpler scheme. This new matrix has been published in a new A5 Race Officials leaflet – it comes into force from July 1st 2007
- The new combined application form for all qualifications will be published shortly.

- A racing rules leaflet of similar design outlines the RYA Racing Charter and the Best Practice and Guidance Notes
- Leaflets include details of Group members and the Regional Race Management Coordinators and Regional Rules Advisor contacts.

Website

- Aiming to improve the content to make this the primary reference site for British Race Officials
- Some progress on this has been made recently but more work is planned

SAIL IDENTIFICATION

If we at Delph have identified a problem perhaps others may be having similar issues and wondering how to deal with it.

Discussion at Delph SC Sailing Committee in relation to boats with various rigs, principally the Laser at the moment, although there are now a host of dinghies with alternative rigs (and “target” PYs from the manufacturers).

The issue has primarily arisen because of:-

- a. The difficulty of the average Race Recorder to recognising the different rigs,
- b. Competitors not always signing on as Laser Radial but expecting a result on that basis.

This has generated extra work for both the Race Team and the Results Secretary

The issue is that there are several groups within the Laser Fleet who might have different aspirations:-

1. Those with only a Radial rig who wish to sail in Fast Handicap
2. The developing young sailors who want the competition of sailing with the radial rig against the sailors with the standard rig.
3. Those with a standard rig who just want to sail as a Laser
4. Those with the standard rig, but who sometimes choose to sail with the radial rig depending on the conditions.

The following amendment to the Sailing Instructions was arrived at.

2.1 Alternate sail rigs. Where a particular class of dinghy has various rig options, the rig being used must be declared when signing on for racing (13.2) and the choice of rig should conform to the principle of (17.3).

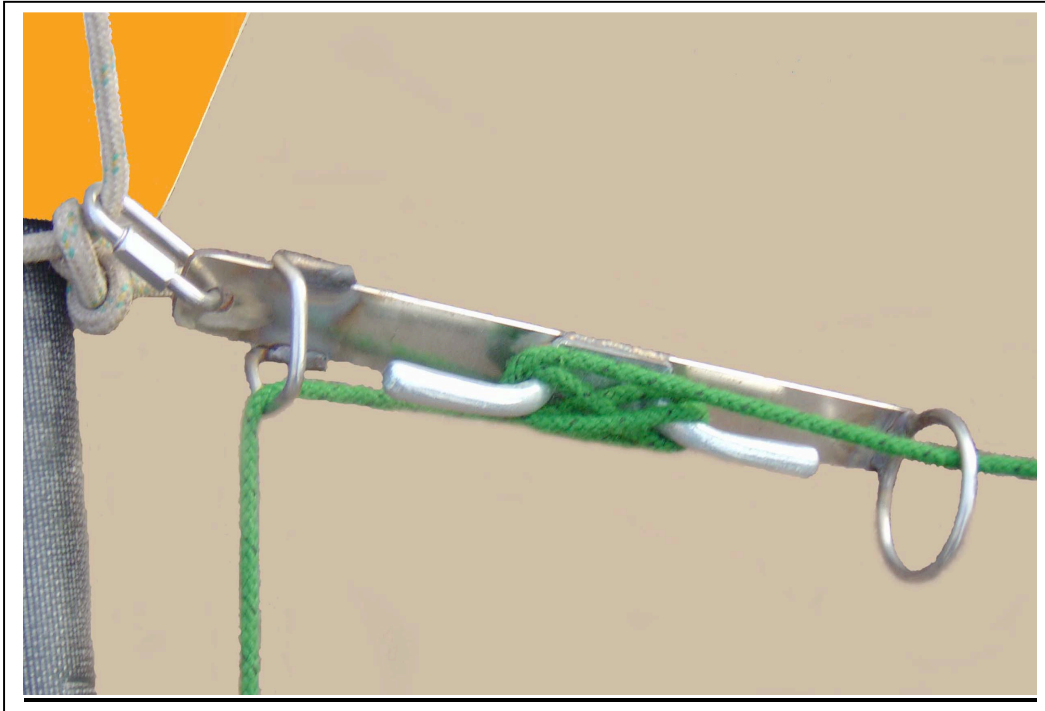
Laser Rigs. To be classified as Fast Handicap (Start 2) for Class Racing a Laser Radial (or 4.7) must sign-on as such AND display a 6 inch red square on both sides of the sail, above the sail number. Other Lasers will use Start 3. In Handicap racing only those displaying the red square will be recorded with the Laser Radial (or 4.7) handicap.

PS I understand there is now a Laser 8.1 doing the publicity circuit.

Our full Club SIs can be accessed at <http://www.delphsailinclub.co.uk> if you need to check the reference to two SIs.

Tony Cropper

PRO Delph SC



The Adjustable ODM

Line to anchor.

Spare line through shackle at end of pole to weight.

The system allows for fine adjustment of the line length of the ODM without lifting the anchor.

1. The length of line from cleat to anchor is determined, leaving an amount 'spare' under the ODM.
2. The spare line (enough for later adjustment) goes through a shackle or eye at the foot of the pole to a weight which helps to steady the ODM.
3. Adjustment is made by undoing the cleat and lengthening or shortening the line to the anchor.
4. The line could be marked at metre intervals so the wishes of the RO could be very accurately set.
5. Less work for the osteopath!

Iain Williams

RYA RACE OFFICIALS QUALIFICATIONS MATRIX

FIRST APPOINTMENT	SEMINAR	EXAM	PERF ASSM	EXPERIENCE	REFS	VHF	PB2	MANUALS
RACE OFFICERS								
National	YES	YES	NO	4 Major Events	2	YES	YES	ISAF Manual
Regional	YES	YES	NO	4 Events	1	YES	NO	NO
JUDGES								
National	YES	YES	NO	4 Major Events	2	YES	YES	ISAF Manual Case Books
Regional	YES	YES	NO	4 Protest Committees	1	NO	NO	NO
UMPIRES								
National	YES	YES	YES	4 Major Events	2	YES	YES	ISAF Manual Case Book
Regional	YES	NO	YES	4 Events	1	YES	YES	NO

REAPPOINTMENT The same, except that:
 - for Race Officers & Judges, a Conference replaces the Seminar/Exam
 - for Umpires, a Conference replaces the Seminar & either the Exam or the Performance Assessment (PA).

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Criteria (bar VHF/PB2) to be achieved within last 4 years prior to 1 November of the year of application
 Member of the RYA/experienced racing sailor/email user with internet access/UK passport holder or principal residence in UK.
 References must be from the 4 events demonstrating experience & on the appropriate RYA form.
 PAs may not be taken before Regional Umpire experience gained/Exams & PAs may not be retaken within 6 months of a failure.
 International race officials automatically qualify for national status for the duration of their international status. Initial international applicants must hold the equivalent national qualification.