

GUIDANCE FOR RUNNING OF SCOTTISH DISTRICT TRAVELLERS EVENTS

In the Scottish District three Travellers Series events are held every year. The aim of these events is to provide an opportunity for skippers to sail at venues other than their home waters and experience a level of competition that will be more demanding than they might normally experience at their home clubs. The events also allow skippers to meet fellow enthusiasts from throughout the district, and therefore serve a social as well as a purely competitive function. The aim of the events is to send all skippers away with a feeling that they have experienced a challenging but fair test of their sailing skills, while in the company of a friendly, supportive, but competitive fleet.

Travellers events must be set up to satisfy the needs of three categories of skippers. The first are those at the top of the Scottish rankings who wish to compete with the best of the skippers from other clubs in Scotland for the Travellers trophy. The second category are established middle ranking skippers eager to test their skills and improve in the company of the top skippers. The third category are newcomers to the sport who are stepping up a level for the first time. Each of these categories of skipper need to be catered for in the design and running of Travellers events.

It is only possible to satisfy all three categories of skipper if there is both careful planning and execution of the event. The following guidelines for running Travellers event are therefore provided to ensure that the chance of running a successful event are maximised.

1. Race Officer

The race officer should be an individual **from the host club** with sufficient radio sailing experience to command the respect of the top skippers and possess local knowledge of the sailing venue and facilities. Ideally they will have acted as part of a race team in the past and be aware of the problems likely to arise during the event. **Taking on the race officer role should be seen by all experienced skippers as a duty that they are bound to undertake** when events are held at their clubs in order to contribute to the general good of the sport.

2. Race Team

The race team for a Travellers event should be large (**at least 5 members from the host club in addition to the race officer**), with members being assigned to designated duties with which they are, through experience, familiar. These duties would include scorer, boatman, starting line judge, fleet assembler/finishing line judge, observer marshal. It is always good practice to use the organisation of an event as an opportunity to provide race team experience to new club members.

3. Fleet size

Fleet size should be restricted to ensure that the step up from club sailing is not so great as to lead to a loss of quality in the racing experience enjoyed by competitors. Sailing in large fleets, as seen in national ranking races, requires a high level of skill and experience. This will not be possessed by

many of the competitors who are new to the Scottish Travellers series. Conditions should be provided in which these skills can be learned, and this can only happen if the step up in numbers from club to Travellers fleets is not too great.

The MYA Heat Management System (HMS) provides the means to control fleet numbers. The recommendation is that **wherever total number of boats entered for an event exceeds 12, HMS should be used.**

4. Course Setting

It is notoriously difficult to be prescriptive about course setting due to the vagaries of the wind and the particular attributes of the sailing water. However, a few general guidelines are:

- a). When possible **Port rounding courses should be used and Starboard rounding courses avoided.** This is particularly important for rounding of the first windward mark at which the majority of problems arise.
- b). The course should be set so that **the distance from the start line to the windward mark is maximised.** This is to ensure that the fleet has spread out before reaching the first windward mark.
- c). When possible **the first windward mark should be set so that it is both easily visible and in a situation where it is not in wind shadow.** This is to ensure that fair strategies of mark rounding can be effectively planned, and rewarded when they are well executed.
- d). In keeping with the policy for national events, **windward- leeward courses that include a gate at the leeward end should be set.**

5. Observers

For each heat, two observers should be appointed. The role of observers is to call contacts, record incidents and acknowledge resolution of incidents through penalty turns taken on the water. At the end of each heat, observers should report any unresolved incidents to the race officer. Observers are best drawn from the race team, but where more than one fleet is being used, may also be recruited from skippers who are not participating in the heat being sailed.

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