

Introduction

Radio Sailing events take on many forms, from the smallest club based event with a few boats to the largest MYA Ranking, National or International Open meeting attracting many skippers.

When organising any event there are several responsibilities and obligations incurred by the organiser as well as a whole host of practical considerations that can potentially affect the safe and smooth running of the event.

This guide has been put together primarily to assist those who take on the overall organisational responsibility for the larger Open events but should also make useful reading for all those involved with the actual running of any race event as well as the skippers who will be taking part.

Successful events in general, are not successful by accident. It takes considerable planning and attention to detail to arrive at a well-run, well-organised event. However, it is important to remember always that we are trying to achieve events that are **ENJOYABLE** for all, competitors, volunteers and families alike and considerations of the type of event being held needs to be taken in to consideration.

This document should be read in conjunction with the latest versions of

- a) World Sailing Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS)
- b) MYA Standard Sailing Instructions (SSI's)
- c) Heat Management System (HMS)
- d) RYA Racing Charter

Throughout this document the reference "he" has been used for convenience, of course the male gender does not have the exclusive rights on running club or MYA Open Events and she should be substituted where appropriate.

This handbook draws on the knowledge of various contributors and previous versions and the MYA acknowledge and thank them for their input.

Main abbreviations used in this guide: -

Model Yachting Association – MYA

Royal Yachting Association - RYA

Racing Rules of Sailing – RRS

MYA Standard Sailing Instructions – SSI's

Heat Management System – HMS

Principal Race Officer – PRO

Assistant Race Officer - ARO

On the Course Side - OCS

1 Pre-Event Planning

When an event is planned, the following roles need to be filled and discussions between those involved held. For smaller events one person may fulfil more than one role in the following list of:

- Principal Race Officer
- Finance
- Health and Safety
- Publicity
- Entries

A successful event starts with the pre-event planning and the time and effort required will vary depending on the scale of event, this may be as little as a lakeside discussion for a district event through to several sit-down meetings for a National Championship, but whichever is chosen it is important that some aspects are agreed early to create the best events.

Note: Experience shows that publicising events early, both online and within the local MYA district along with regularly updated online entry lists will boost entry levels and encourage skippers to enter. The MYA encourages the use of the online entry system for all district, ranking and National events.

2 Competitors with a Disability

Competitors with a disability who may require any form of help or special requirements should, prior to entry, have been in touch with the club contact to confirm that suitable arrangements can be made. The onus is on the competitor to establish whether the available facilities are suitable and if necessary provide a suitable support person. Clubs and Event organisers hosting events which have anyone who has entered with a disability need to ensure that appropriate consideration has been made to accommodate their participation.

As a reminder, **RRS E3.9 Disabled Competitors** states:

To enable a disabled competitor to compete on equal terms, the race committee shall make as fair an arrangement as possible.

3 Health & Safety

The safety of race team, competitors and spectators should always be considered and the PRO is ultimately responsible for these and as such should satisfy themselves that reasonable efforts will be taken always to ensure the safe running of the event.

4 Emergency Contact Details

It is an important part of Event Management that Emergency Contact Details are provided and collected for competitors, race team members and volunteers. Unfortunately accidents and ill health do occur, and the provision of this basic information should be a condition of participation and involvement.

5 Event Team

The Event Team will normally comprise people who carry out the following functions:

- Reception/Registration
- **Principle Race Officer (PRO)**
- Assistant Race Officer (ARO) - There may be more than one for large events
- **Start/Finish Line Judges - This role may be performed by PRO/ARO**
- **Secretary to Line Judges** (*Recorder to write down OCS boats at start or boat finishing order*)
- **Fleet Board Administrator**
- **Scorer**
- Course Setter and Assistant (may also act as Recovery Officer)
- Recovery Officer
- Heat Marshall
- **Observer Marshall**
- Non-competitor Observers
- Equipment Inspector(s)
- **Protest Committee Chairman**
- Protest Committee Members – *Usually taken from the competitors*

Note: For smaller events, a number of these positions can be combined, for ease the key roles have been highlighted in bold italics for guidance.

6 Race Team Meeting

The PRO should have a team meeting, during the previous week if possible or at the latest on the morning before the event starts, with all race officials to confirm each person's responsibilities and to answer any of their questions. This meeting should cover all aspects of the event so that each person knows who is responsible for all required duties and to ensure that they are all fully coordinated so that the event runs as smoothly as possible.

It is strongly recommended that the PRO and Race Team make themselves aware of the contents of the following documents prior to the event:

- MYA Standard Sailing Instructions (SSIs)
- Heat Management System (HMS)
- MYA Race Pack
- Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS) - primarily the responsibility of PRO

7 Team Roles and Responsibilities

7.1. Reception - Registration

Dependent on the size of the event, at least one and potentially two volunteers from the Race Team should be available to register all competitors and check the following:

- Check Competitor's MYA membership – record number (this can be easily checked with pre-entries)
- Outstanding entry details and fee, if any - collect
- Advise of event measurement procedures (it may be necessary to complete the measurement process before registration is finalised and thus a two stage registration)
- Valid certificate for boat to be used – retain for checking (photocopies/pdf are acceptable)
- Personal sail number certificate if sail no. is different from the last 2 digits of the boat no. – check name, number and expiry date
- Emergency Contact name and Number
- Details of where health information may be found

- Note: Where any of these are not available at the event, but where the competitor claims they exist, it is necessary to get him to sign a declaration to that effect and that copies will be sent to the PRO or Event Organiser within 7 days of the event.

7.2. Event Measurement (Inc Equipment Inspector)

Before the event it should be agreed by the PRO, race team, and class captain as to the relevant and practical measurement procedures for the event. This will vary from class to class and the event size and duration. All competitors will be expected to present boats that are within their class rules but occasional checks (or the threat of them) are an effective way of ensuring this.

Ideally two volunteers should be available to check measure boats as appropriate. If they think any boat's equipment does not comply with the rules they should advise the competitor and make a short-written report to the PRO.

Note: If boats are to be weighed it is important that the weighing equipment is calibrated, and check weights should be available to confirm this to the satisfaction of both the measurer and competitor.

7.3. Principal Race Officer

Ideally, the PRO is an on-the-water manager, who lets his team get on with the job without interfering, although he or she should take the decisions regarding boats on the course side of the starting line, course changes, etc.

Before the first race the PRO will brief the Race Team on their jobs, making certain that all tasks are covered. The PRO also ensures (whether through delegation or not), that all the necessary equipment is available and functioning.

The PRO shall always keep an overview of what goes on around the entire racecourse. The PRO and the Assistant Race Officer (ARO) should record all their actions on tape recorders for later reference. The tape recorders should be left on during all start, recall and finishing procedures. As the person with overall responsibility for the event, the PRO will usually represent the Race Team at protest hearings.

If the Equipment Inspector has reported any non-compliance to class rules etc that has not been resolved, then the PRO shall protest the boat(s) involved such that the Protest Committee can hold a hearing.

Note: The tone and feel of an event are set by the PRO and it is their responsibility to ensure that the correct procedures and processes are consistently followed and that events are run in a fair and reasonable manner.

7.4. Course-setter

The Course-setter needs to be able to set an accurate course following the Race Officer's directions. The Course-setter must have the confidence to take up and shift marks to the right position as soon as the Race Officer requests a change.

Ideally, they should have enough information, nautical skills and the necessary equipment to operate on their own and to be independent of detailed orders from the RO, although in some locations there may be a need to operate with two in a boat. Their judgment concerning mark placement can have a decisive influence on the success of the race.

The movement of marks varies between venues with some venues being suitable for wading and others requiring an appropriate boat. It is important that the movement of marks is possible in an efficient and timely manner and thought should be given to how this is going to be undertaken. Experience shows that a boat is best manned by two people and in some instances, they may be required to stay "on the water" during racing.

Note: General recalls, collisions and ill-tempered racing can often be attributed to a poor race course and a good PRO and course setter will do what they can to understand and anticipate this.

7.5. Start and Finish line team

The team is responsible for administering the start line and finish line activities. This entails identifying and recording boats that do not start correctly (DNC, OCS or BFD etc) and the finishing order of boats. There should be two or three members for each team, which at some events may be the same team. If you have sufficient volunteers, then it is worth considering splitting a team, so that one deals with starting and the other finishing. Starting can usually be handled with the PRO and/or ARO and ideally a recorder to record OCS boats for PRO/ARO.

For finish teams with three members, have one caller and two recorders. If there are four members, then split into two independent teams of two. When all boats have finished, compare the primary (MASTER) set with the BACKUP by calling the BACKUP and checking for any discrepancies with the MASTER.

Tape recorders are very useful (actually an essential aid) to record all calls of OCS boats at the start in case of any potential Redress claim especially with a UFD or BFD call.

They are also essential to record finishing positions as they are called, when boats are crossing or re-crossing the finishing line and if time allows for any other activity of interest going on in the finish line area (such as collisions and turns completed or not). This is very handy for sorting out any confusion later particularly where a lot of boats have finished in a close group and recorders may have missed all of the finishing boats called. The recording would be used to resolve any discrepancies between the MASTER and BACKUP set of recordings.

Note: It is important that boats which are "on the water" are identified prior to the start. This should be done by a check of sail numbers not just a boat count (a separate boat count can be used as a cross check). A check at this stage can avoid confusion at the finish and potential protests/ heat re-runs. Compare the list of boats that should be on the water and remove from the start area any boats that should not be in that heat before the start. It is the responsibility of a boats' helm to ensure when they should be sailing. The check should not extend to a call for boats that are not on the water when they should be, as this is considered outside assistance.

7.5.1. Start Line judge

At the start, the line judge should be in a position to judge the start line at least 60 seconds before the start. This gives confidence to the competitors of a fair start and allows time for competitors to adjust their own standing positions. When a start is under a starting penalty (I, U or Black Flag Rule), then the line judge should be in position well before 60 seconds prior to the start as they need to track boats in the period leading up to 60 seconds to start.

NOTE: The start line judge is not responsible for boat-to-boat contact; this is the job of Observers.

Using the side of the marks nearest the course as the two points through which the start line passes he may use a straight edge to judge the line. If a piece of card or plastic is used to shield the pre-start side of the line it becomes easy to judge if there are boats that are over the line at the start signal. NB It is the beginning of the start signal, which denotes the start. As an alternative to a piece of plastic or card, is the use of transparent plastic with a line marked on it (narrow self-adhesive tape is one solution). Boats and importantly sail numbers should then be more visible to the line judge during the pre-start period.

Boats that are (even partly) on the course side (OCS) of the line, at the start must be identified promptly in the following prescribed manner: -

Hail loudly 'Recall seven seven, and five six, and four five, and one three six, Recall seven seven, and five six, and four five, and one three six'.

It is essential to use the word **RECALL** and to call each number twice. Clarity and volume are important, as there is often other noise at the start. If you feel your call has been masked by other calls you may call another time.

If boats cannot be identified by sail number it is acceptable to use other features e.g. colour of sails, colour of hull. Be aware that there may be more than one boat with these features and you should always follow up with a correct call using **RECALL** and identifying the sail number.

Boats that are identified as OCS must return to start correctly. To do this they have to sail to a position where they are entirely behind the start line. You need to remain in place to be able to judge this. The competitors may not be standing in a position to judge this themselves and it is good practice to aid them by calling either "CLEAR" (for one boat OCS, or preferably "CLEAR Seven Seven", and "CLEAR One Three Six" loudly when they are entirely behind the line.

Where it is not possible to identify one or more boats that are OCS it is essential to call a general recall, so that that boat or boats do not gain an advantage over the fleet.

This means the start is abandoned and another is started. To call a general recall you should make two sound signals and hail loudly '**General Recall, General Recall**'.

Stop the countdown tape once the starting procedure has been finished and the start is away (unless the countdown system stops automatically). With the heat two-thirds completed the finish team should move to the location of the finishing line.

7.5.2. Finish Line Judge

At the finish line the line judge gets ready to call the sail numbers, this time sighting across the course side of the finishing marks. Finish line teams should use a tape recorder as a useful back-up as it is sometimes difficult for the recorder to write results as quickly as they are called. The recorders should note the finishing time of the first boat to cross the line.

Be aware that boats often infringe the rules near the finish and will need to make exonerating penalty turns. Do not attempt to decide which time the boat crosses the line is its correct finishing place. The correct approach is to call each boat's sail number each time it crosses the line. The last time the competitor crosses the line should be taken as his correct finishing position and, if there is doubt, the PRO/ARO will advise.

If there are 4 or less boats still racing five minutes after the finishing time of the first boat those boats are recorded as 'did not finish', DNF. At that time, the line judge (ideally in conjunction with the PRO or ARO) should estimate and record the finishing order for those boats remaining on the water. Once this has been completed, then these boats should be advised that they can take their boats off the water.

If there are more than 4 boats on the water still racing five minutes after the finishing time of the first boat, record the finishing places of boats until there are only 4 still racing. At that time also estimate the finishing order of those 4 boats still on the water.

Note: It is important that the finish line judges can undertake their role without distraction. The recording of the finishing positions accurately is important, and it may be that this needs to be reinforced to the skippers during the event that the line judge and recorders should not be spoken to during the finishing process.

7.5.3. Secretary to Start/finish line judges and Timekeeper (Recorder or Scribe)

This is an important position.

a) At the start

Record the time of the Start signal

Note: All times should ideally be recorded using the same (digital) time reference. One way to achieve this is to synchronise all digital watches and clocks to a known and accurate master time reference such as a GPS or Radio-Controlled Clock.

Record the sail numbers of any OCS boats hailed by the line judge. If boats have been identified by their hull or equipment rather than by their sail number, help find out which sail numbers belong to each of these boats. If OCS boats are able to exonerate themselves, then this should be identified by crossing through the number called.

Record as DNS any boat that sailed around at the start, but which did not cross the start line.
Record as DNC any boats that did not compete - that is they did not come to the starting area.

b) At the finish

Record the finishing place for each boat and most importantly the time at which the first boat finishes. MYA SSI 2.07 specifies a Time Out limit of 5 minutes – although importantly this does NOT apply for the seeding races.

After the first boat to finish has been called, sound a clearly recognizable signal (e.g. an air-horn blast or a whistle), so that the other competitors have a time reference for the first boat to finish.

MYA SSI's state that if there are 4 or less boats still racing five minutes after the finishing time of the first boat those boats are recorded as DNF, OCS, DNS or DNC in that order. At that time also record the order of those 4 boats on the water.

If there are more than 4 boats on the water still racing five minutes after the finishing time of the first boat record the finishing places of boats until there are only 4 still racing. These 4 boats are recorded as DNF, and at this time also record the order of those 4 boats on the water. This is a requirement of the MYA SSI's.

Note that under HMS rules, for Race 1 with more than one heat, racing continues until all boats finish.

Note also that under either the event SI or MYA SSIs, a time limit does apply to the last heat of a day, and to the last race of an event, after which such a heat or race shall be abandoned if it is not completed in time. There is no time limit as such, either of 30 minutes or any other duration, but a fixed cut-off time of 18:00 hours or such other time as may be specified in the NoR, SSIs or at the Competitors' Briefing. Refer to the MYA SSIs for the correct procedure to determine whether the last heat of a day is completed or shall be abandoned.

Be aware that boats often infringe the rules near the finish and will need to make exonerating penalty turns. Do not attempt to decide which time the boat crosses the line is its correct finishing place. The correct approach is to record each boat's sail number each time it crosses the line. The last time the competitor crosses the line should be his correct finishing position and, if there is doubt, the race officer or Finish Line Judge will advise. The recorder should put a line through any previous crossing to avoid any doubt, but do not erase the result.

Every boat must be recorded as she finishes, regardless of whether it is alleged that she may not have sailed the correct course. ISAF CASE 80 makes it clear that, without a hearing, a boat may not be penalized for failing to sail the course. It is always possible that the hearing decides the boat did indeed sail the correct course, and if her finish was not recorded then the Race Committee has made a serious error. Thus, a boat may only be disqualified after a Race Committee protest and a protest hearing is made against them.

If time permits, check the boats finishing against those that started. Any discrepancies will have to be accounted for. This is likely to be boats that have "retired" or taken boats off the water during the race and failed to inform the finishing team.

Result sheets will be used as the entry data for the Scoring team. They will be referred to when any boats want to check their finishing position, or request redress when say a wrong or no finishing position is published in the Results' list.

Record the finishing time of the last boat, or the time at which 4 boats are still racing, whichever is later, on which the beginning and end of Protest time will be based.

c) Advising the promoted boats

It is important that the promoted boats in a heat can easily determine their status. This is usually done by updating the fleet control board, but less formally may involve a competitor

being allowed to look over the shoulder of the line judge secretary to check their position, or more formally may involve explicit notification from the RO.

7.6. Scorer

This role may be combined with that of Fleet Board administration for smaller events but especially for larger events, is a demanding role and is best carried out by someone able to devote their entire time to it.

Provisional results will be received from the Line judge team and are normally subject to change only as a result of a protest hearing. The race officer must be informed within 10 minutes (RRS E6.5 or unless amended by the event SI's) of the finish of a heat if there is to be a protest. So, at that point, the results can reasonably be taken as final if no protest is filed. The result sheet can then be used to determine the scores attributable to each competitor. Add these to the master score sheet.

It is particularly useful to competitors to see the results for each heat as the race progresses. This can be as simple as the sheet used by the line judge secretary or by showing the finishing positions in order on the Fleet Board.

It is also useful for competitors to see the overall results of all the competitors as they progress. This may be achieved by making it plain that the official score sheet is available for inspection at any time or by transferring that information to another sheet which is posted after each race.

At the end of the event each competitors' total score is tallied and a number (determined by the length of the event) of worst scores, called discards, are deducted. It may be possible to keep a continuous tally of each competitors score as the event progresses (using a manual system) and this saves a lot of work at the end of the event. It is usually difficult to cater for the discards in this process, other than at the end of each days racing.

Use of a portable PC permits the use of one of the many pieces of software available for scoring. The MYA SSIs identify how a series should be scored. It is normal to use HMS to score all events and the MYA SSIs define that as a standard scoring method. Use of a PC and computer software makes scoring a lot simpler when the number of competitors exceeds approximately 15, due to the ease of calculating discards and final scores. If a scoring system different to HMS may or will be used this should ideally be defined within the SI's for the event, or at the latest at the competitor briefing.

7.7. Recovery Officer(s)

The Race Committee should appoint a capable Recovery Officer(s), who will be responsible for recovery operations of disabled boats (this may be the same person or persons acting as the course setter). They must be familiar with the event venue, with the characteristics of the class competing and any applicable governmental or similar rules. It is most useful to have two people in a recovery boat. This role may be combined with the role of Course Setter, such that one person would act primarily as Course Setter and the other as Recovery Officer.

7.8. Heat Management System (HMS)

This heat system aims to produce the close simulation of a fleet race, in which all boats sail together. In this radio racing system, the fleet is divided into no more than 5 heats. In the first race, the heats are seeded to contain boats of mixed ability. The RO should use Ranking Lists and previous results to assist in setting up fair seeding heats. The results of the seeding heats allow the formation of heats with boats of similar ability, which provides good quality racing. In the following races, starting at the lowest heat, the four (or six) leading boats of each heat are promoted to and immediately sail in the next highest heat. This is repeated until every heat has sailed, allowing every boat, from whichever heat she started, the opportunity to improve her overall position and the chance to win every race. Normally, when the Race Committee divides the fleet at the end of a race based on the Order of Finishing Places, boats that are not promoted stay in their heat and the bottom four (or six) go down to the next lowest heat. However, there are

exceptions to this, for example between races 2 and 3 and where fleet numbers reduce, leading to a reduction in the number of heats.

Note: The understanding of how the HMS system works is vital to the correct running of a multi heat event and it is recommended that the full HMS paperwork and advice notes are read before an event and available for reference during an event.

7.9. Fleet Board administration

Managing the fleet control board is a demanding and non-trivial role, and usually requires the attention of the most experienced officer, after the RO, available to the Event Organising Committee.

The fleet control board requires continuous updating as the results from a heat arrives, so the promoted boats can be identified and placed into the next higher heat. Boats should be shown in their finishing position within that heat for each race.

Racing should not continue until the PRO and Scorer are agreed that the fleet board is correct.

Note: It is the responsibility of the competitors to present themselves to the start. To ensure this, it is important that in multi fleet events the racing should only proceed when the fleet board has been confirmed as updated and clearly advised to both skippers and race team.

7.10. Heat Marshall

For larger events it may be necessary to have at least one heat marshal to ensure that the boats for the next heat are ready to launch when the Race Officer calls for it. At the briefing, the Race Officer may agree a pre-determined time for boats to be called to the launch area. For example, this could be when the last boat in the current heat clears the launch area or when the first boat crosses the finish line in the current heat.

7.11. Observing

The use of observers in radio sailing has been proven to be advantageous and should be used wherever practical. The MYA Observer Notes document should be available for all competitors to reference during the event. Competitors should be made aware of this document which should be displayed on the Official Notice Board for the duration of the event. It can be used as a refresher or a guide for new observers. It may be worth mentioning this at the competitors briefing.

7.11.1. Observer Marshall

The Race Team usually appoints an Observer Marshall, who has the responsibilities of:

- keeping a record of who has observed during the event and for how many times
- Preparing notebooks and pens/pencils for the use of Observers during the event
- Arranging the appointment of Observers from the skippers not sailing
- Identifying replacement observers if the required skipper is not available.
- Issuing each Observer with a notebook and pen/pencil
- Briefing any Observer not familiar with their role
- Ensuring the Observers are on duty in the Start area from the Warning signal
- Receiving the notebooks from the Observers going off duty, and enquiring if there are any incidents not resolved on the water
- Advising the Race Officer of any unresolved incidents

The Observer Marshall should have an "observation system" which is communicated to the Observers as they come on duty. The following system is recommended.

7.11.2. Observation system

It is suggested that there are three observers per heat, each taking a section of the fleet, with perhaps a Senior Observer if the Observer Marshall does not himself take on this role.

Each Observer is given a numbered notebook, which identifies the section of the fleet to which he or she is expected to pay primary attention. Ideally, the notebook has diagrams, which illustrates this.

During the pre-start, the start, and on the first beat:

- Section 1 comprises the starboard end of the starting line, thereafter the starboard side of the first beat.
- Section 2 comprises the mid-part of the starting line, thereafter the mid part of the first beat.
- Section 3 comprises the port end of the starting line, thereafter the port side of the first beat.

As the boats prepare to round the windward mark, and for the remainder of the heat:

- Section 1 comprises the first third of the fleet.
- Section 2 comprises the boats in the second third of the fleet.
- Section 3 comprises the boats in the final third.

It is suggested that the Observer Marshall recommends the number of boats and any overlap to be observed

The overlap implied between the sections is deliberate.

The Observer Marshall does not have a Section, but instead provides back up for any Section where contacts look likely or contacts have been called.

For larger fleets (greater than 17 boats), it is worth considering a fourth observer in addition to the Senior Observer.

Note: *The standard of rules observance at an event is set early on and it is recommended that the observer notes document is available for all competitors to read and that early heats include experienced observers alongside less experienced observers where possible.*

8 Pre-race preparation

8.1. Marks

Marks and buoys should be highly visible against sea or land (bright yellow or rescue orange) and easily towed and handled by the Course-setting vessel.

Because of factors involving the physiology of the human eye, red marks are not recommended.

Marks used for a change of course (i.e. rounding marks) should be of a different shape or colour or have some distinguishing mark such as a coloured (or black) band or sleeve from marks identifying the start, the finish, or under-water obstacles.

Cylindrical marks need a relatively heavy counter-weight to keep them upright, and all marks need a counter-weight fixed to the anchor line about 1 metre below the surface to keep the line down and away from close rounding boats. It is common to number the marks for easy identification. When the number used is of the same dimensions as the sail number for the class being sailed, it immediately becomes obvious when any mark has been set too far away – its number cannot be reliably read. This is important, because it also means that a sail number will not be reliably read, leading to increased frustration by sailors wishing to protest, and increased rule flouting by sailors exploiting the poor visibility.

8.2. Stop watch or watches

Required by the Timekeeper to time the length of the heat and determine the subsequent time-out duration. Have one stopwatch to time the heat, and another, preferably a countdown timer, for counting the time-out. An audible end of time on the countdown timer prevents discussion and allows the line to be watched without looking at the equipment. The use of a master time reference and a digital clock enables all times to be recorded using an identical and common format.

8.3. Clock

Establishing the official time at an event will be well worthwhile. The time at which the event ends may determine the winner and that time is decided in advance and set out in the SSIs or the briefing and confirmed by a written SI. Accurate observance of the requirement to end the event at that time determines the fairness of the event, not only for the winner but also for all the remaining places.

It is useful to use time from a GPS or Radio Controlled Digital Clock as the master clock for the Event Official Time and synchronise all other clocks and watches to this time.

The PRO can reassure the competitors that he will observe this requirement to the letter by

- Giving competitors the opportunity to synchronise their watches with the event official time at the briefing
- Having a large clock conspicuously displayed during the event.

8.4. Official Notice Board

The Official Notice Board should identify the following: -

- Notice of Race
- Event SI's (including any changes to the MYA SSI's)
- MYA SSI's
- Changes to timings for the event
- Class Rules
- RYA Racing Charter
- Observer Guidance Notes
- Race Team members
- Jury Chairman and Jury team members (If appointed)
- Results
- Social programme (if any)
- Map of the facilities (if required)
- Venue Emergency Details
- Any important messages

8.5. Course Board

The Course board should clearly identify –

- The Start Line
- The buoys that are being used for the event
- Whether the buoys are to be rounded to Port or Starboard
- The course
- The Finish Line

9 Competitors Briefing

Events vary greatly in the duration and content of the meeting for competitors. A pre-race meeting can be very helpful in building up contact between the PRO /the Race Team and the competitors, especially when there is no opening ceremony.

Although event waters should be as "neutral" as possible, there is often some advantage favouring local competitors. The advantage extends to knowledge of the shore facilities and even to familiarity with the officials. A meeting can be of benefit in countering some of these advantages.

Subjects, which may be covered at the Competitors Briefing include:

- A friendly word of welcome (if there has not been a formal opening ceremony)
- An introduction to key officials
- An identification of main shore locations (Race Office, Protest Room, etc.)
- Location of the Official Notice Board and Course Board
- Identify the various sound signals to be used, including warning for start sequence, general recall and heat finish.
- Any changes to the racing times set out in MYA SSIs or NoR
- Identification of Marks, etc.
- Hazards and prohibited areas
- The course area
- The Control Area
- Food arrangements
- Social arrangements
- Prize giving
- Specific rules of the Host Club.

The meeting has no authority in terms of the rules and the Sailing Instructions, statements made may not be subject to a protest but there is a responsibility upon the official conducting it to exercise great caution not to mislead.

Sailing Instructions should be unambiguous and not require further explanation; nevertheless, there is usually a valid point or question from someone on them. To act correctly, you should ask for such questions to be submitted in writing, but this would often look too formal. Therefore, you may accept oral questions as well as written ones.

10 During the Event

10.1. Recalls

The Race Officer, in case of an Individual Recall, will watch for the 'On the Course Side' (OCS) boats to return and start correctly. In case of a General Recall, he will order the start of a new sequence as soon as possible from the Warning Signal.

*Note: The countdown for the first re-start after a general recall **shall be one minute**. For a start using an alternative starting penalty (see **Error! Reference source not found.**), the Countdown will revert to two minutes*

Unfair Course and Abandoning the Start

After the start, the Racing Rules and the Sailing Instructions limit the Race Team. After the starting signal, the Race Team may abandon the race utilising a sound signal (RRS would call for three sound signals to be made to abandon a race). A call of "Race Abandoned" should also be made and repeated to ensure that all competitors are aware. The reasons for abandonment are:

- Because of an error in the starting procedure
- RRS 32.1(b) "because of foul weather", is replaced by Appendix E3.8 (d) "because of foul weather or thunderstorms".
- Because at least one boat sailed to the first mark from the start line without tacking
- Because insufficient wind making it unlikely that any boat will finish
- Because a mark is missing or is out of position or
- For any other reason directly affecting the safety or fairness of the competition

However, after one boat has sailed the course and finished, the Race Team shall not abandon the race, without considering the consequences for all boats in the race or series.

10.2. Course changes

The Race Officer must ensure fair conditions for the competitors with respect to the evenness of the beat and run and should continually assess this. The RO therefore has to consider changes to the course, shortening the course (before the start), or even abandonment, when major wind shifts, or velocity changes occur, or the security of the competitors is in question.

- i. In case of little wind, there may be time limits to consider.
- ii. Whilst RRS 32 allows for shortening or abandoning after the start, RRS E3.8(c) precludes courses being shortened during a heat and MYA SSIs deletes RRS E3.8(d) and changes 32.1(b) (Abandonment) to: 'because of thunderstorms'.

The ability to know when to abandon a heat and when not to, is one of the means by which a Race Team can prove its skill and experience. It is up to the PRO to make this decision based on his experience and the information he receives from his fellow Race Team members around the course. In Radio Sailing, there will usually be more races to follow and it almost always proves better to leave the course for the current heat and to set a better one for the next heat. Any course change, even merely a change of position for one mark, must be announced to the sailors before the next heat starts.

10.3. Boats on the course side of the starting line

The problem of boats on the course side of the starting line at (or during the minute before) her starting signal and General Recalls can be reduced by a number of practices. Adjustment of the line to increase or reduce the amount of bias will help and this can be done right up to, but not after, the Preparatory signal. Individual recalls should be made promptly after the Starting Signal in order to demonstrate the Race Committee's intention to detect premature starters and provide a good, fair start.

Events with large fleets are regularly plagued by the problem of "premature starters" and General Recalls. Some Race Officers feel that a General Recall should always be signalled unless all boats on the course side can be identified. There is no rule requiring this; in fact, the contrary is true. RRS 29.2 is replaced by Appendix E3.6, General Recall, states: When at the Starting Signal the race committee is unable to identify boats that are on the course side of the starting line or to which rule 30 applies, or there has been an error in the starting procedure, the race committee may hail and repeat as appropriate "General Recall" and make two loud sounds. The preparatory signal for a new start will normally be made shortly thereafter.

The Race Officer must weigh up the pros and cons of allowing perhaps one or two offenders to escape against the penalty that a General Recall may impose upon a large number of competitors who made a good start.

If there are unidentified boats who are OCS, then the Race Officer should signal a General Recall. Once two General Recalls have been signalled, and the Race Officer is certain that the problem is due to the competitors rather than the length or bias of the start line, then one of the alternative Starting Penalties should be used to get the fleet racing. These are:

- RRS 30.1 (I Flag or Round the ends Rule)
- RRS 30.3 (U Flag or Soft Black flag Rule)
- RRS 30.4 (Black Flag Rule)

10.4. Alternative Starting Penalties

Troublesome fleets can often be brought into line by applying one of the Alternative Starting Penalties, either to either all starts or after the first or second General Recalls. However, this penalty is generally not favoured by competitors and Race Committees and has limited applicability in radio sailing. It is recommended that an alternative starting penalty is not applied for all starts following two General Recalls as there may be several reasons for multiple General Recalls.

General recalls are often a symptom of a poorly laid start line. A good start line can be recognised from a poor one – are the boats evenly spread along it? If so, then it's probably OK but if not, then there is no point using any of the alternative starting penalties, as a poor race will result, and the competitors will lose faith in the Race Officer.

10.5. Dealing with errors on the part of the Race Team

A time will come when the Race Team makes an error. A common error in radio sailing with heats, for example, is to fail to schedule the correct boats in a heat.

In such circumstances, the Race Team should NOT attempt to “fix” its error by, for example, declaring the heat or race abandoned. Instead, it should immediately seek the assistance of the protest committee or jury by initiating a request for redress for the boat(s) concerned under RRS 60.2(b), or by asking the boat(s) concerned to submit requests for redress under RRS 60.1(b).

10.6. The Finish

A finishing line should be at right angles to the direction of the course from the last mark (or centre of the gate marks if used), and it should be relatively short (12-15 boat lengths).

There is a common misunderstanding that the finishing line is set at a 90-degree angle to the wind. The definition of the term “Finish” is: “A boat finishes when any part of her hull, or equipment in normal position, crosses the finishing line from the course side”. However, she has not finished if after crossing the finishing line she:

- a) takes a penalty under rule 44.2,
- b) corrects an error under rule 28 made at the line or,
- c) continues to sail the course

In other words, if for any reason it has not been possible to adjust the course, or on the last leg of the course there has been a change in the wind direction, the finishing line should be placed in accordance with the direction of the course from the last mark, that is, at 90° to the course from the last mark and not at 90° to the wind.

The finishing line should be relatively short: 12-15 boat lengths, depending on the fleet size, the type of boats competing and the weather conditions. A short finishing line may decrease the chance of massive group finishes; it significantly reduces the margin of error and therefore reduces the possible advantages that may be created by the movement of either end of the line.

10.7. Starting the next heat

One of the most important aspects of running a big event is time management between heats and working out ahead of time how many heats can be achieved within the allotted racing time.

MYA SSIs requires a warning signal will indicate the starting sequence for the next heat as soon as practicable after a heat has been concluded. This applies equally if the next heat is the start of the next race. There is normally no reason to delay the start of a heat simply because it is the start of the next race. The Race Officer must always be aware of good reasons to delay though, for example due to:

- Observers finishing their duties before competing and being allowed time to prepare and launch their boats
- A protest involving the promoted boats
- A protest hearing that still being heard involving a boat in that heat.

HMS states that Protests involving the place of a boat that may be promoted or requests for redress, which may result in a boat being promoted due to its place being adjusted in HMS, shall be heard before the start of the next heat.

Note that RRS E6.5 gives a competitor time (no later than 10 minutes) to submit a protest after the end of a heat or after the relevant incident, whichever is later. For smaller events, it may be desirable to reduce this time limit by an appropriate Sailing Instruction.

10.8. Observers

While on duty, an Observer is a member of the Race Committee and should be reminded of what they can and cannot call – it may be useful to post these on the Notice Board!

An Observer is REQUIRED to hail, and is restricted to hail ONLY the following:

- boat to boat contacts
- boat to mark contacts

An Observer is required to make a note of:

- Protest hails (how many? what exactly was said? how long after the contact? it is not the job of an observer to decide whether the hail was correctly made)
- The situation prior to a contact or protest hail
- The situation at the time of the contact or protest hail
- Responses to a protest hail
- Penalty turns and whether the turn was incomplete
- If any boat failed to sail the correct course

10.8.1. What a good Observer will do

A good Observer anticipates incidents. This means that they need to continuously track the boats under observation, and to always know their current situation:

- Are they on starboard or port?
- Are they overlapped, or is one boat clear ahead or clear astern?
- If overlapped, which boat is windward and which leeward?
- Was the overlap obtained from clear astern and within two boat lengths?
- Have they entered the four-boat length zone?
- Are they tacking?
- Have they passed head to wind?
- Have they assumed a close-hauled course?

An observer will not always be certain of what they see. For example, it can be difficult to say whether an overlap was established in time outside the zone, or whether a boat had passed head to wind. However, the observer's evidence, and the quality of that evidence, will be considered in the hearing and will contribute to the quality of the event.

A good observer applies the principle of the "last known certain situation".

An observer must go back in time to the point when the facts were certain, and report that. For example, if unsure whether an overlap was indeed established outside the zone, the last known certain situation was surely of no overlap, and so an observer determines, notes, and reports that the overlap was not in fact established outside the zone.

Be careful: the issue here is NOT one of deciding whether a boat has infringed a rule, either probably or beyond reasonable doubt, but of deciding whether a statement can be made with certainty.

Additionally, an observer is permitted to give help to competitor in the form of information freely available to all boats.

This reflects a recent change to the RRS and SIs and it seems that clarifying the course given on the board in response to a question from a competitor would be within the scope of this permission. Advising any competitor, whether he has asked or not, that he has not sailed the course correctly IS NOT within the scope of this permission.

Be aware that an observer's opinion may be incorrect and of the consequences of that error.

10.8.2. What a good Observer will NOT do

The observer's duty is limited to noting the facts. The only call to make is a call of "Contact!". The observer must NOT, either at the time of an incident or afterwards, determine guilt, identify or advise on the relevant points of the RRS involved, call "You've not sailed the correct course" or "Your turn is incomplete", or suggest any action or remedy that the skippers should have taken or should now take.

Going beyond calling contacts between boats and marks takes the observer clearly towards being in breach of the rule prohibiting outside help (RRS E4.2) and, possibly, the sportsmanship rule (RRS 69).

Note: Taking observers from the fleet is an effective way of creating better racing and selecting competent observers for the early races during an event will set a standard which benefits the whole event.

11 At the end of the Event

At the end of the event the results should be posted as soon as possible together with prize giving and thanking everybody for participating, especially the Race Team for their support.

Finally, it is good practice for the Race Team to have a follow up meeting to discuss what went wrong and why and how to prevent errors in future.

Additional Tips:

Information for competitors:

To avoid potential complaints or protests, ensure that the Fleet Board, Official Notice Board, and Course Board are up to date and correct at all times and direct the competitors to these for any information;

Note:

If a competitor reads the course board incorrectly it is their problem - however,

If the PRO tells the competitor the wrong course it is the race teams' problem!

Pace of the Event

It is important that the event is run at a pace that allows a reasonable number of races to be completed; it should not be too fast, or too slow but always it needs to be remembered that lost time cannot be recovered and a slow start to the event should be avoided.

Preparations should start early, and all items required to start the event on time should be in place by the time of the daily briefing (along with backup systems if available).

Changes to the race course are inevitable and the speed and accuracy of these is a vital part of the time management. If necessary, the course setter(s) should be on the water during racing to allow quick alterations at any point between heats.

Multi Fleet Events

Ensure that the Fleet Board is up to date and correct (and all finish sheets passed to the Scorer) before starting the following heat. Failure to do this may create problems which take a lot of unravelling!

Consistency of Approach

A consistent approach to all aspects of the racing is important, and inconsistencies can set precedents which create friction or delays later in an event. For example, if time is allowed to change rigs, or for minor repairs, ensure that the time allowed is the same throughout the event and for each competitor request.

Collisions and Penalties:

If there are numerous collisions or protests during the racing it can often be attributed to the course set or the start line length or bias/position. Do not be afraid to discuss things with the competitors and request reasonable advice to resolve any pinch points on the course.

This handbook is meant as a reference guide to Radio Sailing race teams and should be read alongside the current version of the Racing Rules of Sailing, the event Notice of Race and the event Sailing Instructions.

There are also other good reference documents available via the World Sailing, RYA and IRSA and IOMICA websites which are worth reading, although only IRSA and IOMICA have documents specifically related to radio Sailing.