



# **International Radio Sailing Association**

Race Management Policies for Major Events  
Course Management

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# IRSA RACE MANAGEMENT POLICIES FOR MAJOR EVENTS

## Course Management

*This document proposes policies for race management at major radio sailing events, including IRSA International Class World and Continental Championships, international championships of other classes and other international events. Organizers of other events may wish to follow or adapt these policies.*

*The intention of this document is to deal only with Course Management – laying the course, starting, finishing and other tasks on the water. It may well be that, in the future, it proves necessary to set out policies regarding other aspects of the Race Committee's responsibilities – scoring, heat scheduling, equipment inspection etc.*

*By defining what competitors can expect when travelling to an event, and setting out what event organizers are expected to provide, this document defines an achievable standard for those major events that are a key part of the continued development of radio sailing.*

*The policies aim to define outcomes rather than prescribe methods. This is not a race management manual. Thus, for instance, a target is set that boats be evenly spread along the start line. How the course management team go about achieving this target will depend upon circumstances. At times 5° of bias at the port end of the line may achieve the desired outcome. At other times, for instance when one side of the course is advantaged, more bias may be necessary.*

*All stakeholders should view these policies as an evolving document. As race officers develop new techniques, as competitors expectations evolve, then these policies should adapt. This document sets out policies that the Course Management Team should endeavor to achieve not rules that must be followed. There may be good reason to modify, temporarily or permanently, any one of the policies.*

### 1. Definitions

- 1.1 **Principal Race Officer** – an experienced Race Officer appointed or approved by IRSA or the event organizing body who has overall responsible for the conduct of all racing.
- 1.2 **Course Management Team** – the Principal Race Officer and all persons responsible for laying the course, starting and finishing races and other tasks on the water such as assisting boats in difficulty. Within the Course Management Team there may be groups responsible for the start (Start Team), the finish (Finish Team), mark-laying (Mark-Laying Team)... The Course Management Team is part of the Race Committee.
- 1.3 **Experienced Race Officer** – an experienced sailor with good knowledge of the racing rules and experience of race management who has been certified by his National Authority or World Sailing or whose experience has been recognized by the national radio sailing authority.
- 1.4 **"Will"** means the intentions of the course management team.

### 2. General Principle

- 2.1 The policies set out in this document are intended to ensure that racing is fair and that the course management team provides racing of the high quality expected by competitors at international events.
- 2.2 A shortage of time or an insufficient number of completed races is not sufficient reason for failing to follow these policies.
- 2.3 Decisions, especially when postponing or abandoning a heat, will be based on the boat-handling that can reasonably be expected from a competent, but not expert, sailor.

### **3. Times/Timing/Changes InSchedule**

- 3.1 Times will be based on local time, as available on local mobile phone services, unless otherwise indicated. All times will be given using the 24 hour clock (13.00 not 1 p.m).
- 3.2 Starts will not be delayed for competitors to reach the race area if they could have arrived with reasonable diligence. However, the Race Committee will allow competitors who sailed in the previous heat time to change or adjust their rig to adapt to changed conditions.
- 3.3 After a postponement of more than 10 minutes, to alert competitors that heat will start soon an acoustic announcement will be made (with one sound signal) at least 2 minutes before the warning signal.
- 3.4 The course management team will use the entire day, subject to the provisions of the Sailing Instructions, if necessary to complete the schedule.
- 3.5 No heats will be started ahead of schedule except as provided for in the Sailing Instructions.

### **4. Decision to Race**

- 4.1 Before the event starts race officials will discuss the conditions under which a heat may be postponed or abandoned. These conditions should be announced at the initial competitors briefing.
- 4.2 The heat will be started at the scheduled time if the wind conditions and visibility are within the parameters outlined in these policies. Waiting for 'better' conditions may be unfair, and will be avoided.
- 4.3 The course management team can wait for the wind to 'stabilize' following a major change in conditions.
- 4.4 The start may be postponed if a major wind shift is expected to occur during the next heat based on a known pattern or other reliable information (example: sea breeze can be seen in the distance and is expected to fill in). Otherwise, the course management team will start the heat.
- 4.5 When possible, wind will be measured in the racing area from a drifting boat. Average wind speed will be determined over a five minute period.
- 4.6 A heat will not be started if the wind-speed is so low that boats are unable neither to manoeuvre to start nor complete the course within the time limit.
- 4.7 A heat will not be started when high wind speeds, combined with sea conditions, current rapid changes in wind speed or any other factors, affect the safety of boats, sailors, the race committee team and vessels.

### **5. Sighting the Line / Timing / Signaling / Recording**

- 5.1 The start team will be a minimum of two persons. Whenever practical, at least one of the start team will be an experienced Race Officer.
- 5.2 At least one member of the start team will use a sighting device to visualize the line.
- 5.3 Each member of the start team may use a hand-held voice recording device and record, without stopping, from at least 30 seconds before the starting signal until after anything of interest after the start. A commentary of anything of interest will be recorded (such as boats getting close to the line, bunching, etc.).
- 5.4 If tapes are used, they will be labelled and preserved until after the conclusion of the entire event. If digital recorders are used, each day's recording will be saved and indexed for easy retrieval.

- 5.5 An individual recall will be signaled immediately after the starting signal by a hail of 'Recall' The sail numbers of OCS boats will then be hailed promptly, starting no later than 5 seconds after the starting signal.
- 5.6 Competitors who have been scored OCS or penalized under rule 30, may listen to the voice recording of the applicable start.

## **6 Calling OCS**

- 6.1 The course management team will not permit a heat to continue if it is satisfied that unidentified boats were over early.
- 6.2 When the course management team is satisfied that all boats over the line have been identified they should signal an Individual Recall as per rule E3.5 unless the number of boats OCS is such that the Course Management Team is unable to hail all sail numbers promptly.

## **7. Postponing a Race During The Starting Procedure**

- 7.1 The course management team will postpone a heat during the starting procedure in response to adverse outside effects depriving boats of an equal chance of a good start.
- 7.2 The course management team will postpone the race during the starting procedure if there is a major wind shift or other events cause significant bunching of boats at one end of the start line. In rapid oscillations the course management team will endeavour to lay a starting line based on the mean oscillations expected.
- 7.3 If any wind shift occurs before the starting signal such that it significantly increases the risk of a general recall, a postponement will be considered.
- 7.4 In the circumstances described in 7.1 to 7.3 if the course management team determines that adjusting the starting line is likely to improve the chances of fair start without a general recall, then a very late postponement will be considered.
- 7.5 The course management team will also consider postponing the start for any of the following reasons: a drifting mark, a significant error in the timing of signals, other boats interfering with the competing boats, inappropriate starting line length or angle, a reduction in visibility preventing the course management team from sighting the starting line or identifying premature starters, weed and other factors that might affect the fairness of the race.
- 7.6 For a postponement that the course management team anticipates will be longer than ten minutes, an acoustic announcement will be made and flag AP will be displayed.

## **8. General Recall**

- 8.1 In case of any problems with the starting line (such as length, or angle to the wind, etc.) a postponement may be signaled, even up to the last second before the start, instead of a general recall.
- 8.2 If a race management error is discovered after the starting signal (e.g., timing), the course management team may abandon the race. In these circumstances, the course management team will not signal a general recall.
- 8.3 When the course management team is not satisfied that all boats over early (or that have broken rules 30.1, 30.3) have been identified, a General Recall will be signaled.

- 8.4 In the event the start has been postponed, or a General Recall has been caused by the length or angle of the starting line, the course management team will adjust the starting line and make another attempt using the same preparatory signal.
- 8.5 If the course management team is satisfied that a General Recall was not the result of the length or angle of the starting line or a course management team action, it will signal the use of a rule 30 starting penalty (I flag or black flag) for each subsequent attempt to start the heat
- 8.6 An important principle to be followed by the course management team is that rule 30 starting penalties will only be used when general recalls are caused by the boats themselves, or rapid oscillations of the wind, and not by actions of the course management team.
- 8.7 When using the black flag, the course management team will make every effort to signal a postponement in the event of any problems with the starting line.

## **9. Abandonment**

- 9.1 The course management team may abandon the heat:
- if after starting boats can sail directly the windward mark zone on either tack;
  - if boats can sail from the zone of one mark to the zone of the next mark on one tack on both the windward and the downwind leg of the course.
- The heat will not be abandoned for these reasons when at least one boat has rounded the last mark of the course and is sailing to the finish (or has already finished).
- 9.2 The course management team will abandon a heat if the course area is not visible from the control area.
- 9.3 The course management team may abandon the race when it is unlikely that the leading boat will complete the course within the overall time limit, even if a new wind were to arrive. The further into the race, the less likely it is that the course management team will abandon the race.
- 9.4 A heat will not be abandoned due to high wind speeds, combined with sea conditions, current rapid changes in wind speed or any other factors, except when the safety of boats, sailors, the race committee team and vessels is affected.
- 9.5 The course management team will consider abandoning the race if it determines that an outside influence, including weed, has made the race unfair. Every effort will be made to ensure that other vessels do not interfere with racing.
- 9.6 Competitors are reminded that the decision to race, or to continue to race, is their sole responsibility.

## **10. Setting the Course to a New Wind Speed or Direction**

- 10.1 The Course Management Team will consider re-setting the course following a change in wind direction. The course will definitely be re-set if:
- after starting boats can sail directly to the windward mark zone on either tack;
  - boats cannot cross the starting line on both tacks.
- The Course Management Team will endeavor to set a new course that meets the requirements of 11, Courses.
- 10.2 The Course Management Team will re-set the length of the course following a change in wind speed to meet the requirements of 11, Courses.
- 10.3 The Course Management Team will ensure that a manned Race Committee vessel is permanently on stand-by in the proximity of the race area. This vessel will be available for mark-laying and recovering disabled boats.

## **11 Courses**

- 11.1 The course management team will endeavor to set a course so that boats are evenly spread:
  - along the start line;
  - on each side of the beats;
  - on each side of the runs;
  - at the gate.
- 11.2 The course management team will attempt to set the longest possible first leg within the constraints of the course area.
- 11.3 The course length will be laid to give the first boat of each fleet the best chance of achieving the target time.
- 11.4 Gates will be approximately 10 hull lengths wide. The Course Management Team will endeavour to lay the gate square to the sailing wind. Variations in width and angle may be appropriate to adjust for current or other prevailing conditions.
- 11.5 The offset mark will be at least 10 hull lengths from the windward mark.

## **12. Starting Line**

- 12.1 Starting lines will generally be laid square to the median sailing wind. Current, favored side of the course, expected wind shifts and other variables may justify variation from this guideline.
- 12.2 The course management team will use the following guide to determine the minimum length of the starting line:

$$\text{Starting line length} = \text{number of boats} \times \text{boat length} \times 1.5.$$

In strong winds, heavy seas or any other reason the line will be lengthened as necessary.

## **13. Finishing Line/Finishing Procedures**

- 13.1 The finish team will be a minimum of two persons. Whenever practical, at least one of member of the finish team will be an experienced Race Officer.
- 13.2 At least one member of the finish team will use a hand-held recording device to record the order of finish.
- 13.3 If tapes are used to record finishing, they will, if possible, be labelled and preserved until after the conclusion of the entire event. If digital recorders are used, each day's recording will, if possible, be saved and indexed for easy retrieval.
- 13.4 A written record of the finishing order will also be maintained.
- 13.5 Competitors and coaches may listen to the voice recording(s) and review the written records of their finishes

## **14 Corrections Due to Scoring Errors/Requests for Redress**

- 14.1 The Race Committee will adjust posted finishing places if it is satisfied that, based upon its records or observation, it has made a scoring error.
- 14.2 If the Race Committee believes it has made an omission or improper action, including a heat scheduling error, affecting the outcome of the race for which redress may be available, it may request redress on behalf of the potentially affected boat(s).

14.3 The Race Committee will consider requesting redress on behalf of a boat if it is satisfied that that boat's score has been made substantially worse by the actions of an official boat.

## **15. Race Committee Protests**

15.1 The primary responsibility for protesting breaches of the rules rests with Competitors. The Race Committee will not normally protest a boat.

15.2 The Race Committee may protest a boat in the following circumstances:

- i) A breach of a sailing instruction that may not be protested by another boat;
- ii) An apparent breach of good sportsmanship (Rule 2);
- iii) Failing to take a penalty after knowingly touching a mark, but not protesting another boat;
- iv) Failing to sail the course (Rule 28)
- v) Following a report from an observer of an unresolved incident

## **16. Communication between the PRO and competitors.**

16.1 As far as reasonably possible, there shall a daily meeting of National Representatives with the PRO and other race officials. The daily meeting may discuss course management and other matters relating to the running of the event.