

Advice Notes for IRSA Addendum Q

For use at events to which an International Jury has been appointed

When an International Jury has been appointed for an event the Chairman will be an experienced judge, and he, together with several of the judge-umpires will have experience of radio sailing events. This version of the Advice Notes is specifically addressed at participants in such events. The advice is based on recognised best practice of an International Jury with at least 6 members available for umpiring duty.

The main objective of umpiring is to allow racing to be self policing, yet to provide an 'on the water' protest committee' in the eventuality that an incident is not resolved by the parties involved. To achieve this umpires work with observers, usually but not always competitors. The umpire contributes a detailed knowledge of the rules and procedures, together with different forms of umpiring. The observer contributes a detailed knowledge of the boats, radio sailing tactics, and an eye practised in evaluating speed, distances and angles in the context of radio sailing

Advice to the Race Committee

Appointing observers.

The Race Committee will appoint observers in accordance with rule E5.1(a) for each heat. It is recommended that there is an observer to work with each umpire. Other observers may also be appointed. It is preferable that competitors from heats not scheduled to sail, will form the majority of observers, but the race committee may appoint other suitable people as observers if insufficient competitors are available.

Observer Organiser (OO)

The race committee should appoint one or more people to act as Observer Organiser. Whenever possible this position should not be combined with other duties as it is important that observers for a heat are appointed and teamed as early as possible prior to the commencement of a heat. The Observer Organiser will liaise with the Jury Chairman, and ensure that observers arrive in good time and fully equipped (note pads, identifying bibs. etc) for the heat.

Selection of observers

Where possible the OO should select observers for the next heat from the heat before the one in progress; for example observers from C to observe A.

As far as possible, the OO will select competitors from the fleet so that they act as observers for a similar number of duties during the event and where possible select a mixture of nationalities in each heat.

The umpire team

Usually, the Jury Chairman will designate 4 umpires for each heat. Occasionally, only 3 will be available if a jury panel is hearing a protest. Umpires will generally officiate for 4 heats followed by a 2 heat break.

The OO will ensure that each umpire has been paired with an observer. The OO will agree with the Jury Chairman before the event how un-paired observers will be allocated. In many cases umpire/observer pairing is accomplished quite informally. During a long event umpires and observers get to know each other and will often choose to work together. In case of difficulty the OO will liaise with the umpires delegated for that heat, before pairing observers and umpires.

The umpire team will have decided how they intend covering the fleet during the heat. This may evolve during the event. Umpires will inform observers which section of the fleet they, as an umpire/observer team, are covering.

Unresolved incidents

When an umpire is not in a position to resolve an incident by making a decision the unresolved incident is reported to the race committee. The race committee may then protest one or more boats on the basis of the observer report. It is IRSA policy that the race committee should protest. By doing so they reinforce the enforcement of the rules by supporting the observer, who is also a competitor. The protested boat has already been given a clear opportunity to respect a fundamental principle of sportsmanship by take a penalty, and has refused to do so

SYRPH

Every attempt should be made to deal with protests using SYRPH. The race committee should appoint one or more persons to implement the SYRPH procedure.

Identifying boats

If umpires and competitors are reporting difficulty in reading the sail numbers of boats, especially at the furthest point of the course, the Race Officer should consider reducing the length of the course. One way of regulating this problem is to use marks identified by numbers or letters the same size as the sail numbers on the boats. If the mark numbers are not easy to read the course may well be too long for the existing conditions

Advice to Umpires

Umpires can prepare for an event by reading the Radio Sailing section in the ISAF IJ Manual. They should familiarise themselves with Appendix E, IRSA Addendum Q, SYRPH and any heat management system being used.

Introduction to umpiring of Radio Sailing

Radio Sailing has a long tradition of self-policing. Competitors assist in enforcing rule observance by acting as observers, who hail contacts and record any incidents, but give no decisions. At an umpired event, umpires function as an immediate protest committee, and may give penalties when competitors have failed to resolve an incident themselves. Observers continue to fulfil their normal role, and will also provide umpires with additional information regarding incidents they may have witnessed.

Umpires and observers work in pairs, this is known as the buddy-system. The umpire will have a detailed knowledge of the rules and procedures, together with experience of other forms of umpiring. The observer has a detailed knowledge of the boats, radio sailing tactics, and an eye practised in evaluating speed, distances and angles in the context of radio sailing. Working together they can follow racing closely, anticipating and observing incidents so that the umpire has sufficient information to decide rapidly whether a penalty is appropriate. Communication between umpire and observer will ensure that nearly all incidents are resolved within a few seconds, and that very few incidents need to be resolved by a protest hearing.

Positioning

A key part of any umpiring process is being in a position to witness any incident. This is especially so in radio sailing as boats can accelerate quickly and move fast in relation to their boat length. Umpires will agree between themselves which area or group of boats each umpire-observer pair is to follow. It is good practice to remind your fellow umpires which boats you are watching, especially when the pre-established plan needs to be modified as a race evolves.

Your observer will know where he would like to be standing in the control area if he was racing. Umpire and observers should aim to be standing in or near that position. However, umpires should be very careful not to block a competitor's view of the racing area.

Communication between umpires and observers

Your observer acts as an extra, expert, pair of eyes. By encouraging the observer to 'talk the race' with you it is possible to establish the rights and obligations of boats before an incident occurs. When an observer hails contact he must be absolutely sure that there has been contact. Following an observer hail, Addendum Q requires umpires to consult with observers and allows umpires to make decisions based on the information provided by observers. Discuss any incident with your observer, even if you have not personally seen the incident, and base your decision on what you have seen yourself and the confidence you have in the observer.

Boat identification

If you are unable to distinguish a boat's sail number, you may identify the boat by description, such as deck or hull colour, and then as soon as possible, by sail number. A general description like "the boat on the outside of the group rounding the mark" might be better until a certain identification is established. It is better not to hail any boat than to inflict a penalty on a wrongly-identified boat.

Following an incident

It is the responsibility of competitors to take the appropriate penalty when they have broken a rule. Umpires and observers inform competitors by hailing that there has been contact between boats, or between a boat and a mark. Competitors may also protest another boat. Competitors then have an opportunity to take a penalty themselves. In the meantime, the umpire, assisted by his observer, should decide which boat, if any, has broken a rule. If no boat acknowledges breaking a rule the umpire may then hail a penalty. However, if a boat does indicate that they intend to take a penalty, even if it is not the boat that the umpire would have penalised, that closes the incident.

Very occasionally an umpire will not have enough information to make a decision. In this case the incident should be reported to the Race Committee after the heat.

Taking a One Turn voluntary penalty or Two Turns after an Umpire hail

Following a protest or hail of contact, the initial requirement for competitors is to acknowledge verbally that they intend taking a penalty. Umpires will agree beforehand how much time competitors will be given. The time allowed may be short, 3 to 5 seconds, for instance. Once a competitor has acknowledged, they must get well clear of other boats as soon as possible and take their penalty. Any delay in doing so may result in a further umpire given penalty. Umpires should decide if the boat is making an effort to get clear.

If, after time has been for a boat to acknowledge, there is no response, then an umpire will hail a decision. When an umpire hails a penalty boats must take a Two-Turn Penalty. This aggravated penalty is to encourage competitors to abide by the principles of sportsmanship and to enforce the rules themselves.

Whether a boat takes a one or two turn penalty the umpire will rely upon his observer to verify that the penalties are carried out correctly. Incorrect or incomplete penalty turns can be penalised by an umpire.

Communication with competitors

Whilst racing, umpires may wish to give a brief explanation or comment on a decision. Competitors accept a penalty more easily if they are given an explanation. Competitors may request more detailed explanations after they have finished. Only answer questions from competitors relating to decisions you have made.

De-briefing meetings may be held with competitors and race committee, either after the day's racing or at the morning briefing, the next day to discuss any problems or questions that might arise from umpire decisions or the umpiring system.

Request for interpretation of the rules or race documents are often best replied to in writing, so that all competitors and race officials can read them.

Advice to Competitors

Competitors should read rule E5 and IRSA Addendum Q before racing.

Introduction to racing with umpires who are working with observers

Umpires act as an 'on the water' protest committee to resolve incidents almost immediately. By avoiding time-consuming protest hearings, umpires facilitate the running of more races at an event.

The presence of umpires does not reduce a competitors responsibility to abide by the BASIC PRINCIPLES including to follow and enforce the Racing Rules of Sailing. The role of umpires is to reinforce, not replace, self policing. They intervene following a hail of contact or a protest. When an umpire witnesses contact between boats, or a boat touching a mark, they will hail 'Contact' in the same way as an observer.

Umpires will not penalise a boat until she has been given an opportunity to respond to any incident by protesting or by taking a penalty. Umpires will only give boats a short time to respond, so competitors should acknowledge rapidly if they intend taking a penalty. When an umpire does give a penalty, the boat must take two turns.

When racing under Addendum Q an umpire's decision is final. You may only take an incident to a protest hearing if your boat has suffered damage, no umpire hails a decision or hails "no decision".

Protest procedures while racing

Protest procedures remain unchanged. Initially, hail once to make your protest. Hail loudly! Listen for the other boat's response and/or an umpire penalty hail. If you get no response to your first hail (either by an umpire giving a decision or the other boat acknowledging fault), you are obliged to repeat your hail to make your protest valid. This is to make sure the observers/umpires and the boat you are protesting have heard the hail. Note that rule E6.3 specifies twice. Do not make the hail more than twice or get into an argument of the rights or wrongs of the incident.

Penalties while racing

If you are protested by another boat, or if your sail number has been hailed following contact, and you accept that you have broken a rule you should acknowledge this as soon as possible. Then you must make an effort to get well clear of other boats. Merely sailing at the same speed and direction in the hope that a gap will appear is not sufficient. Once clear you should make a turn which includes a tack and a gybe. If, after taking one turn you still have an advantage as a result of breaking a rule you should take one or more further turns until the advantage is lost.

Umpires will penalise boats that do not make an effort to get well clear, take an incorrect turn or add further turns if they believe that you have gained a significant advantage.

If no boat takes a penalty or acknowledges within a short time and an umpire has sufficient information to make a decision, the umpire will hail his decision. If the umpire hail is "no decision" or no hail is made a protest can be lodged after the heat.

However, if an umpire does penalise a boat, the penalty is two turns, in the same direction, each turn including a tack and a gybe. Whilst taking a penalty you must keep clear of other boats.

Protests or requests for redress after racing

All incidents between boats should be decided on the water, preferably by the competitors themselves, or by the umpires. However, if there is no umpire decision, or for breaches of rules that cannot be protested during racing you may protest or request redress immediately after finishing, or as soon as possible after the incident if it does not occur while racing, follow the procedures for protesting as set out in Appendix E which may be supplemented by the Sailing Instructions.

Actions of Umpires

You cannot request redress because of decisions, actions or non-actions by the umpires or observers.

Advice to Observers

Your role as an observer

Observers are formally recognised as part of the race committee during the heats for which they are appointed. When racing is umpired your role is to follow the fleet and call boat-boat or boat-mark contacts, to monitor boats that have been called to ensure penalties are completed and to report unresolved incidents to the race committee. In addition you will work with the umpire, giving him information that may assist him make a decision.

As always you must hail only when absolutely sure contact has been made.

Race Committee request to observe

The race committee will have appointed an Observer Organiser (OO). Observer duties will be shared more or less equally amongst all competitors and you will only be excused if you have a valid reason and then normally only with the approval of the umpire panel. When you are requested by the OO to observe a heat you owe it to yourself and your fellow competitors to carry out the function diligently and to the best of your ability.

The OO will give you a notepad to record any incidents you see. Before doing anything else write on a new page your name, sail number and the race / heat number. You will probably not meet up with your umpire buddy until you get to the Control Area. Take the first opportunity to introduce yourself and confirm with him what part of the fleet you will be observing.

Working with Umpire buddies.

As soon as boats are racing umpire and observer should constantly discuss events on the sector of the race area you are observing. When boats are on converging courses, or approaching a mark, or at any time they are in close proximity it is important to establish each boat's rights and obligations. Following an incident occurs if you can describe what you saw in a clear and concise manner the umpire may be able to make a decision based partly on your information. If you are unclear and hesitant it is likely he will not accept your view and make a decision accordingly.

Observer hails

Observers are required to hail contacts in accordance with E5.1(b). Whilst it is not the observer's job to make a decision any details he can provide will assist the umpires. Hails need to be made promptly, clearly and in a loud voice. If you are unable to identify the sail number(s) immediately initially identify the boat by description such as deck / hull colour or "the boat to windward of XX", followed as soon as possible by the sail number(s). You should repeat the hail if there is no response.. Hail contact only if you are absolutely certain that an incident has occurred and you are able to identify the boat(s) involved. It is better not to hail any boat than to hail the wrong boat

Taking notes

When you hail boats that make contact, write their numbers on your pad and 'ring' the one who you believe is the boat that should take a penalty. If a competitor protests, record on your pad the sail number of the boats involved. Add a 'P' alongside the protesting boat number.

When a penalty turn is complete strike through the number of that boat written on your pad.

If no boat makes a penalty turn record the facts of the incident and the circumstances leading up to it that you observe. Add brief notes to the numbers marked and if possible add a small drawing, the relevant positions, where contact made on hull, marks, wind direction etc as appropriate. You may be asked to present this evidence at the end of the heat.

If a boat penalised by an umpire does not complete a correct penalty turn, (a tack AND a gybe) make contact with an umpire to require another penalty to be imposed.

Monitor penalties given by an umpire

When an umpire gives a penalty, check that the boat makes an effort to get well clear of other boats. Then check that the boat takes two turns in the same direction. It is useful to note on which tack the boat was when she started to take a penalty. If the penalty is incorrect or incomplete report this to the umpire.

Record incorrect mark roundings, boats out of control etc

Record, but do not hail, the sail number of any boats which do not correctly round marks of the course. You must follow and record boats that continue to sail the wrong course. If large numbers boats fail to round a mark consult with the umpires and other observers, checking that a boat may have later rounded the mark correctly. Record the sail numbers of boats that retire or who announce that they are out of control.

At the end of the heat

If, after the heat, there are unresolved incidents discuss these with the umpire. You may then complete an Observer Report Form. You may later be required to give evidence in person at a protest hearing. If so, give your evidence clearly and concisely. The Protest Committee may need to question you to obtain the facts concerning the incident.