

Ontario J/24 District World Qualifier Event – Race Committee Guidelines

This document outlines the Ontario District's recommendations for race management. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide competitors with consistent race committee practices from event to event regardless of the host club and/or principal race officer. It is not the intent of these guidelines to override the Race Committee Chairman's (RCC) judgment and talent.

Schedule of Events

Due to relatively light air conditions throughout the province during the summer months, a noon (or later) scheduled start time is suggested. In many cases, racing is postponed on the water while the wind builds and settles. The class would prefer beginning later and allowing racing to continue later in the day.

Earlier start times should be reserved for the final day of an event to allow travel.

Wind Conditions

Minimum wind speed – 4 knots to start a race. A starting sequence should not be initiated in speeds less than prescribed. Additionally, this minimum should be sustained across the start area and for the duration of the sequence until all boats have cleared the starting area.

Once the race is underway, the time limit and RCC judgment are determining factors regarding wind speed.

Maximum wind speed – The class prefers to not establish a maximum. Primary concern is that the conditions remain safe. It is each competitor's responsibility to determine their maximum wind speed as it relates to their safety in navigating the race course.

Starting

Line Bias – All start lines should be set square to the wind – regardless of current or wind conditions on the course. Assessing the course and wind conditions is an integral part of sailboat racing and responsibility of the competitors. Discouraging competitors from a given (tactically advantageous) end of the line should not be a consideration in setting the start line.

Sequence – the following “penalty” flags should be implemented to start all races:

Start Attempt #1 – “I” Flag

Start Attempt #2 – “I over Z” Flag

3rd and Subsequent Start Attempts – “Black” Flag

Ideally, there should be no more than 3 attempts to start a race. In all general and individual recall situations, the Race Committee should attempt to advise all premature starters via use of VHF radio. In the event of “Black” flag general recalls, premature starters should be identified (using VHF and/or board on the RC boat) prior to initiating the sequence for a subsequent start.

Line Length – Start line length should be determined based on the following formula: # of boats x 24 feet. Example, the line for a 20 boat fleet should be approx. 480 feet.

While Racing

Wind Oscillations – As a general rule, if the wind is oscillating there is no need to establish a limit on acceptable oscillation size. However, as a guideline if there is a prolonged wind shift in one direction (45 degrees or more is the suggested guideline), the RCC should consider abandoning and re-sailing the race once conditions have settled.

Persistent Shifts – If the oscillation becomes a persistent shift on the 1st leg of a race, then the class recommends abandonment of the race once it becomes obvious that the race has become unfair.

The following situations were provided for discussion (from ISAF Race Officer Seminar):

A persistent 60° wind shift occurs at the following stages of a race. What is the correct R/C response in each case?

- a) On the Start Line.
- b) Lead boats one quarter of the way up the first leg.
- c) Lead boats half way up the first leg.
- d) Lead boats three quarters of the way up the first leg.
- e) Established leader, 200 yards from the weather mark.

The class agrees with the recommendation to abandon the race in scenarios (a) through (d). in the case of (e), the race is allowed to continue with an appropriate change of course.

Shortening Course – Races must be a minimum of 2 legs (the windward to offset mark segment is not considered a leg).

No Wind – The class does not wish to set guidelines regarding situations where the wind dies during the course of a race. The RCC has ample tools – their experience, good judgment, shortening of course, time limit, etc. – that allow them to make the proper decisions.

The primary interest of all parties is for racing to be fair and safe. There will always be situations where variables on the race course impact some boats more than others – and that is part of the sport – however, there are limits. Should the race become inherently unfair as a result of these variables, the RCC should consider abandonment.

Support – The Race Committee shall ensure that a sufficient number of support boats and skilled personnel are available to effectively set and change courses, provide on and off water support, etc. during the regatta.

On Shore

In the absence of Jury personnel, the RCC is authorized (and should be prepared) to approve sail and crew change request forms.