Umpired Fleet Racing

Medal Race using Addendum Q

Advice to Umpires

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This is practical advice for umpires in addition to the other documents for the medal race and is based on three-four umpire boats per race with two umpires in each boat. It should be remembered that while we endeavour to cover every situation it will not always be possible.

Before the Medal Race

Make sure that you have all necessary equipment before leaving the harbour. Essential equipment is: green-and-white flag, red flag, black flag, whistle, radio, wet notes, digital voice recorder (optional), racing rules, sailing instructions, Addendum Q, food and water. Make sure that your rib has enough fuel.

Positioning – Basic Principles

Good boat driving and positioning is the key to good umpire decisions. In terms of positioning, umpired fleet racing has many similarities with team racing. Know which boats you are supposed to be monitoring and think ahead to where any two (or more) boats will be closest together. Make sure you are in a position to see the gap and be aware of how and when overlaps are established. If you want to learn more about positioning, you should read about it in the match and team racing manuals. They can be downloaded from the WS website.

If you are not in good position, do not give a penalty.

Two positioning systems are available: zone system and fleet system. The zone system allocates areas of the race course to each umpire boat. You umpire whichever boats come into your zone, usually described as left, middle and right. In the fleet system, umpire boats are allocated to specific racing boats, either because of the positions in the series or as the race unfolds. It is also possible to start using the zone system and then change to the fleet system as the race pattern becomes clear around the first windward mark. The zone system is likely to be maintained if the racing boats are significantly faster than the umpire boats or the umpire boats create too much wash.

If you have to make a decision which boats to monitor the following list gives some ideas for setting priorities:

- Boats fighting for overall position – give highest priority to highest places, but remember that the difference between 9th and 10th can be important to some competitors.
- Boats fighting for position in the medal race – give highest priority to highest places.
- Boats that are taking penalties.
- Boats that have been involved in an incident with contact in which case the umpires should look for any damage caused.
- Boats rounding marks.
- Be close enough to see the protest flag (does not apply for boards) and hear protest. This is a particular problem with boards as it may get you dangerously close if they capsize.

This means that we always want an umpire boat to windward of the first windward mark and most likely there should be an umpire boat at the leeward mark/gate arriving with the first group. It also means that if two boats are contesting gold/silver, they will be allocated an umpire boat from the preparatory signal. Be aware of tactics before the starting sequence. The boats may start on this a long way from the starting line.

Avoid motoring parallel to a boat when they are on your quarter, even if you think your wake is not affecting them.

Discuss the most likely breaches on the leg you are on. Use that information to decide on your positioning. Check how the other umpire boats are positioned. For example, it is a good idea to have one umpire boat on the side of the fleet if continuous or unsuccessful pumping is a potential issue.

Umpires should work together with the media. Where possible do not cut across them. If a TV boat is seriously affecting your ability to umpire effectively tell the Chief Umpire.
Communication in the Umpire Boat
The communication between the two umpires in an umpire boat is based on the principle that each umpire adopts a boat. If you are not familiar with this, the match racing manual explains it in detail. The manual can be downloaded from the WS website.

The driver always speaks about the boat you are following and the other umpire is observing all other boats. If there can be any doubt, clarify who you are speaking about, e.g. by saying “I am boat X coming from port…”

If one umpire states a position, the minimum response from the other umpire is ‘I agree’ or ‘I disagree’ or ‘I did not see’.

Keep eye contact with the other umpire boat(s) when possible.

Communication with the Race Committee
All comments to the Race Committee should be made through the Chief Umpire.

Communication with Competitors
Only answer questions from competitors relating to decisions you have made. Avoid discussions if possible. They should raise all other issues with the race committee.

Umpiring an Incident
The rules for umpired fleet racing do not define a specific time limit for a boat to take a penalty. In order to handle this consistently, the following procedure is useful:

• You see an incident. Decide if anyone has broken a rule.
• If no boat has protested, one of you says “Incident closed”, meaning that it can no longer be protested. If the other umpire has time, it is helpful if he says whether he agrees.
• ‘As soon after the incident as possible’ when taking a penalty includes the time needed to gain control of their boat if necessary and to find a way to start to sail clear.
• If a boat has protested, observe and agree when both boats have had the opportunity to start to get well clear.
• If no boat has taken a penalty as soon as reasonably possible you signal your decision (as stated in Q3.1).
• Only penalise a boat if you are in a good position to decide that a rule was broken.
• Agree which boat, if any, you will penalise and say out loud the flag you will display.
• One umpire drives a boat and the other makes sound and visual signals.
• Clearly identify any boat you are penalising. Make sure your sound signal is loud enough, the flag properly pointed and sail number clearly hailed.
• If you are satisfied and have agreed that the conditions for a second penalty are met (eg. gaining advantage in the race despite taking one penalty, or deliberately breaking a rule) you are required to give another red flag penalty.
• If a boat fails to take a penalty as required, you must give her another penalty. This time, she is penalized for failing to take the original penalty, so that penalty is cancelled. Therefore, after the second penalty signal, she owes only one penalty.
• If a boat fails to take a penalty and thereby gains an advantage, you should give her one penalty for not taking the penalty and one penalty (or more) to cancel the advantage.
• If a boat still fails to take a penalty when you have signalled it the second time, you should disqualify the boat by signalling with the black flag and clearly identifying the boat.
If you need to motor through the fleet to signal a penalty, raise the penalty flag first to show the fleet why you are doing this and, when you are close enough to the correct boat, blow your whistle and call the boat identification.

It may be helpful if you have seen an incident to get on the radio to the other umpire boat(s) and simply state: ‘Umpire 2 has the incident between X and Y’.

Remember for Part 2 incidents to wait for a competitor protest. When umpires are working well together in an incident, they sometimes make the mistake of signalling a decision on a Part 2 incident, even though the boats have not protested. To avoid this, the umpire who sees a flag should say “Protest flag on X”.

A boat taking a penalty is required to keep clear under rule 22.2 from the moment it is obvious that she is turning to take a penalty. Until then she may be sailing clear and the right-of-way has not changed yet. A boat that fails to keep clear under rule 22.2 is subject to protest by the right-of-way boat, not by the umpires, as this is now a Part 2 incident. A boat that fails to get well clear of other boats as soon as possible, fails to comply with Addendum Q3.2 and is subject to a penalty initiated by the umpires.

**Breaches of Rule 42**

Appendix P does not apply, except P5. Penalties for breaking rule 42 are the same as for other rules that can be protested on the water. The same advice for signalling the penalty applies, raise the Red flag first, get close to the boat to be penalised, then make your sound signal and identify the boat. Because the penalty is mild, it is important to penalise breaches of rule 42 as quickly as possible. It should also be considered to give a second penalty if the competitor gained an advantage by breaking rule 42.

If a boat is penalised under rule 42 and later in the race repeats the breach, the umpires should consider giving two penalties where the second is for deliberately breaking the rule. If a boat repeats a breach the third time, the umpires should consider disqualifying the boat.

**Damage**

If there is an incident with contact, check for damage if possible. It is useful information if there is a request for redress. Inform the Course Chief what you have seen.

When a boat breaks a rule and causes injury or serious damage, her penalty shall be to retire from the race according to rule 44.1(b). If the boat fails to retire, disqualify her by signalling a Black Flag penalty to her.