Writing a Notice of Race and Sailing Instructions

Paul Pascoe & Peter Osbourne, 10th August 2022

There are four bodies which share the responsibility for organising a regatta;

- World Sailing,
- Member National Authority (MNA) – Australian Sailing
- Host Club
- Affiliated Organisation other than a club – usually a class association

The Organising Authority shall be one or more of these organisations

There are three components to the main event documentation:

- Notice of Race (NOR)
- Entry Form
- Sailing Instructions (SIs)

NOR

- The NOR is essentially a contract between the OA and the competitor on what is being offered – a competitor will make their decision on whether they will enter an event based on the information in the NOR
- Publishing the NOR is the responsibility of the Organising Authority (OA), and it shall conform to RRS Appendix J1
- The Guide to drafting a NOR is no longer included as an Appendix in the RRS – it is now Appendix LG and can only be downloaded from World Sailing here; https://www.sailing.org/inside-world-sailing/rules-regulations/racing-rules-of-sailing/ under the section "Online Rules Documents".
- The Notice of Race is a Rule
- Changes to the NOR are permitted "provided adequate notice is given" RRS 89.2(b).
  - o The NOR was changed for the Melbourne to Osaka race after the race had started. Competitors were emailed at sea and all provided written agreement to the change.
  - o Be very careful if changing the schedule of races, especially the latest time a race may be started on the final day of the event
- The first part of the NOR specifies which rules are in place, ie. WS RRS, Introductory Rules, Col Regs, local port authority regs, IRC, AMS, etc.
- Information on accommodation, social events etc, while important to competitors, should not be included in the NOR.

Entry Form

The entry form is generally created at the same time as the NOR and is created from information in the NOR.

When creating the entry form, make sure that every piece of information that is required for results is captured on the entry form. Catering, emergency contact details, medical issues can also be included, but the major stuff ups are when not all the required information is available for presentation. The biggest mistakes are generally not collecting DOB, Gender etc when there are going to be prizes for "first female", or "Under 14", (Australian Youths in WA).

Useful stuff: The best way to ensure that you have collected all the information is to refer to the Prizes section of the NOR, or even better still, talk to the person buying the trophies. If they are purchasing a prize for the first female then gender is a mandatory item on the entry form.

Useful stuff: When there is an age-based division, do not ask people to specify if they are Under 14, Under 16 etc, but ask for their DOB and work it out yourself just prior to registration. The reason is that the reference date for the calculation of age is always different and a percentage of people will invariably get it wrong. This applies to both Junior and Masters events.

The NOR and entry form are written well in advance of the event, and the list of prizes may have changed by the time the event rolls around and SIs are being drafted. When writing the SIs closer to the event, check with the person purchasing trophies again and see if the NOR is still valid or the SIs need some change. If additional information not on the entry form is needed, then this can be gathered at the onsite registration.

SIs

- Publishing the SIs is the responsibility of the Race Committee, and it shall conform to RRS Appendix J2
- The Guide to drafting SIs is no longer included as an Appendix in the RRS – it is now Appendix KG and can only be downloaded from World Sailing here; https://www.sailing.org/inside-world-sailing/rules-regulations/racing-rules-of-sailing/ under the section "Online Rules Documents".
- The SIs are a Rule
- Generally drafted with input from OA, and reviewed by at least the Chairman of the Jury.
- It is highly desirable that duplication between the NOR and SIs be avoided.
- Changes to SI's, RRS 90.2(c) "The sailing instructions may be changed provided the change is in writing and posted on the official notice board before the time stated in the sailing instructions or, on the water, communicated to each boat before her warning signal. Oral changes may be given only on the water, and only if the procedure is stated in the sailing instructions".
- Verbal instructions are rarely a good idea, although they are popular with windsurfers
- Generally SIs state that changes must be posted "1 hour prior to scheduled start time except for schedule changes which will be 1900 hours the night before". Bringing forward races the next day is always problematic unless there is an effective communication system. Pinning on the notice board is generally not enough, though technically correct.
- RRS Appendix S provides a Standard Sailing Instructions which may be used at an event if it is stated in the NOR. Use of Appendix S greatly simplifies the drafting of the SIs, although care must be taken that it is suitable for local circumstances. Supplementary SIs will need to be posted on the official notice board to describe any changes to the Appendix S wording, and to include non-standard instructions such as race schedule, time limits, mark descriptions etc.

What can the NOR & SIs change

- The rules that can be altered are listed in rules 85 – 88. Some rules cannot be changed, i.e. port/starboard.
- Class rules cannot be changed unless there is a letter from the Class Association.
- Australian Sailing (AS) Prescriptions cannot be changed unless it is an international event.
- When a rule is changed in the NOR or SIs, it must specifically refer to the rule, otherwise the change is not valid. "The Two Turns Penalty is replaced by a One Turn Penalty. This changes RRS 44.1".

Wording

The following are the recommended verbs and their meaning.

- Shall – Means "must" and generally refers to what a competitor must do, "e.g. Shall sign on".
- Will – Generally something that the RC will do during the course of the event, "will raise orange flag 5 minutes before warning".
- May – An optional act, e.g. "There may be equipment inspections".
- There is a more comprehensive paper on the use of "Shall" vs "Will" in another Explainer in the Files section of the ROV fb group

NOR Contents – Appendix J

Mandatory contents

- Event Title and name of the OA
- The rules that will be in force, including any other documents, e.g local regulations.
- Classes to race including any handicapping system to be used.
- Conditions of entry, e.g. financial member of a Class Association.
- Times for registration and the first race.

Optional Contents – included if relevant

See Appendix J1.2 for a full list, but there are a number of items generally included:

- Entry process, fees, and closing dates
- Schedule of races, including the latest time for the last race of the event
- Measurement
- SIs availability
- Courses to be sailed, or at least an overview, e.g. "Windward/Leeward and Trapezoid"
- Scoring changes to Appendix A, generally about number of drop races
- Support boats
- Boat storage/mooring
- Radio Communications
- Prizes, including handicap systems, e.g. 1st in IRC
- Advertising
- Media
- Disclaimer or Liability
- Insurance
- Safety Requirements

Not Required

The following documents are often included but are not necessary as they are automatically included by specifying WS RRS. See Definitions, Rule (d).

- Class rules, or rating rules documents (e.g. IRC).
- National Prescriptions.

SI's Content

Mandatory

- The rules that will be in force, including any other documents, e.g local regulations (copy from NOR)
- Schedule of races (copy from NOR)
- Courses to be sailed, list of marks, class flags (refer to Appendix A)
- Time limits
- Handicap systems to be used (in Prizes)
- Scoring (copy from NOR)
- Location of Official Notice Board if not in the NOR

Optional Contents – included if relevant

See Appendix J2.2 for a full list, but generally included items:

- Procedure for changing to the SIs
- Safety Requirements (copy from NOR)
- Signals made ashore
- Racing Area
- Description of obstructions
- Description of the start/finish
- Changes to Penalties (copy from NOR)
- Time Limits
- Protest Procedure
- Safety (copy from NOR)
- Replacement of Crew or Equipment
- Measurement checks
- Support boats (copy from NOR)
- Radio Communications (copy from NOR)
- Prizes (copy from NOR)
- Disclaimer or Liability (copy from NOR)
- Insurance (copy from NOR)

As you can see, lots of overlap and it is up to the individual as to whether it is relevant to duplicate or not. People will not have read the NOR, or if they did, it will have been six months before the event and then only to get the dates and the fees.

Process to write your NOR

Remember that this is a marketing document and you want to showcase your event. This will be the competitor's first contact with your event and first impressions are important, so as well as being factually correct, it needs to be visually appealing.

- Find a similar event from last year.
- Setup the auto numbering in MS Word, or copy/paste into your standard document.

- Update with your new dates, classes, handicaps, logos
- Compare to Appendix J to make sure that:
  - All mandatory items are included and check on optional items that may be relevant
  - The wording is exactly the same as in the sample in Appendix K.
- Check the prizes against any existing perpetual trophies.
- Check with the club for any local rules, restrictions etc.
- Send a copy to other members and ask for feedback using Track Changes.
- Go around for a second time.
- Convert to PDF.
- If there are revisions, post the changed document to the website with a comment on what has changed. Date the change.

Process to create your Entry Form

- Read the NOR to find all the variations on divisions
- Read the section on Prizes and ensure that all required information is being collected
- Call the person buying the trophies to check that this is correct
- Create the entry form
- Send the link to a friendly competitor to try out and comment on usability
- Send the link to one of the local rock stars and ask them to enter, even if they don't pay immediately.
- Post the NOR and link to the entry form on the website
- Send out a press release with a link and a news item to say "and the first entry was xxxx".
- Do not publish a list of entries until there are least a useful number of entries. Nothing looks worse than a week out from an event with 10 entries.

Process to create your SIs

- Use the same basic process as for NOR comparing against Appendix L.
- Copy/paste the relevant sections from the NOR to the SIs.
- Check again on the prizes and if additional information required, inform the volunteers handling registration to collect this additional information.
- As a courtesy, send to the OA and at least one Jury member for comment.
- If there is a multi-class regatta, it is useful to leave the drafting of the courses until a couple of days out from the regatta when the mix of classes is clearer.
- Use recommendations from Addendum A for illustrating the course.
- Use coloured marks in the diagrams where possible as this is helpful for course layers as well as sailors and reduces the risk of error.

Using the new "built in" SIs

Appendix S contains standard SIs that can significantly reduce the size of SIs. The NOR is still the same except that the section on SIs specifies that Appendix S is to be used and that Supplemental SIs will be available. These SIs can be reduced to the minimum of the following:

- Schedule of races
- The location of the race office and of the flag pole
- Description of the marks
- Time limits

The one additional item that would generally be included would be:

- Course layout

[DP] [SP] [NP]

Discretionary Penalties are now in the rules, so do not to define these. Add [DP] next to a rule to give the Jury discretion on penalties.

"The notation '*[DP]*' in a *rule* means that the penalty for a breach of the *rule* may, at the discretion of the protest committee, be less than disqualification."

To include Standard or "No boat" protests must include the following in the heading (prior to item 1).

[SP] denotes a rule for which a standard penalty may be applied by the race committee without a hearing"

[NP] denotes that a breach of this rule will not be grounds for a protest by a boat.

Recommendations

- Use the new Appendix S for regattas. This may not be realistic for Club SIs as there is a lot more local information.
- Write the NOR and Sis at the same time to ensure that there are no inconsistencies for the sections that are duplicated.
- For an annual event, write the NOR and Sis for next year's event the day after this year's event finishes, incorporating all the changes to SIs or any stuff ups into next year's Sis.
- Be careful when copying from year to year as errors can be carried from year to year, or worse, can be compounded.
- At the start of every four year rules cycle, start with a new NOR and SI in a Microsoft Word format that you are comfortable using. Check against the new rules for any changes.
- Use a Microsoft Word template with auto numbering.
- Do not duplicate RRS into your SI's, e.g. There is no need to say "The start will be run under Rule 26", as this is the default.
- Put all of the most useful information, especially about sailing the course, and aspects that changes from event to event, into an Appendix. Then for your next event, most of the information is in one place and easy to change. E.g. Marks, Course Flags, Course layouts. With all of this in the Appendix, the only thing that you may need to change is the schedule of races.
- Don't be too specific in the NOR and SI about the conduct of on-water activities. Give your RO plenty of flexibility. "There will be a maximum of three races back to back". This was in the Optimist Nationals Sis to make sure kids weren't overloaded. But during the regatta we were way behind on the schedule, then we had a moderate day, no waves, not too hot, and the kids could easily have done a fourth race. The forecast for the next day was not good and they didn't not get another race in the series so no drop race in the finals and very unhappy sailors and parents. This should have been a recommendation to the RO from the OA, not hard coded in the Sis.
- Limit the number of people to review the documents. Some RO's/Judges will love to tear your document to pieces and add in lots of extraneous stuff. Find

a short list of pragmatic, but detailed reviewers. The best reviewers may not be the best RO's or Judges.

- Once you have a generic set of SIs, it is possible to limit any changes to:
  - Title of the event
  - Schedule
  - Prizes
  - Appendix A – Course diagrams

How to use Microsoft Word

- Use Auto numbering and styles to auto number and auto format.
- Modifying a Word document with auto numbering significantly reduces the amount of effort required to edit the document. For example without auto numbering, if you add in a new section between items 2 & 3, you then have to renumber every item until the end of the document. Using auto numbering will do this automatically as you edit. To find out how to do this, do a Google search for "Microsoft word automatic numbering".

How to draw Course Diagrams

- Start lines, finish lines and marks are easy to draw in Microsoft Powerpoint or any other drawing tool.
- Lines for the course to be sailed are sometimes a little more difficult and often not worth the effort or the complexity of the end result.
- The best approach is to create a small library of a start boat and marks of different colours. A sample are shown below:
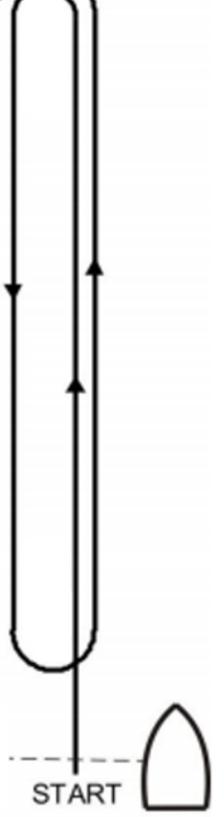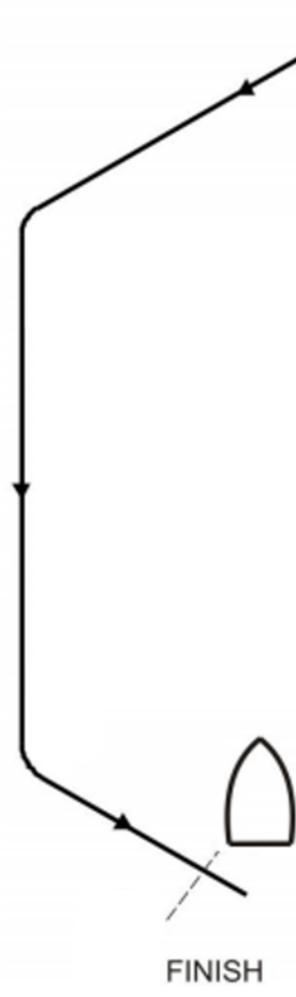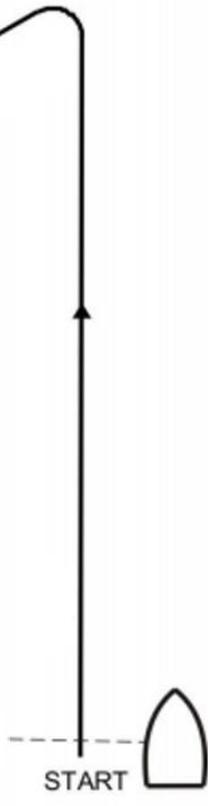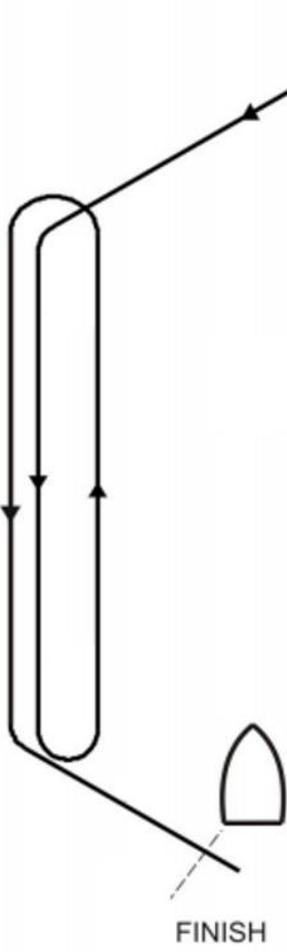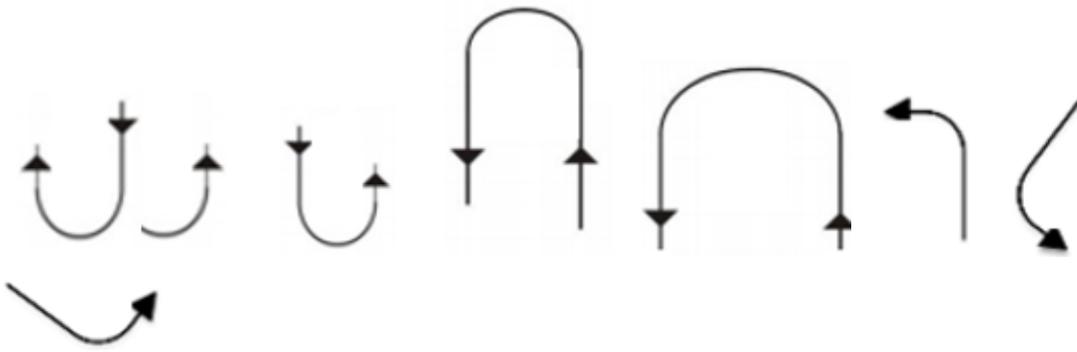

Using just coloured circles you can add in mark numbers as follows:

Alternatively, using the following types of marks allows you to create diagrams with separate mark numbers.

Adding in lines components:

START

FINISH

START

FINISH

With the finished product looking something like:

1

2

4S 4P

3S 3P

START

FINISH

1

1a

2

START FINISH

1

1

1

90°

2

1

3

Start

Finish