

WAVES 2005 Regatta

Information for Parents of Competitors

Introduction

Parents, along with sailing coaches and instructors, play a vital role in the development of all sailors.

Parents are enthusiasts. They help rig and maintain boats and equipment; they provide funding and transportation; they motivate and nurture sailors as they move into their racing careers. Sailing is a lifetime sport, and the attitudes of a parent will often determine how long a competitor will remain active on the water.

In the quest for excellence for their kids, however, parents sometimes become frustrated with apparent lack of progress through a program, or sometimes find the results their children achieve disappointing. It is normal to be disappointed when things aren't going well, but it is often detrimental to the progress of the youth sailor if the parent isn't careful about the messages delivered in discussions around success and failure.

Coaches and race officials in Canada want the best for all competitors, adult and youth. Race officials are driven by three goals: Fair competition, Safety, and Satisfaction to the client. In this context, the "client" is often the competitor and the other family members involved. Race officials are trained to provide high quality events, within limitations imposed by weather and other factors, but it is important to note that race officials are always volunteers, and are entitled to be treated with respect by coaches, competitors and their families.

The following guidelines have been developed for parents who attend regattas with their children. It is intended that parents who wish to attend youth events in Canada adopt these guidelines as an acknowledgment of their responsibility during the regatta. The purpose, of course, is to give each youth competitor the chance to compete with a minimum of stress, and to ensure that race officials are respected and supported as they do their difficult work.

Parents have a responsibility to:

1. Treat everyone at a regatta respectfully within the context of their activity, regardless of gender, place of origin, race, physical or mental

disabilities, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, or economic status.

2. Refrain from public criticism of Race Officers, Judges and members of Protest Committees, Umpires and other volunteers.
3. Direct comments or criticism to the appropriate body.
4. Consistently display high personal standards and project a favorable image of sailing.

How to ask questions about or comment on decisions taken during a regatta

1. The youth competitor should approach the regatta office personally and either fill out a scoring inquiry form (if the question is about scoring) or ask one of the volunteers at the desk for assistance.
2. If the youth competitor is accompanied by a coach, the coach should carry the question or comment to the regatta office. If possible, the question or comment should be made in writing.
3. Only if a coach is not available, a parent may bring questions or comments to the regatta committee, but they must be in writing. Verbal representations by parents are sometimes misunderstood..
4. The regatta office will direct the question or comment to the appropriate person, usually the Race Officer or chair of the Protest Committee. That person may meet with the competitor and the coach or parent in an effort to respond to the query. Alternatively, the response may be offered in writing, and delivered to the competitor or posted on the Official Notice Board.
5. If the competitor has further questions or comments, they may be submitted in writing to the Commodore of the host yacht club. It is advisable to forward a copy to the provincial sailing association as well.

Thanks very much.
WAVES 2005 Committee

