



Canadian Yachting Association Race Management Committee

An Overview of Race Officer Training



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CYA RACE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

AN OVERVIEW OF RACE OFFICER TRAINING

INTRODUCTION:

This overview has been undertaken, coincidental with revisions that are being made to the overall Officials Development programs, to restore them to a reliable, user friendly, segment, of CYA's services to the Provincial Sailing Associations, the Member Clubs, and the sailing community at large. The need for these revisions is largely as a result of the failure to maintain reliable records of those who have been certified as Race Officials, and the collapse of the re-certification process.

While examining the problems of the past few years it has become apparent that there is a degree of dissatisfaction with the existing program design, and this has also been addressed in the recommendations. The review, although intended to look primarily at program administration, has of necessity been exposed to critical comments and recommendations from many individuals, and a number of PSAs, and these have been incorporated as appropriate in the recommendations.

The process used in conducting this review has been feedback from the majority of the PSA Race Management committees, and comparisons made between CYA programs, and those of a number of other countries, including USA, UK, New Zealand, and France, all of which have excellent programs operating, the USA program having been designed fairly recently, following close scrutiny of our program.

HISTORY:

With the selection in 1970 of Canada to host the 1976 Olympiad, funding started to become available for Officials Development from Sport Canada for the National Sport Governing Bodies, and similarly from Provincial Government Sport sources. CYA found it expedient to relocate to Ottawa, and shortly after USYRU was named as the successor to NAYRU. USYRU issued its first Race Management Manual in 1975, and it's interesting to note that Lynn Watters of Canada was one of the authors along with a number of other well known names.

The Olympic Games were hosted by Germany in 1972, with the Yachting events staged at Kiel, under the direction of Otto Schlenzka, Kommodore of the Kiel Yacht Club, setting an extremely high standard of race management. Livius Sherwood had at this time been named as Director of Yachting for the 1976 Olympiad, and was present at Kiel during the 1972 Games as an observer. On his return from Kiel preparations for the 1976 Games

entered a concentrated training phase. Three separate race courses were planned, each with its own Committee. These committees were permitted to operate independent of each other, within the Olympic guidelines, the Yacht Racing Rules, and the Sailing Instructions. The committees were staffed from Montreal, Ottawa and the Toronto - Golden Horseshoe area, and during the three years prior to the Games practiced hard until each reached excellence in performance. The challenge to the teams was Uncompromising Perfection. Those that failed to achieve were dropped and a replacement found.

The Yachting events in 1976 were exceptional, and a standard of performance was achieved second to none. A large number of highly motivated, well trained race officials was one of the legacies that sailors gained from the Games. The Olympic Harbor was another legacy, and it was natural that CORK should become the venue for the week long CYA Regatta Management Seminars that were conducted from 1977 through 1981.

These seminars took two knowledgeable candidates identified by each province, on the understanding that they would return home to further train others by conducting local seminars. These seminars were always well attended. In addition Race Management seminars were a popular feature of a number of CYA and PSA annual meetings during the same period.

At the 1977 CYA AGM in Banff a strong lobby was presented for the development of a certification program to recognize those who were being trained. Up to that time all that the attendees received was a Certificate of Attendance. In 1982 the CYA Operations Plan was adopted at the AGM in Saskatoon, and included was the Officials Development Committee, not fully defined, but there in name to receive Sport Canada funding.

One of the criteria for funding was the preparation of a program designed specifically to train both Race Officers and Judges, supported by documented records each year of the number of Officials developed at each level, in the two disciplines. It was from this initiative that the Race Management Training program was developed, based on four levels of demonstrated competence and experience, including the development of formalized course content, and a program to additionally train the trainers resulting in the Course Conductor program.

During this period the Officials Development team of the Federation de Voile du Quebec had been busy preparing a series of Race Management manuals, and in 1979 the CYA Race Management Committee completed and published the official CYA Race Management Manual. This manual has been updated twice and awaits preparation of the 4th edition following the publication of the 2001 - 2004 Racing Rules of Sailing, and the Canadian prescriptions. Ontario Sailing Association published a comprehensive manual in 1980 for those running club events.

A number of other excellent Race Management manuals exist, the USYRU published in

1975, was completely revised by US Sailing in 1994. The IYRU manual was published in 1992 followed by the second edition of the Royal Yachting Association manual in 1993. Each of these documents cover in detail most of the data needed to organize and run small club races and major events.

The CYA manual is unique in that it has adopted a user friendly style, with explanations of why some techniques are preferable, and how to anticipate and overcome various problems that might be encountered. Most of these manuals are updated, as appropriate, on a four year cycle as the Rules are modified.

THE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM.

THE INTENT.

Descriptions of the Program can be found in a number of source documents, the CYA Directory, the Officials Logbook, and the CYA Race Management Manual, and it is not necessary to repeat them here in this overview.

The four part program, with certification levels determined by skills and experience, was intended as a national program. This, when the program was first introduced, was expected to ensure a degree of uniformity of training across the country, and a comparable level of skills and experience obtained by those achieving certification.

Levels I and II.

Recognizing that levels I and II are tailor made for those involved primarily in club racing, and local competition, the responsibility for delivering and administering these programs has been delegated to the Provincial Sailing Associations, a number of which have their own very active and capable Race Management Committees. It was originally hoped that PSAs, who for various reasons could not support their own programs, would seek assistance from another PSA with an active program.

In order to ensure uniformity in the level I and II skill levels attained, a Course Conductor program has been designed to attach the teachers who train and test levels I and II. Certified Race Officials who successfully attend the Course Conductors training seminars are certified as RM Course Conductors (RMC).

They then organize and conduct level I and II seminars and training as required by PSAs in their respective jurisdictions. This ambitious model was intended to build a coast to coast foundation of trained, qualified Race Officials up to the Club Race Officer level. For those who wished, a CYA Certificate of proficiency was available upon application. It was originally set up that PSAs would forward applications for certification to CYA who would issue the Certificate, and maintain records of all those who had been certified, and initiate

re-certification notices as appropriate.

Levels III and IV.

Level III and IV certification recognizes advanced race management skills and experience, and proven satisfactory performance beyond club and regional events. The original intent was that the CYA RM Committee would have the responsibility for training level III and certifying levels III and IV.

No training programs or manuals were produced for these levels, recognizing that applicants would have already acquired extensive knowledge and experience. It was considered that a once a year level III RM Seminar, held during CORK would be adequate to provide any advanced training necessary, and to permit applicants the opportunity to demonstrate those skills required for certification.

A Certification Committee appointed by the CYA RM Committee would review applications. It was originally set up that CYA, on notification by the RM Committee, would issue the Certificate, and maintain records of all those who have been certified, and issue re-certification notices as appropriate.

THE REALITY.

In early 2001 a comprehensive questionnaire was circulated to each PSA, and the members of the CYA RM Committee. The majority responded and their views and recommendations have been analyzed, and form the basis for much of this overview.

Levels I and II.

Training at levels I and II, although not strictly to CYA standards, occurs in most provinces, although several have no RM Committee in name. The training described varies widely in content, and the general feedback indicates that as levels I and II are unlikely to ever be required to serve outside of their local area this, in the view of the trainers, creates no problem.

The general feeling is that coast to coast uniformity is of far less importance than local knowledge, and familiarity with local equipment and conditions, and the needs of local sailors. Certification at these levels appears to be almost a non issue, although some PSAs make the application form available to participants, who seldom follow through. The benefit of CYA Insurance coverage that comes with certification is not widely known or considered important.

The degree to which the laid down programs are adhered to varies from PSA to PSA with those provinces having the largest sailing population, being the better organized as one would expect. Ontario, being closest to CYA's influence, follows the formal program very closely, while other PSAs have chosen to make modifications to suit their own needs. BCSA has developed its own program, developed as a result of dissatisfaction with the present program format, and more particularly the administration problems, but is prepared to take another look at the overall CYA program when it is brought back under control. .

Levels III and IV.

Feedback regarding the level III program is unanimous in its criticism, not only of the way the program has failed to be administered, but also the content and lack of planning of the level III seminars conducted at CORK. Examples range from individuals who have traveled to CORK to work on race committees under observation, expecting to learn something which will lead to their certification but end up doing menial level II work, to individuals who, without any RM knowledge, were sent by their PSA just because there was some funding available and nobody else wanted to go. This leads to ridicule of the program and a general distrust of the system. The failure to even inform participants that there was a CYA Race Management Manual is questionable.

A number of advanced level seminars have been held, mainly in conjunction with Canada Games, Pan Am Games, Sail East and Sail West and some Youth events, to provide high caliber RM coaching and mentoring for specific race committees. These have been modeled on the ISAF Race Management Seminars, but without support or input by CYA, and without any associated certification.

The security provided by the CYA Directors Errors and Omissions insurance coverage is generally known to level III Race Officers, and is accepted as a worthwhile benefit. It obviously is not a high priority in obtaining certification.

Most of the comments received about level IV have referred to the failure to acknowledge receipt of Certification Applications, coupled with the lengthy delays in informing applicants of acceptance or rejection, and whether Certification would be granted. Several level IV Race Officers, although still very active have allowed their certification to lapse due to the absence of a re-certification procedure.

Insurance coverage is more important for level IV ROs as their involvement in major international, and cross border events could expose them to risk not encountered at club events.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:

On the positive side the Race Officer Training program has been, and continues to be

successful. Most PSAs are actively involved in training at levels I and II, although not all are following the CYA model absolutely.

The quality of Race Management has been significantly improved nationally over the past two decades. Considerable effort by dedicated individuals has resulted in the development of high quality level I and II training programs, available to those wishing to use them.

The CYA Race Management Manual has set a high standard, such that other countries have used it as their model in developing their own training material. The training and certification of Course Conductors is unique.

Most PSAs have programs at the local level to improve level III skills, mainly by on the job training, and knowledge sharing, through seminars accompanying major events.

On the negative side the Race Officer Certification program has fallen short of expectations. A number of reasons for this have been identified during the subject survey. None come as a surprise, having been the subject of considerable debate and criticism over recent years. The absence of any written procedures has resulted in a gradual drift to the present situation as staff changes occurred at both CYA and PSAs, and as similar changes occurred in the volunteer ranks. Without any formal guidelines to follow, new incumbents did what they believed appropriate. This coupled with several attempts to transfer a manual process to a computerized system, which is still not fully functional, has created misunderstandings, confusion at times, and a general distrust of data being produced by both CYA and PSAs.

The apparent incompatibility of various data bases has created problems, and miscommunication has added to the confusion. The most serious effect of the loss of reliable records has been the discontinuance of re-certification notices being issued, and incorrect, or no data being published in the CYA Directory and on the various web-sites.

A general complaint from those surveyed relates to the original certification fee that was introduced at the inception of the program. This nominal fee was intended to cover the cost of an Officials lapel pin, the Certificate or sticker, regular Officials Newsletters, and postage. As the Newsletter was dropped due to budget constraints, and communications discontinued, the need for a fee appears to have diminished. The suggestion that there be a fee has been sufficient disincentive to cause most level I and II course graduates to express disinterest in certification. The same opinion exists with levels III and IV, to a lesser degree.

The original requirement that levels III and IV should be Individual Members of CYA is still a sore point with a few, although Individual Membership as it existed when the program was first conceived no longer exists. Never the less the unsatisfactory memory still effects opinions.

CYA appears to be alone in having a four level Officials Development program. Each of the other programs examined has three levels only, and do not spend time in training those areas we cover in level I. It is worth noting that the CYA Judges program, although still four levels, appears to have recognized that the lowest level is really a recognition level. All of the other programs have titled levels, rather than numbers I to III, making them more descriptive of the level of qualification represented.

All of the RM programs examined are well administered, with responsibility shared between volunteers and staff. Re-certification reminders are sent out well in advance, following screening by the volunteer responsible for keeping the lists up to date. Inactive RO-s are either down graded one level, or dropped completely, so that lists remain realistic. All re-certifications require attendance at a seminar prior to re-certification, or an appropriate level of demonstrated satisfactory performance.

The seminars appear to be designed for the skills of the attendees, and are basically a two day workshop based on a large number of scenarios requiring discussion and RM skill application. Where tests are used they are only one criteria for certification, or re-certification. Performance, maturity and leadership ability is also taken into account. There are no fees associated with certification, however each seminar attendee is required to pay a fee to help cover the costs of the event. In most instances certification is for four years. Only the USSA certifies the lowest level, the others give an attendance recognition. NZSA only appoints the highest level, by invitation, for a one year period.

CONCLUSIONS:

For a number of reasons the CYA Race Management Training program has become generally unattractive to those for whom it was designed.

CYA has failed to support its own policy that only level III or IV Race Officers Chair CYA events. This has weakened the perceived need for level III certification, and has resulted in the Chisholm Trophy being awarded to those who failed to satisfy the terms of the Deed of Gift.

The PSAs, and their members do not, by and large, accept the program as it now exists, and there are several probable reasons.

(a). There is no clear direction to those responsible for administering the program resulting in a collapse of continuity.

(b). Over the past two decades the membership of the RM Committee has changed for various reasons. Without clear guidelines delineating their responsibilities within the

structure, they have each brought their own thoughts and ideas, resulting in a program drift away from its original concept.

(c). The program itself is not user friendly, and certification offers little attraction.

(d). The regional representatives of the RM Committee do not necessarily speak for each of the PSAs, and for some regions there has been little, or no PSA input into how the RM programs have been developed.

CYA within its Officials Development Program has three separate, but parallel disciplines, Race Officers, Judges and Umpires. Each is administered separately, undoubtedly incurring duplication or triplication of time and effort. The administrative procedures have not been effectively coordinated.

Now is a good time to introduce change in the administrative aspects of the RM program. Our new staff members, are keen, with a willingness to cooperate, and anxious to be involved. The melding of the administrative procedures into a Protocol, or Standing Operating Procedure, covering the three disciplines is acceptable to the Chairs of the three committees involved.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(1). That a Standard Operating Procedure (S O P), embracing the three disciplines - Race Officers, Judges and Umpires be prepared, acceptable to the Chairs of those committees, and to Staff.

(2). That this S O P cover all procedural details of initial Certification and re-certification, including the working relationship between CYA and the PSAs where responsibility for training and certification has been delegated. That CYA obtain input and acceptance to the procedure from each PSA.

(3). That there be a new volunteer position created of Officials Development Coordinator. This position, reporting to the VP Training would monitor the administrative functions of each discipline, alerting as necessary should deviations occur, and making recommendations as necessary. Regular liaison with staff and the VP Training would be a key part of this role.

(4). That CYA install a Forms Control system, and that all forms used in the administration of the Officials Development program be developed jointly by the respective volunteers, the O D C and Staff. That all forms be identified by code and be Revision

dated, and a system established to purge obsolete forms, including those held by PSAs.

(5). That the RM Committee change the names of levels I through IV to a more user friendly nomenclature, to parallel the terminology adopted by the Judges Committee.

i.e. Club RO, Senior Club RO, Canadian RO and Senior Canadian RO.

(6). That the RM Committee initiate a Phase II of this Overview, or establish a new committee to take a close look at the UK, NZ, US and ISAF programs for level III training, in an attempt to regain national acceptance of our programs, and to increase significantly the number of level III - Canadian Race Officers.

(7). That the RM Committee prepare a report for the VP Training, at each annual meeting of the committee, indicating whether the proposed Standard Operating Procedure, when it is introduced, is being adhered to. If not, reasons for the deviations and recommendations for correction.

Respectfully submitted:

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