

Hosting / Running a Match Racing Event

*Organized by the US Sailing Match Racing Committee
(with special thanks to Maggie Shea and Bruce Cook for their work on this)*

INTRODUCTION

Clubs and associations across the country have started local match racing series, and their members can attest to the addictive nature of match racing for both the competitors and spectators. It's an exciting variation to add to any club/association's regular season schedule. This manual provides an overview of the basic needs required of the host, where to begin with regatta administration, and some guidelines for race management.

Some clubs/associations have taken the next step and organized formal "graded" match racing regattas. This manual also provides an overview and some detail of what it takes to run a graded match racing regatta.

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1) RUNNING BARE-BONES MATCH RACING

If you just want to go out and run some match races for practice or fun, all you need is two boats (keelboats are better for match racing), a whaler, 2 marks, a stopwatch, you and some sailors.

Set the starting line about 8 lengths of the racing boats long. Set a windward mark upwind of the left end of the starting line, so the beat takes about 4 minutes to sail. Set your watch for a 5:00 minute countdown. Assign an end to each boat and signal the start of the starting sequence. The boats enter at 4:00 minutes and start at 0:00. The course is windward (mark to starboard), leeward (leave the starting mark to starboard), windward, finish downwind across the starting line. Have the boats change ends and repeat.

If you have 1 or 2 more marks, set a leeward mark or a gate (preferred) just to windward of the starting line.

If you are planning on hosting/running a graded match race regatta, read on...

2) HOW MATCH RACING WORKS

Match race regattas consist of tournament-style round robins and knockout elimination series. Consecutive matches are sailed in “flights” and are started in rolling five-minute sequences. A windward-leeward-windward-leeward course is used with marks rounded to starboard and a leeward gate in many instances. The format is intense (with 2-10 boats racing around a short course at a time), exciting, and it is great for spectating.

The host is expected to provide equally matched boats for racing. If the host does not have an existing fleet that it can use, it borrows boats from members or others. The number of boats available, the amount of time scheduled to sail the event, and the desired format then determines the number of skippers who can compete in a regatta. Most events have between 6 and 12 skippers compete over a 2 to 4 day period of time. However, you can have as few as 2 skippers compete in a one-day event.

Once the dates for an event are published on public racing calendars, skippers usually contact the regatta organizers to request invitations to the event. The regatta organizer then issues invitations to selected skippers to come to the event based upon their background, experience, and any special criteria that the event might have.

Match race regattas use on-the-water umpires to officiate the racing. Like sports officials in baseball, basketball, and football, the on-the-water umpires in match racing follow the competitors around the playing field [the race course] and dispense instant justice to them when they protest. This process virtually eliminates the need for post-race hearings and makes the sport more spectator friendly because virtually everything is decided on-the-water during the race at the time of an incident. Competitors and race officials like it as well because it frees up their evenings to socialize and enjoy everyone’s company.

A flag system is used with the umpiring process: competitors display a “Y” (Yankee) flag to initiate a protest against another boat, and umpires respond to that flag with flags that assess penalties in varying degrees or signal “no penalty given; play on.” The system is, therefore, very visual and easy for competitors, officials, and spectators to understand.

It is common practice to have two umpires per umpire boat and one umpire boat per match sailed. US Sailing’s Umpire program certifies umpires and lists their names and contact information on the “Find an Umpire” page of its website to help organizers find umpires for their events.

The Notice of Race and the Sailing Instructions that are used for match racing are standardized documents that are used for every graded match race event in the world. The work is done for you. All you have to do is fill in certain information to localize the documents to your venue.

World Sailing, the international governing body for the sport of Sailing, has established and published a grading system to categorize match racing events. It categorizes events as grade 1-5 according to specified criteria, with 1 being the highest (strongest) level and 5 the lowest. Most regattas are graded 2, 3, 4 or 5. Skippers who participate in graded events that comply with World Sailing grading criteria earn points that are used to calculate their overall world-wide ranking.

Now that you have an overview of match racing, let’s take a more specific look at the considerations for setting up an event.

3) EQUIPMENT NEEDS

Sailboats

What type of sailboat is needed?

Generally speaking, keelboats that are sailed by a crew of 3-6 people and that use spinnakers make excellent match racing boats. Examples of boats that are commonly used for match racing in the United States are the following: Ideal 18, Sonar, J/22, IC 24, J/24, Tom 28, Catalina 37, Match 40, Colgate 26, Ultimate 20, Governor's Cup 22 and the Elliott 6m.

Do the sailboats have to be identical?

No. It is ideal to have a fleet of identical boats to use for a match race regatta but that is not always possible. To address the fact that the boats in a given fleet may not be identical, the organizing authority must take all reasonable steps to equalize the boats for the regatta.

What does 'equalize the boats' mean?

This means that the organizing authority must take all reasonable steps to standardize its fleet of boats so that each boat will perform as well as each other boat if they are equally sailed. Typically, this means that the boats in the fleet should be in the same or a similar state of repair, have a similar underwater hull condition, be the same weight, have the same forestay and shroud lengths and tension, have the same mast location, have the same sails (same cut and usage), have the same deck layout (the same or similar hardware, sheeting and control systems located in the same or similar places on the boat), and the same on-board equipment; this means that the forestay and shrouds should be taped once the standing rigging is tuned so that no adjustments can be made to the uniform settings. And it means that there should be a detailed inventory for each boat listing what each boat includes: everything else should be removed. A fleet of perfectly equalized boats is the goal; however, we live in an imperfect world so the standard sailing instructions specifically provide that variations between boats will not be grounds for redress.

If your club/association has its own dedicated fleet of boats for this type of racing, standardization of the boats is something that can be programmed into its annual schedule of activities so that the fleet of boats is race-ready at any given moment. If the club/association relies on borrowed boats, then the event organizers should consider incorporating the following into the regatta format: 1) have the competitors rotate more frequently and through more boats in the qualifying round robin, and 2) pair the boats in the knock out series so that boats of similar performance sail against each other.

The best way to track boat performance is for the Race Committee to keep a list of the number of wins each boat scores during the round robin and for the Race Committee to ask the competitors who have qualified for the knock out rounds which boats they want [or do not want] to sail. Doing this keeps things objective.

Will the people who lend us their boats be upset if we 'equalize' their boat?

No. The people who lend you their boat for this activity know that you will be getting it ready for the racing to be done. However, they will be upset if you do not return their boat to them after the event in as good or better condition than it was provided. Your ability to borrow someone's boat is entirely dependent on how well you take care of it. It is, therefore, **CRITICAL** that you have a system in place to take care of the boat. A system for doing that includes the following:

- an inventory of the state of the boat and the equipment that it came with;
- an inventory of anything that was removed from the boat so that it can be replaced after the event and before returning the boat to the owner;
- instructions for rigging, de-rigging, mooring, towing and stowing the boat and its sails and equipment to the extent that you are not satisfied with the standard provisions in the sailing instructions;
- a bosun to check for damage on the water in the event of a collision;
- a bosun on the water to make repairs on the water to the extent feasible;
- the collection of damage reports from competitors at the end of the day;
- daily independent inspections of the boats being used;
- post event inspections of the boats; restoration of the boats post event; and a
- procedure for returning the boat to its owner that ensures the owner's satisfaction and expresses your appreciation for the use of the boat. If the standard sailing instructions do not adequately cover things for you in this regard, you can certainly add instructions to that document.

A similar system should be in place for taking care of a club-owned fleet of boats.

Do you need to be concerned about class rules?

No. Class rules do not apply in match racing. Instead the rules in Appendix C of the RRS and rules for the handling of the boats in the Sailing Instructions apply.

How many sailboats are needed?

An even number of boats is required. Most events have six, eight or ten boats, and invite eight, ten or twelve teams. Having a spare boat can really help in the event of damage or a breakdown. When there are more teams than boats, more boat changes are required in addition to the motorboats that are needed to move the teams between boats. This takes time and slows up the completion of the format. The minimum number of boats is:

- Grade 5 → 2 boats
- Grade 4 → 4 boats
- Grade 3, 2 and 1 → 6, 8, 10 or 12 boats (no less than half the number of skippers)

What happens when there is damage?

There are several ways in which damage is addressed in match racing:

1. *Damage Deposit* - You should collect a damage deposit from each skipper before that person and his or her crew set foot on the boats. The amount of the deposit depends on the boats, and usually ranges from \$500 - \$2,500. The standard notice of race provides that the damage deposit is the limit of the skipper's liability per incident. It also commonly provides that the damage deposit must be reinstated before the skipper continues in the regatta after the organizing authority takes a deduction from it.

Generally speaking, the amount of the damage deposit should be no less than the amount of the club's insurance deductible.

2. *Bosun Assessments, Point Deductions, and the Damage Deposit* – When contact occurs between boats while racing, a bosun should inspect the boats for damage. If damage is found, the bosun should assess the nature and extent of the damage found, the effect that the damage has on the functionality of the boat, and assess the amount of time it will take to repair the damage. The bosun will then use that assessment to categorize the damage as A, B or C damage using the table in Appendix E of the Sailing Instructions, and the umpires will then have the race committee deduct the amount of points attributable to that category of damage by Appendix E from the skipper's score. The skipper will then be offered an opportunity to have a hearing on the subject with the advice that the point deduction could be increased after a hearing. ***In addition***, the skipper(s) responsible for the contact will be responsible for paying for the repair work out of their damage deposit irrespective of the category of damage assigned on the race course.

The cost of repair of damage that occurs during the regatta when the boats are not racing will be assessed to those skippers responsible for it.

It is helpful if the bosun has available an itemized price list for repair work that includes repair costs for sails and replacement costs for equipment.

3. *Insurance* – The organizing authority for an event should be sure that it has adequate insurance coverage for hosting sailboat regattas. This is a somewhat specialized area of the insurance business so care must be taken to be sure that adequate and appropriate coverage is in effect to include coverage for the boats being used and the race officials at the event. US Sailing's recommended insurance agent/broker is Gowrie Barton & Brett. That company offers a comprehensive insurance program for yacht clubs and similar organizations that conduct sailboat regattas. Having adequate and appropriate insurance coverage will enable your club to address particularly serious occurrences should something that unfortunate occur.

Preparing the Sailboats

Each sailboat should have a means of identification: either a name, sail number or bow number. And, each boat should be identified in the same manner: either by name, sail number or bow number.

The boats will also need the following flags (8"-12" in length and width) taped or tied to the shrouds and/or backstay:

- 1 blue and 1 yellow – designates which side the boats are assigned for initial entry
- 1 red – used when sailors protest certain rules or request redress
- 1 'L' or Lima flag – indicates a breakdown
- 1 Yankee flag attached to a 14" dowel or stick – used for normal protests [Part 2 of the RRS]

Race Committee Boats

You will need a race committee signal boat, mark set boat, a breakdown boat, and the equipment to set up a race course and do a starting sequence. If your club regularly runs sailboat races, you should already have the equipment needed.

Do you need a special type of signal boat?

Clubs/associations around the country use different types of boats for their signal boats, but most signal boats tend to range from 18' to 28' in length. You should use the signal boat that your club/association already has. It should be able to comfortably accommodate 4-6 people and, ideally, have places for poles with flags attached to them to be displayed, including a starting/finishing line flagpole. You do not want your race committee staff to hold flagpoles up in the air for long periods of time.

Do you need any special equipment on board the signal boat?

Your club/association's well-equipped signal boat should have the equipment that you need. At a minimum, that equipment should include the following:

- Code Flags: A, AP, C, F, H, L, M, N, P, Y, third substitute, and numeral pennants for each match in a flight: if you have 4 matches/flight, you will need numeral pennants 1, 2, 3, and 4. If you are going to run five matches/flight, then substitute numeral pennant 8 for 5 (5 is yellow/blue which can be confusing when raised at the start for match 4).
- Solid Color Flags: yellow, blue, and the colors of your windward marks (which should not be yellow or blue)
- Horns (preferably power; if you have air horns, have plenty of spare cans: at least 5 cans per regatta)
- Race committee automated starting system
- GPS, compass, wind gauge, range finder, and tell tale
- Electrical tape, whiteboard and marker, and VHF radios [for RC channel, umpire channel, competitor channel, and spares].

Do you need a special type of mark set boat?

Clubs/associations around the country use different types of boats for their mark set boats. The ideal size of this boat depends on the size of the marks used, but it should comfortably accommodate at least two people onboard plus the equipment that will be carried on board. Generally, whalers or other hard sided boats are best for the mark set boats. You should use the mark set boat[s] that your club/association already has. At a minimum, the mark set boat needs the following equipment onboard:

- Code Flags: C, M, and numeral pennants that correspond to the number of matches per flight
- Solid color flags that correspond to the colors of the windward marks
- Poles on which to display the flags
- Air horns, mark inflator, VHF radio
- GPS, hand bearing compass, wind gauge, and tell tale
- Boat hook for grabbing marks
- Anchors, anchor lines, and counter weights
- Marks for the race course

Do you need special types of marks?

At a minimum, you will need a start/finish mark, a single leeward mark, a windward mark and a windward change mark. This will allow you to set up a basic, traditional match race course. It is recommended that the start/finish mark be a different color and/or shape than the leeward mark[s] to avoid possible confusion. The use of counter weights [such as a small mushroom anchor tied to the anchor line 8'-10' below the surface] helps to keep the anchor line as vertical as possible between the mark and its anchor to eliminate or minimize the chance of a boat catching its keel on the anchor line.

The marks used do not have to be large marks. They just have to be visible enough to be seen on a racecourse that typically has legs that are 0.25 nm - 0.5 nm in length and take 12 – 18 minutes to sail. The larger the marks used, the more difficult it is to manage them on the water.

If the wind at the venue where you race is regularly shifty, your race committee will find it very difficult to make course changes after the first start with multiple matches on the race course at the same time. To address this circumstance and make life easier [i.e., minimize the re-setting of marks during races], race committees put two or three [2 or 3] windward marks [each a different color] in the water before the starting sequence begins. Typically, but not necessarily, one of the marks is a default mark [the windward mark competitors must round in the absence of a change of course signal from the race committee]. Then, any course changes will be made during the starting sequence or at the leeward mark/gate as needed for the matches racing. If this system is used, the windward mark set boat will obviously need to carry the extra mark[s], and the anchor lines, anchors, and counter weights for the additional marks being used.

It is prudent to not use a Yellow or Blue mark as a windward mark, as that can cause confusion because the Yellow and Blue flags have other meanings when flown from the Race Committee signal boat.

As you become more experienced and comfortable with your match racing program, you may wish to consider setting a leeward gate in the place of a single leeward mark. Leeward gates have become more popular at match race regattas because they offer competitors more tactical options than a single leeward mark. If your race committee chooses to have a leeward gate, it will then need the additional mark, anchor line, anchor, and counter weight to set the additional mark.

Do you need a special type of breakdown boat?

A separate motorboat should be dedicated to repairing breakdowns. This boat should be easily maneuverable and able to pull up alongside the sailboats so it is preferable that it be well fended or soft sided like a RIB. It should also be able to carry on board the spare parts [including extra spinnakers, spinnaker poles, tillers, tiller extensions, repair tape and any other piece prone to breaking on the boats] and the tools needed to make repairs between races.

Umpire Boats

You will need a minimum of one umpire boat for each match in a flight. For example, if you have 4 matches in each flight, you will need 4 umpire boats. Ideally, these motorboats will be center consoles that range in size from 15 feet to 19 feet in length, will be easily maneuverable, and will comfortably accommodate 2-3 people. Having a spare boat is always a good idea. Onboard each boat should be the following:

- Colored flags- yellow (2), blue (2), red (1), black (1), and green (green and white checkered if possible)(1) on poles
- Flag holders- PVC tubes zip tied to seats or center consoles work well.

- VHF radios (2 per boat)

The poles displaying the colored flags should be long enough so that they can be placed in the flag holders and have the flag fly above the umpire's head when standing while the umpire boat is being operated. This arrangement makes it easier for the competitors to see the flags and prevents the flag from hitting the umpires in the face.

4) RACE OFFICIALS

Match race regattas require a core group of officials: the Organizing Authority, Principal Race Officer, and Chief Umpire. Together, these three are responsible for the execution of the event and they make the decisions about the format, race course, and racing. Set forth below is a breakdown of their roles and responsibilities:

Organizing Authority (OA)

- Creates regatta documents: NoR's, SI's (with the RC), pairing sheets, and amendments to the sailing instructions
- Oversees venue preparation
- Coordinates logistics for umpire team and competitors; his/her contact information should be provided to competitors to be easily reached by email or cell phone
- Manages registration
- Oversees boat draw, is responsible for format changes or abbreviations
- Runs the competitor briefings
- Monitors the weather conditions and alerts the PRO about any dangerous weather
- With the PRO, makes the following decisions:
 - When the format needs to be shortened and stages must be terminated
 - The number of points in each knock-out series
 - Informing the competitors and umpires of the intention for racing that day
 - Decisions about the use of spinnakers, or going to smaller jibs or reefing mains, etc., and whether racing should be run due to wind and weather conditions
- Provides the grading report to the Chief Umpire at the conclusion of the event
- Works with the PRO and the Chief Umpire as a team in the successful execution of the event

Principal Race Officer (PRO)

- Creates the SI's (with the OA)
- Oversees racecourse positioning- size, length, area
- Manages the Race Committee and assigns people to the following functions:
 - Sound signaller
 - Flags (need two people)
 - Line Sighter
 - Timer and recorder
 - Mark boats
- Scores the event, confirms scores with the Umpire responsible for scoring statistics, and reports the official results to the OA.
- PRO makes the decisions regarding:
 - Weather conditions and, with input from the umpires, sail-ability of races

- Together with the OA, number of races/day
- Size, length and location of course
- When to abandon or postpone a race with input from the umpires when practical
- Works with the OA and Chief Umpire as a team in the successful execution of the event.

Chief Umpire

This person should be a certified national or international umpire with extensive experience whenever possible. The Chief Umpire

- Invites the members of the umpire team to the regatta
- Coordinates umpire meetings, rules debriefs and assigns various responsibilities to the umpire team such as the following: statistics, equipment, social agenda, jury, etc.
- Is the point person for communications within the umpire team, with the PRO and OA, and with external entities such as the media, US Sailing and World Sailing
- Works with the OA and PRO as a team in the successful execution of the event
- Reviews the NoR and SI's before they are published
- Sends in the completed Grading Request Form at the conclusion of the event

5) REGATTA ADMINISTRATION

While any club/association can have a match racing program of its own, and while any two boats can match race each other when and where they choose, there is already in place a world-wide program for match racing that provides a structure and plan for this type of sailboat racing. That structure and plan categorizes match racing events into 5 Grades, and awards competitors in those events ranking points that are calculated after each event based upon the results a particular competitor has in the event: a competitor who won an event will receive more points than a competitor who finishes last in an event. All competitors who match race are then ranked worldwide based upon the total number of ranking points that they have accumulated. Ranking points are then used to grade the higher level events [in order to be a grade 1 or 2 event, the event must have a minimum number of ranking points]; this means that the Organizing Authorities for these higher level events will limit their invitations to competitors who are ranked highest so that the event will have the required minimum points to be graded at the desired level. All of this is to say that this program provides a means for active match racers to move up the ladder of success toward the top of the game.

What are the 5 grades of match racing events?

Match race regattas are graded 1 – 5, 1 being the highest (strongest) level, based upon certain criteria that can be found in section 27.2 of the World Sailing Grading Regulations: [WS Regulations](#).

Note that grading requirements may vary a bit between an Open event and a Women's event.

A general overview follows:

Grade 5's and 4's are the base of the pyramid. As beginner level match race regattas, grade 4's and 5's are casual with a focus on development and learning. There is no grading-specific competitor criterion; skipper ranking doesn't matter. Grade 5's can be single-day events, whereas Grade 4's must be held over two days. Grade 4's must have 6 skippers competing.

Grade 3's are the most popular level regattas, and they usually feature a mix of new and experienced teams. The grading regulations for Grade 3's are stricter than the grade 4's, but still allow for new match racers to compete. World Sailing requires these events to have at least 8 teams, 30% of which must either be a different nationality than that of the host nation OR have travelled more than 500 km from their ordinary place of residence to the event venue. (This restriction is waived for national championships which are automatically grade 3.) For experienced racers, Grade 3's are a great place to start match racing.

Grade 2's are generally much more competitive than Grade 3's and the invitation process is highly selective. World Sailing requires that the field of competitors at this level be composed of international and highly ranked teams. The 12 top-ranked skippers in the field of competitors must bring a certain number of "skipper points," which correspond to the skipper's World Sailing ranking 4 months prior to the event. Open Grade 2's require 50 skipper points; Women's Grade 2's require 35 skipper points. See the table in the World Sailing Grading Regulations for the breakdown of skipper points per ranking position.

Grade 1's are the highest grading level below World Championships (WC) and the World Match Racing Tour (WMRT). The same skipper point policy applies from the Grade 2, except that Grade 1's must have 100 skipper points for Open events and 70 skipper points for Women's events. Grade 1's often have prize money and are the most selective invitation process. Additionally, World Sailing must appoint the umpire team at the present time and regatta organizers are expected to pay umpires a per diem. Grade 1's therefore demand the most cost-wise from organizers.

How do you get an event graded?

This is a four-step process.

First, the event organizer/OA fills out the World Sailing Grading Form [[Match Race Grading Form](#)] as soon as possible before the event [at least 4 months before the event if possible] and sends it to the US Sailing Match Race Grading Secretary, currently Nicole Breault [<mailto:nbsailor@gmail.com>], for approval. The Grading Secretary then sends the approved grading form to World Sailing so World Sailing can place the event on its event calendar. Be sure to keep a copy of the approved grading report as you will need to have it after the event is concluded. At this point, your event is graded at the grading level you requested, but World Sailing reserves the right to change the grading after the event if the actual data for the event does not substantially meet the grading criteria for the requested grade level.

Second, within 5 days after the regatta for grade 3, 4, and 5 events, and within 24 hours after the regatta for grade 1 and 2 events, the OA should complete the grading form with actual data from the event to include the finish results, the World Sailing ID for each skipper, travel distance information, and other information requested by the form.

Third, this completed form should then be submitted to the Chief Umpire for review. When the Chief Umpire is satisfied that the actual information is correct as reported on the form, the Chief Umpire will sign the form to attest to the fact that the information entered in the form is true and accurate.

Fourth, the signed grading form should then be sent to matchrace@isaf.co.uk. The OA or the Chief Umpire can submit the form. World Sailing will then use the information provided to calculate the competitors' ranking points from the regatta and to update the world wide ranking list for all match race competitors: [WS Match Racing Rankings](#).

What happens if you forget to submit a grading report before an event is held or fail to send it in on a timely basis after the event is concluded?

The old adage “better late than never” applies if this does happen, and it does. Fill out the report form, send it to the Grading Secretary for approval if needed, and get the document submitted to World Sailing with a “mea culpa”. Without that form being on file with World Sailing, the competitors will not get their ranking points and they will be most unhappy with you.

Event Financials

It is important to establish a budget early when planning the event. The lower the grade of the event, the less the host is expected to supply to the sailors – lunches, food after racing, etc. Being able to pay for umpire travel, housing and food expenses, however, may have a significant effect on the availability of higher-level, experienced umpires; this is primarily important for higher level events [grades 1-2-3] where grading requirements mandate that there be a certain number of International Umpires at the event.

How much are entry fees for match race events?

Event entry fees vary based on the overall cost to the organizer for running the event, the number of racing days, the event grade, event sponsorship, race official expense if any, World Sailing grading fees for Grade 1 and 2 events, and the number of teams entered. Many venues charge \$200-300/day of racing.

How much do you charge for a damage deposit?

The amount of a damage deposit depends primarily on the insurance coverage, or lack thereof, for the boats used in the event. Some venues charge their insurance deductible as the maximum deduction per incident. Others assign a value that would theoretically cover major damage to the boats used in the event. You must remember that the standard regatta documents limit a competitor’s responsibility for damage for a single incident to the amount of the damage deposit. Damage deposits are in addition to entry fees and currently range from \$500/incident to \$2500/incident in the US.

If at the end of an event there is damage that cannot be assigned to a specific skipper, the OA typically divides the amount of unassigned damage by the number of skippers and deducts that amount from each skipper.

Regatta Documents

As indicated above, there is a worldwide program for match racing that undertakes to standardize match racing practices so that practices are the same, or virtually the same, anywhere in the world match racing occurs. Part of this program is a set of standard race documents [notice of race (NoR) and sailing instructions (SI)] that are used everywhere in the world at every graded match race event. All you have to do is to fill in certain basic information to localize the document to your venue and particular event and you are done. Instructions accompany the standard documents that are located at the following address: [Standard NoR & Sailing Instructions](#). The NoR can be created and finalized by the OA, but the SI’s should be reviewed and approved by the PRO and Chief Umpire before distribution.

What is the basic procedure for inviting competitors to your event?

First and foremost is having a notice of race (NoR) published and having your event listed on recognized event calendars and websites such as World Sailing’s event calendar, US Sailing’s website,

the *Dial Up's* calendar of events, and your own organization's website with links to the notice of race. This enables interested competitors to find your event and reference the NoR in anticipation of coming to your event.

You should then identify your target group of competitors. For example, you may wish to target youth under the age of 23 years or competitors listed in the top 50 on the World Sailing Match Race Ranking list, club members, or others. You then want to get a list of the people in your target group and their contact information and send them an email with a copy of the NoR attached, or a link to it, asking them to apply for a spot in your event. The World Sailing website, the US Sailing website, and other match race organizers can be excellent sources of this information.

When you receive requests for an invitation, you will then decide who you want to invite to your event and you will send those people an invitation to your event. Invitations should be issued as soon as possible to allow potential competitors to plan their schedule and crew lists for the year and to ensure affordable travel arrangements. That invitation should include the following information:

- A link to the Notice of Race.
- A deadline for the invited skipper to pay some portion (usually half) of the registration fee as a non-refundable deposit to hold his or her place
- Contact information for the event organizer
- Helpful logistics details not included in or attached to the Notice of Race to include:
 - address, location, and hours of registration
 - tentative practice schedule for teams traveling from out of town
 - nearby airports, hotels, and housing arrangements
 - the number of meals provided at the event so sailors can budget
 - any required social functions and dress code
- The following statement: “Should you accept this invitation and later withdraw within two months of the event or leave the event before the end without the written approval from the OA, it is possible for a zero score to be applied to your ranking points for this event by World Sailing.”

Are there any documents or information that you will need to obtain from the competitors at registration?

Yes. As specified in the SI, competitors must provide the following at registration:

- Weigh-in
- Liability waivers
- Damage deposit: cash, credit or check

Every member of every team competing in the event must weigh in so the Organizing Authority can determine if the team meets the weight limit specified in the Sailing Instructions. Compliance with the event weight limit is required for grading purposes and must be certified by the Chief Umpire at the end of the event. If a team does not meet the weight requirement for the event, it will have to do something to comply before it competes.

Liability waivers vary with the Organizing Authority as to content but most Organizing Authorities require teams to sign one as a condition of participating in the event.

Teams must establish a damage deposit before they can step foot on the boats being used for the event. These are not usually set up in cash or by check, but it is possible. The most common scenario is for an Organizing Authority to establish the deposit by a good, valid credit card with adequate, available credit limits. Whether the Organizing Authority actually charges the card at registration with the amount of the deposit [and refunds any balance after the event] or simply takes an impression of the card that can be completed should damage occur during the event is a matter of the Organizing Authority's preference.

Event Format

The event format for a given event should be the one that maximizes the racing program for the event given the number of teams participating, the number of boats being used, and the number of days of racing scheduled. The format can then be modified during the event as circumstances require because the standard match racing documents allow for modification of the format during the event. Most formats consist of at least one round robin followed by a series of knock-out rounds. At developmental regattas (grades 4 and 5), round robins are commonly used to maximize racing among all teams since those events are run over fewer days [typically, 1-2 days max] than grade 1, 2, and 3 events [3-4 days or more].

What is the thought process for establishing a format?

First, assess your time constraints:

- Number of racing days and racing hours/day permitted by daylight
- Number of boats and matches per flight
- Quality of boats and number of necessary rotations [boat swaps]

Since most, if not all, match race events begin with a round robin, the chart below provides guidelines for the duration of a round robin for some of the common skipper/boat combinations:

Round Robin Duration Key

Skippers	Boats	Matches/Flight	Flight Duration	Flights/RR	Hours of Racing Needed
6	6	3	40 min	5	3.5 hours
8	6	3	40 min	10	6.5 hours
8	8	4	45 min	7	5.25 hours
10	8	4	45 min	12	8.75 hours
12	8	4	45 min	17	12.5 hours
10	10	5	50 min	9	7.5 hours
12	10	5	50 min	14	11.5 hours

The chart above assumes that each race takes 15 minutes to sail and that there is no down time between flights for boat swaps, breakdown repairs, or other reason.

If you have at least 8 teams and 8 boats, then the possibility of a quarter-final stage exists. Each match in a quarter final knock out is typically sailed until one of the boats in the match scores at least 2, but usually 3 points. The chart below provides some guidelines for the duration of a quarter-final knock out:

QUARTER-FINAL KNOCK OUT DURATION KEY

Skippers	Boats	Points Max Races	Matches/Flight	Flight Duration	Max Hours of Racing Needed
8	8	2 pts/3 races	4	45 min	2.25 hours
8	8	3 pts/5races	4	45 min	3.75 hours

The chart above assumes that each race takes 15 minutes to sail, that there is no down time between flights for breakdown repairs or other reasons. It also assumes that each match in the flight takes the maximum number of races to decide the winner of the match. It is quite common for a winner of a match to be determined in fewer than the maximum number of races. When that happens, the overall amount of time it takes to sail the quarter finals shortens.

It is quite common to plan for semi-final and final knock out stages for the top 4 teams at your event, the top 4 teams being determined by the results of the earlier stages in the event. The chart below provides some guidelines for the duration of those stages:

SEMI-FINAL AND FINAL KNOCK OUT DURATION KEY

Skippers	Boats	Points Max Races	Matches/Flight	Flight Duration	Max Hours of Racing Needed
4	4	2 pts/3 races	2	30 min	1.5 hours
4	4	3 pts/5 races	2	30 min	2.5 hours

The chart above assumes that each race takes 15 minutes to sail, that there is no down time between flights for breakdown repairs or other reasons. It also assumes that each match in the flight takes the maximum number of races to decide the winner of the match. It is quite common for a winner of a match to be determined in fewer than the maximum number of races; when that happens, the overall amount of time it takes to sail the semi-finals, or finals as the case may be, shortens.

Assuming, for example, that you have an event with 8 skippers and 8 boats, you will need

	<u>3 Pt K/Os</u>	<u>2 Pt K/Os</u>
Round Robin	5.25 hours	5.25 hours
Quarter-Finals	3.75 hours	2.25 hours

Semi-Finals	2.50 hours	1.50 hours
Finals/Petit Finals	2.50 hours	1.50 hours
Total Hours	14.00 hours	10.5 hours

to complete an event with a round robin, quarter-finals, semi-finals and finals. If you have 6 hours per day to sail, you will need 2 days plus 2 hours on a third day to complete this regatta with 3 point knock outs and 2 days to do the event with 2 point knock outs. Your time changes if you have a round robin, semi-finals, and finals, and no quarter-finals.

What you have to do is mix and match the variable factors to come up with a format that works for you and that maximizes the time you have scheduled to sail.

As noted above, the discussion has assumed that there are no boat swaps during the round robin other than, perhaps, a change after the end of the day before the next day of sailing. That is the desired approach. When deciding if you are going to have rotations, and how often you will have them, consider how equal the boats are: if the boats are not closely matched, then it will be necessary to swap boats more often to keep things fair. If they are closely matched, then the approach mentioned above is recommended. If you are going to have boat rotations during the day, then you may have to adjust the time needed to sail the particular stage of the event when rotations will occur.

Note that in a knock out stage, the *option* to swap boats after odd numbered matches [after the first or third match] is routine. No adjustment in the times mentioned above is really needed because this usually occurs quite efficiently, because the option is not always exercised, and because the maximum amount of time is not usually needed to complete the knock out because the winners are often decided in fewer races.

What happens if you find yourself running out of racing time at the event and unable to finish the format that you set up?

This happens quite frequently, particularly if the event experiences conditions not suitable for sailing. Knowing that this happens, match racing affords the Organizing Authority/Race Committee the opportunity to change the format, terminate any stage or the event when, in its opinion, it is impractical to attempt to hold the remainder of the matches under the existing conditions or in the remaining time scheduled; early stages may be terminated in favor of later stages. This ability allows you to mold your event to the racing conditions actually experienced during the event.

When running an event, it is important to take things one step at a time and to make decisions when you have the information to do so. This means that you want to make your decisions on the day when the decision has effect. For example, make your decisions for racing on the day racing will occur when you can actually see what the weather is, not the night before; for example, make the decision to have a 2 point knock out instead of a 3 point knock out just before the knock out stage begins.

Some guidelines to help keep racing fair include the following:

- Do not eliminate stages until you are confident they cannot be sailed
- Do not start a knock out stage if you cannot complete the maximum amount of racing planned for that stage
- Avoid abbreviating a knock out stage to a “one point”, “sudden death” race

- Abbreviate later knock out stages: for example: sail the semi-finals to 3 points, and reduce the finals/petit finals from a 3 point stage to a 2 point stage if you are running out of time
- Manage expectations: always make sure competitors know how many points the stage is being sailed to before the Attention Signal of the first flight in that stage is displayed

The Race Committee can use the umpire team to communicate information to the competitors on the water if needed. Umpires are happy to help out.

How do you set up pairing sheets for racing?

The Organizing Authority uses a spreadsheet computer program to create pairing sheets, which are schedules stating who sails who and in what order and when. The schedules also tell the competitors which team in a given match is the blue entry and which team is the yellow entry for the match. The spreadsheet most commonly used by organizers is the program by Mario Miino found on the [US Sailing Match Racing webpage](#). Scroll down to “Racing Promotion” and under “Running a Race” see *Pairing Sheet program*. A basic instruction sheet for the program is also on the website page to help you get you up and running right a way.

To do this, the Organizing Authority will need to establish a ranking of the competitors. In match racing, the event ranking is customarily based upon the World Sailing ranking of the skipper: [WS Match Racing Rankings](#). Boat numbers can also be listed on the pairing sheets; the Organizing Authority provides this information. These pairing sheets once generated are distributed to the competitors, umpires and race committee so that everyone on the race course knows the plan.

To maximize the efficiency of the racing schedule, the pairing sheets for the round robin stages should be reviewed and modified around the following three parameters before being distributed:

- The skippers in the last match of one flight should not be in the first match of the next flight
- Teams that are rotating OUT after a flight should be in the first or second match of the flight so the rotation can occur while the other matches in the flight are still racing
- Teams that are rotating INTO a boat should not be the first match of the next flight

6) RACE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

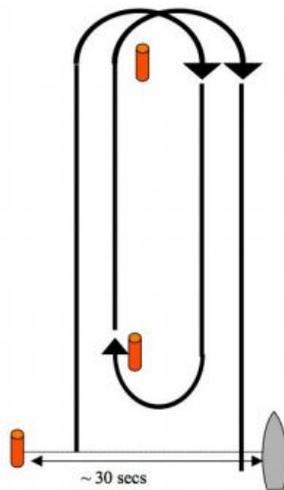
There are two primary resources that outline all the differences in race management procedure from fleet racing to match racing:

1. Racing Rules of Sailing: Appendix C – Match Racing Rules: [Racing Rules of Sailing](#); and
2. World Sailing Race Management Policies for Match Racing: [WS Race Management Policies for Match Racing](#) .

This section is a basic overview that highlights the parts most different from fleet racing.

The Racecourse

The match racing racecourse is a windward-leeward course with two laps, starboard rounding and a downwind finish. The only variation is the number of laps, which can be manipulated to meet target race length of about 12-18 minutes excluding the starting sequence. The windward leg should take approximately 4-5 minutes to sail. The leeward mark or gate should be approximately 50 yards to windward of the starting line. If a leeward gate is used, the two marks should be set approximately 2.5-3 lengths apart and square to the wind. The starting line should take a sailboat about 25 seconds to sail, which usually translates to about 8 of the racing boat's lengths. Race committees often use a two- or three-mark system to facilitate windward mark changes. With three marks, the RC drops a mark to the starboard and port of the default mark as a starting point, at about the same distance from the starting line.



The Starting Sequence

The table below sets forth the starting sequence for a 4-match flight:

TIME	VISUAL SIGNAL	SOUND SIGNAL	MEANING
22	Attention: Foxtrot displayed	One	2 minutes to warning for match 1
21	Foxtrot removed	None	1 minute to warning for match 1
20	Warning: Numeral Pennant 1 displayed	One	5 minutes to the start of match 1
19	Preparatory Signal displayed	One	4 minutes to the start of match 1 Pre-start entry time begins
17	<i>Blue and/or Yellow Flag displayed ONLY IF one or both boats does not cross & clear the starting line the first time from course side to pre-start side during pre-start entry period</i>	<i>One - Only if flag is displayed</i>	Pre-start entry time ends; flag is displayed until umpires signal a penalty or for 1 minute, whichever is earlier
16	Preparatory Signal removed	One Long	1 minute to the start of match 1
15	Start 1: Pennant 1 removed Warning: Numeral Pennant 2 displayed	One	Start of match 1 5 minutes to the start of match 2
14	Preparatory Signal displayed	One	4 minutes to the start of match 2

			Pre-start entry time begins
12	<i>Blue and/or Yellow Flag displayed ONLY IF one or both boats does not cross & clear the starting line the first time from course side to pre-start side during pre-start entry period</i>	<i>One - Only if flag is displayed</i>	Pre-start entry time ends; flag is displayed until umpires signal a penalty or for 1 minute, whichever is earlier
11	Preparatory Signal removed	One Long	1 minute to the start of match 2
10	Start 2: Pennant 2 removed Warning: Numeral Pennant 3 displayed	One	Start of match 2 5 minutes to the start of match 3
9	Preparatory Signal displayed	One	4 minutes to the start of match 3 Pre-start entry time begins
7	<i>Blue and/or Yellow Flag displayed ONLY IF one or both boats does not cross & clear the starting line the first time from course side to pre-start side during pre-start entry period</i>	<i>One - Only if flag is displayed</i>	Pre-start entry time ends; flag is displayed until umpires signal a penalty or for 1 minute, whichever is earlier
6	Preparatory Signal removed	One Long	1 minute to the start of match 3
5	Start 3: Pennant 3 removed Warning: Numeral Pennant 4 displayed	One	Start of match 3 5 minutes to the start of match 4
4	Preparatory Signal displayed	One	4 minutes to the start of match 4 Pre-start entry time begins
2	<i>Blue and/or Yellow Flag displayed ONLY IF one or both boats does not cross & clear the starting line the first time from course side to pre-start side during pre-start entry period</i>	<i>One - Only if flag is displayed</i>	Pre-start entry time ends; flag is displayed until umpires signal a penalty or for 1 minute, whichever is earlier
1	Preparatory Signal removed	One Long	1 minute to the start of match 4
0	Start 4: Pennant 4 removed	One	Start of match 4

If you have more matches per flight, then you repeat the pattern and adjust your times to accommodate the additional matches.

You will note that RRS Appendix C 3.1 provides for a 10-minute attention signal. Rarely, if ever, is a 10-minute attention signal used. Instead, use the 7-minute attention signal provided for in the standard SI. The additional 3 minutes adds nothing to the program.

What happens when there is a breakdown on one of the sailboats?

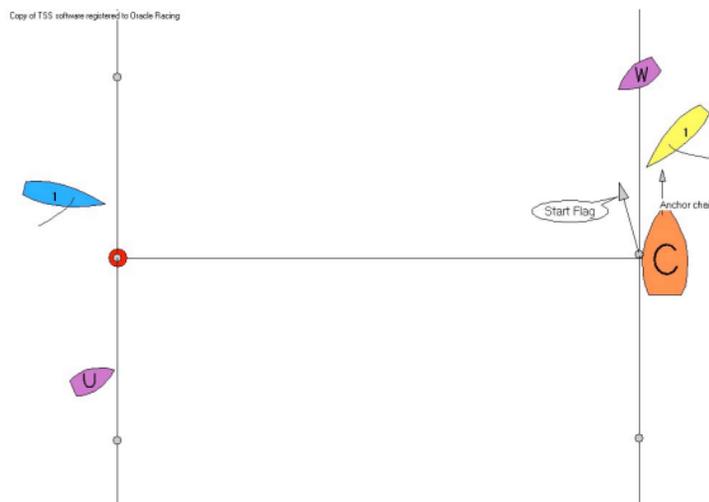
Before displaying the Attention Signal for a flight, the RC should determine if a breakdown flag is being displayed by any of the competing boats. The umpires should be doing the same and communicating this information to the RC. If a boat has a breakdown flag displayed, the bosun will be contacted via radio and asked to address the situation. The bosun should determine the nature of the breakdown and the time expected for repairs and communicate that information to the RC. The RC will then decide how it wishes to address the situation. It could, for example, decide to wait for the repair to be completed before beginning the starting sequence for the flight; or, it could decide to reschedule the match involving the boat under repair and move the other matches up to avoid a blank start.

Once the boat is repaired, the RC will decide whether to run that match as soon as possible or to leave it to a later time. The umpires will then be asked to notify the competitors involved of the decision made.

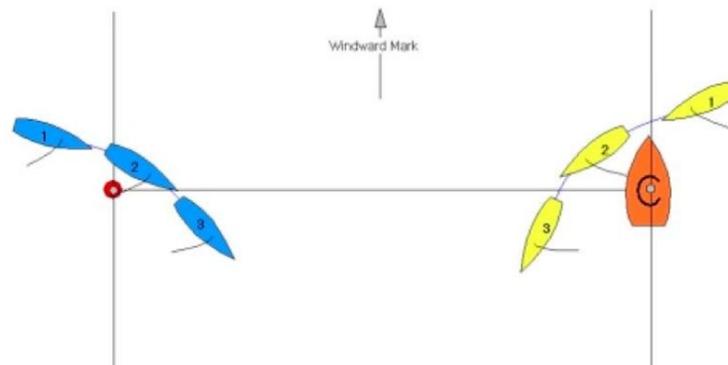
Entry

There are two entry requirements that the boats in a match must satisfy before the start:

1. Each boat in a match must be outside the line that is at a 90-degree angle to the starting line through the starting mark at her assigned end at the preparatory signal for the match. This is commonly referred to as being outside of the 'H'. See the diagram below. In the pairing list, the boat on the left-hand side [blue] is assigned the port/pin end of the starting line. The other boat [yellow] is assigned the starboard/signal boat end of the starting line. RRS C 4.1. If a boat does not satisfy this requirement, the match umpires will penalize her. This is an umpire call to make. However, the match umpire may ask the Line Sighter on the signal boat to watch for compliance when there is no wing boat watching the 90-degree line at the signal boat end of the line. If this request is made and the yellow boat breaks this rule, the Line Sighter must communicate that information to the match umpires so that they can penalize yellow; if yellow complies with this rule, then nothing is communicated to the match umpires.



2. Each boat in a match must cross and clear the starting line for the first time from the course side of the starting line to the pre-start side of the starting line within the two minute pre-start entry period following the preparatory signal. See the diagram below. This is a RC call to make. If a boat does not satisfy this requirement, the RC must display that boat's flag [blue or yellow] for one minute or until an umpire signals a penalty to that boat, whichever is earlier. C4.2.



OCS

When any part of her hull, crew or equipment is on the course side of the starting line or *one of its extensions* at a boat's starting signal, the race committee shall promptly display a blue or yellow flag identifying the boat with one sound signal (note, just one sound whether one or both boats are OCS). The flag shall be displayed until the boat is completely on the pre-start side of the starting line or one of its extensions or until two minutes after her starting signal, whichever is earlier. C3.2.

Change of Course

If the windward mark must be changed for the first leg, the RC should display the C [Charlie] flag and a flag that is the same color as the new windward mark with the Preparatory flag with multiple sound signals. If the windward mark must be changed during the race, the mark set boat can signal the change to the matches affected before the leeward mark by displaying the C [Charlie] flag, a flag that is the same color as the new windward mark, and the numeral pennant for the match affected with multiple sound signals. Note that signaling a change of course from a point approximately 4 hull lengths upwind of the leeward mark or gate is preferred for match racing.

Note that a change of course for a new leeward mark or finish is never made.

Abandonment and Shortening

The Sailing Instructions provide that the RC may abandon or shorten any match for any reason after the starting signal, after consulting with the match umpires when practical. World Sailing has some guidelines for abandoning a race that are found in the World Sailing Umpires' and Match Racing Manual, in section H3:

[World Sailing Match Race Umpire Manual](#)

Additional guidelines are found in Match Race Call L1:

[Call Book for Match Racing](#)

These are guidelines only. Consultation with the match umpires, and Chief Umpire if necessary, during a match is highly recommended, is common practice, and affords the race officials running a match the opportunity to address a variety of situations.

Match races are rarely, if ever, shortened at a rounding mark, but it is common for the RC to adjust the length of the second windward leg during the race.

Finishing

Please note that Race Signals: Blue flag or shape is **NOT** to be used [C3.3] to indicate that the RC boat is on station at the finishing line. No flag or shape is needed for that purpose. Displaying a blue flag or shape when you have blue and yellow as the racing colors for match racing would be confusing.

Please note as well that Appendix C2.1 to the RRS changes the definition of *Finish: a boat finishes when any part of her hull crosses the finishing line in the direction of the course from the last mark after completing any penalties. However, when penalties are cancelled under rule C7.2(d) after one or both boats have finished each shall be recorded as having finished when she crossed the line.*

You will find that there is frequently a lot of activity at the finish line in match racing, particularly when the boats are close and the leading boat has a penalty outstanding: to win, the boat with a penalty has to take the penalty and finish ahead of the other boat and the time and opportunity to do this quickly diminishes as the boats get closer to the finishing line; this circumstance can generate some exciting interaction between the boats. This interaction frequently occurs as boats take penalties around the finish pin or near the signal boat. The RC must, therefore, be on its toes and paying attention when boats in a match are in the process of finishing a race. The match umpires will assist the RC in this regard once the boats are on the last leg of the race course with a radio call informing the RC which boat in the match has a penalty outstanding. It is prudent for the RC to record each time a boat crosses the finishing line in the event a boat crosses several times while dealing with its penalty.

The RC customarily displays the flag [blue or yellow] of the boat that finishes first as a courtesy, but no sound signal. However, the RC is not required to display the flag of the boat finishing first; doing so is not binding on the RC or determinative of the winner of the match. Often RC's do not display the flag if another match is about to start.

Scoring

The RC is responsible for scoring the event. However, one umpire will customarily be designated by the Chief Umpire to be a "scribe" to keep track of the racing results for the umpire team, to confirm those results with the RC scorer, and to assist with tie breaks as needed. This team work helps resolve and eliminate problems with race results, and speeds things up between stages.

Umpires – see RRS C5 – C9

Umpires administer immediate justice on the water at the time of the incident. Unlike fleet racing, their actions are not protest-able, redress-able, or appeal-able after the fact. For example, if an umpire accidentally displays the wrong color flag, their signal stands. The umpires use the following flags and assess penalties outlined in RRS C7:

- Green or green & white flag with one long sound → no penalty
- Blue or yellow flag with one long sound → the identified boat shall take a penalty. If there are two flags of the same color flown, the identified boat must take one penalty as soon as reasonably possible.
- Blue or yellow with a red flag → the penalty turn must be taken as soon as reasonably possible
- Black flag with a blue or yellow flag → the identified boat is disqualified, the match is terminated and the point is awarded to the other boat.

Umpires make calls on rules from RRS Part 2 in response to the display of a Y-flag by a competitor and they have the right to initiate penalties if competitors break certain other rules or satisfy certain criteria.

Competitors may initiate redress hearings or protest for non Part 2 rules by displaying a red flag as soon as possible after the incident. When there is need for a hearing, the Chief Umpire will constitute the protest committee from the members of the umpire team. Decisions of the protest committee are, with some exceptions, also not appeal-able.

7) RESOURCES

World Sailing Match Race Umpire Manual

Section H of the World Sailing Match Race Umpire Manual is an additional reference source for race management considerations in match racing:

[World Sailing Match Race Umpire Manual](#)

US Sailing Match Racing Race Officers Seminar (in the works...)

This is a continuing education course offered by the Race Management Committee for race officers who want to learn more about running match races or a match racing event.

CALENDARS

[World Sailing Events](#)

[US Sailing Match Racing webpage](#) (Master Regatta and Clinic calendars are first item)

[Oakcliff Sailing](#)

[Chicago Yacht Club](#)

[WIMRA](#)

US CHAMPIONSHIPS AND OTHER SERIES

[US Women's Match Racing Championship \(USWMRC\)](#)

[US Match Racing Championship \(USMRC\)](#)

[US Youth Match Racing Championship \(USYMRC\)](#)

[ICSA Match Racing Nationals](#)

US Grand Slam Series: see [the Master Calendar](#)

California Dreamin Series: see the [Master Calendar](#)

NORTH U RESOURCES

[North U Homepage](#)

[Match Racing Playbook by Dave Perry](#)

[“Welcome to Match Racing” Free, introductory DVD](#)

RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

[The Dial Up](#) – the free North American Match Racing e-newsletter

[US Sailing Resources for Match Racing](#) (including papers explaining how match racing works, etc. (scroll down to Racing Tips)

[World Sailing Match Racing Rankings](#)

[Match Racing Call Book](#)

[Contact List North American Match Racing Supporters](#) (Match Racing Resources)

[WIMRA](#)

[Find An Umpire](#)

[Why & How to Get Involved in Match Racing](#)

[Miino Pairing Program and Instruction Sheet](#) - see “Racing Promotion” > “Running a Race”

INTERNATIONAL SERIES

[World Match Racing Tour](#)

[Women's International Match Racing Series](#)

US Grand Slam Series: see [the Master Calendar](#)

Dated: June 1, 2018