



# Sailing Events: Practical Management Tips

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Over the last few years the TopYacht team has become more and more involved with major sailing events. While primarily involved with the production of results we have necessarily become involved with other aspects of events. The following is an apparently obvious list of items that we have seen carried out well at some events and ignored at other events. These ideas are not in a particular order.

PS the team members have all recently either been competitors in major events and/or have been involved in race management of same , as well as results production.

## **There is no room for "she'll be right mate" in a properly run event.**

The organisation, responsibilities and physical equipment must be ready well **before** the event. It is far too common to see folks assembling flags, creating lunch order forms, explaining "how to lay a mark" or working out "who is on the finish boat" as the events is actually starting!

## **Have a simple printed list of jobs / roles.**

Make sure the list it is comprehensive. If the task exists, someone is going to have to do it, or the organisers are likely to look a bit silly. There are race management tasks (PRO, RO, start team, finish team, course layer etc) and event management personnel (registrars, caterers, car park coordinators, cleaners etc).

## **Have a simple written description of each role.**

Most people are pleased to have a clearly defined task / list of expectations.. There is much less chance of the task not being fulfilled to the satisfaction of the participant and the organisers. "He'll know what we need." Is **not** the way to go. Put a simple job description in their hand. Make sure they understand exactly what is expected of them; **everyone** will be happier.

## **Have specified organisers/coordinators.**

These are the **essential** people who hold it all together. The folks carrying out the various roles of "starter", "time keeper", "car park attendant" etc are busy doing their thing, they are very unlikely to have time to co-ordinate as well!!

## **You will need both "on water" and "off water" organisers.**

For larger events you need an off water "race management" person, usually the PRO, to make on the spot decisions about administrative issues such as implementation of breaches of safety code, even chasing up wrong sail numbers etc.

You need a separate Event Coordinator who is organising everything from making sure the venue is cleaned each night to making sure you haven't run out of ink/paper for the printer

### **Often one single person to wear too many hats.**

All too often the club just expects one person to "do it all" or the individual just takes it upon themselves. Either way it is very unfair to that person and can put an enormous strain on the one individual. That is bad for the person, the organisation, the competitors and the even the as a whole!!

Share the hats around a number of people.

Import some people if needed.

### **Establish and write down and distribute procedures.**

How will you get the finish times to the computer as soon as the last competitor has finished (or before for drawn out finishes)?

What will you do if a nasty, unexpected change comes through?

How will you assemble the protest committee (when needed) if several members are not on site?

How can a competitor get info about why their result for race 2 appears to be incorrect?

### **Talk to people!!!!**

Keep the volunteers informed as to what is happening. "The postponements will be reviewed at 15:00"

Keep the competitors informed. Often this is done rather poorly. It *their* regatta!! Tell them when the postponements will be reviewed, let them know where to leave their boats at lunch time etc.

### **Data Management.**

**Before event:** You need a sensible database structure to collect data about the competitor before the event. You need that (confirmed) information **before** the first race.

**During event:** You need printed forms on coloured coded paper to gather data during the event. Forms for : Sign on, competitors list, finish sheet, retirement sheet, mark rounding sheet, protest forms etc.

**After Event:** Do a debrief. Write down things that went well and things that need improving for next time. Prepare a "how to" for the next team that take on these tasks.

Further Reading:

[Job Descriptions For The Results Team](#)

[Getting Fast Accurate Results at a Regatta](#)

[On Water Team Checklist](#)