

Report on use of “Appendix U” (simple rules for umpired fleet racing)

2020 Australian O’Pen Skiff Championship, 17 – 21 January 2020

Class sailed: O’Pen Skiff

Entries: 25

Host club: Mordialloc Sailing Club, 12 Bowman Street, Aspendale VIC 3195

Chief umpire: Damien Boldyrew

1. Prior to the event.

- 1.1. The O’Pen Skiff class (formerly O’Pen Bic) instigated umpired fleet races for its gold fleet races some years ago under the guidance of David Tallis. The class routinely uses umpired fleet race rules detailed in Appendix U, as developed by David Tallis.
 - 1.2. Given the classes familiarity with umpired events and Appendix U, there was no question or hesitation in its use for this event.
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2. About Appendix U

- 2.1. Appendix U adopts the fundamentals of Addendum Q, deliberately omitting the cumbersome language and making some changes to produce a simple one page document that is relatively easy for its audience to read and understand. This is particularly important for young sailors.
 - 2.2. Like Addendum Q, Appendix U changes several rules. Whilst Addendum Q addresses and details rule changes in accordance with the requirements of RRS 85.1 (a large contributor to what bamboozles and bores its average reader), Appendix U simply states “*This Appendix changes racing rules in O’Pen Bic Class Rule C, Part 4 5, A5 and the definition of Finish*” and then details only enough of the changed rule for the sailor to understand the their rights and obligations. This has no doubt been one of the contributing factors to the document not exceeding a single page.
 - 2.3. Unlike Addendum Q, to encourage the self-policing nature of the game, there is a difference between a self-imposed penalty and one imposed by an umpire. A boat that takes a penalty of her own volition takes a One-Turn penalty. An umpire signalled penalty requires a boat to take a Two-Turn penalty.
 - 2.4. Distinct from Addendum Q, Appendix U also relaxes the restrictions on requests for redress under RRS 62.1 (b) and (d). It does maintain a restriction on requests for redress by a boat under RRS 62.1(a) but introduces that the umpires may request the PC consider redress if they believe an improper action or omission may have occurred.
 - 2.5. Specific for this class, Appendix U also includes changes to the class rules in respect of RRS 42, as well as changing rule RRS 31.
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3. Umpiring the event under Appendix U

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- 3.1. Appendix U is a simple document to read and understand. To further assist competitors, at the event competitors were briefed on how to protest, the signals an umpire may make and what a boat then needs to do. Simplicity is key to this briefing.
- 3.2. On the water, two umpire ribs operated. 25 boats is a large fleet to cover, however with a broad skill level across the fleet, it was expected that most pressure would occur during the start and first two mark roundings. The umpires operated correspondingly, remaining vigilant throughout the race to anticipate where the next likely boat v boat incident might occur, and manoeuvred accordingly.
- 3.3. Where there was a protest, more often than not a boat took a one-turn penalty rather than wait for an umpire decision. This was pleasing to see and quite different to what my experience has typically been umpiring under rules such as Addendum Q, where boats seem more inclined to ‘play to the whistle’ as the price of a penalty is the same either way. In any case, there are three contributing factors to this behaviour on the water at this event:
 - (a) the umpires are there (so we better do the right thing);
 - (b) the Appendix U penalty differential (a self-imposed penalty is cheaper than one from the umpire); and
 - (c) the class has fostered a culture of ‘doing your penalty’ when you’ve broken a rule.
- 3.4. The umpires were also tuned in to race management in case they may need to act to request redress under RRS 62.1(a). There were no issues in this regard as the race officer (Garry Hosie) and his team implemented and executed excellent race management practices.
- 3.5. Post-racing each day, the umpire team was available to answer questions about calls made. Often general rules queries were also raised. This sort of interaction is essential and should be encouraged.

4. Feedback

- 4.1. The class is an advocate for umpired fleet racing at their gold fleet level. The class consistently receives positive feedback from the sailors and their parents. The class intends to continue its use of Appendix U.
- 4.2. For the umpire team this was a straight forward event and there were no issues in the application of Appendix U.

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