



HAL's Race Results

Guidelines for Scoring a Regatta or Championship

Here are some thoughts on using HAL's Race Results to score an important event, such as a regatta or championship. The overall priority is to provide accurate results to competitors and other interested parties - such as friends and relatives, officials and the press - in a timely fashion.

The aim is to provide provisional results immediately after the end of each race and validated results as soon as any protests or jury decisions have been resolved. The results must be displayed on the official event notice board, and people also like to see them on the web. It is also convenient if results can be emailed to interested parties.

Getting information published quickly, marked provisional if necessary, is the best way to catch mistakes early. It is amazing how hard it can be to correct an error if it is not caught until the competitors have left for the night. If it is picked up as soon as they come ashore it can be fixed straight away.

The following paragraphs suggest which issues to think about when planning the scoring arrangements for an important event.

Where and when to compute the results

You need to make an early decision on the basic arrangement for producing results. There are three fundamental options.

Option 1 – Score on the committee boat after each race. The race officer's team does the results on the committee boat, or in the starting hut if they are shore-based. This is an efficient option if the race officer is happy to dedicate at least one member of his team to it immediately after the finish of each race. Bear in mind, though, that if there are several races being run back-to-back this may be a busy time for the team. Also you have to be sure that there is a suitable place to do it in comfort and that you have a laptop with sufficient battery endurance.

Personal opinion. Option 1 is elegant but needs a well practiced team. The race team is often busy and the results will be low on their list of priorities.

You still need to decide how to get the results to the club.

If you can arrange an Internet connection alongside the race team, you can publish immediately to HAL's Club Results Service and the resulting web pages can be viewed and printed at the club.

Alternatively, you could print the results onboard and take them ashore by RIB, but in that case you might be better using Option 2.

Or you could bring the results ashore at the end of the day, but competitors will get their results late and you might as well use Option 3.

Option 2 – Score in the club after each race. Results can be sent ashore by radio, telephone or RIB. This option can be as fast as Option 1 if there is somebody standing by to process the results as soon as they arrive.



HAL's Race Results

You need reliable communications to the shore, which is usually best by mobile phone. VHF is an alternative, but ties up valuable radio time and clogs the air waves.

Make sure the person receiving the results over the phone or radio has a pre-printed form with line numbers on it. Read the results in blocks of ten boats and confirm that sender and receiver are both on the same line number.

The person ashore needs to print provisional results and get them on to notice boards as soon as possible. It is useful to get them on the web immediately, marked provisional, so that competitors' friends and family can see them.

Personal opinion. Option 2 is often the most practical one. It is reliable provided you have good communication with the committee boat and somebody available in the club to input the results.

Option 3 – Score in the club at the end of each day. This is the simplest option, but also the slowest. Competitors will not see results until well after they have come ashore, by which time many may have gone home. You are likely to get late queries, very likely the next morning when people are keen to get back out on the water and need to know how they stand in the rankings.

Personal opinion. Option 3 is only suitable for club racing and very low key events.

What equipment is needed?

If you just want paper printouts and nothing on the Internet, all you need is a computer running HAL's Race Results and a printer.

If you are calculating the results ashore, remotely from the race officer's team, you need a reliable communication link next to the computer. Mobile phone is best as it does not clog up the VHF channels.

It is good to use paper of different colours for different types of printout. For instance: provisional results on pink paper, validated results on pale green paper and other notices, such as boat lists, on white paper.

If you want to put your results on the Internet, and very few events do not do so these days, you need an Internet connection.

Initial Setup

Once the Notice of race has been published, you can start setting up HAL's Race Results. The first thing to decide is whether to start a new file for the event, or to mix the event into your day-to-day club results. In most cases it makes more sense to start a new file.

The first thing to do is set up the Class Register and the Race Schedule. Think whether any tandem series are needed, for instance to pick out a mini-series within the overall results.

Pay particular attention to the table of discards and to the scoring arrangements for non-finishers. Do the Sailing Instructions specify that boats scoring DSQ get more points than those that retire, for instance?



HAL's Race Results

Set up the Series Switches on the Race Schedule. These control what will be shown on printouts and web pages. Cruisers usually like to see the boat name and owner, whereas dinghies often do not have names and the helm is the most important identifier. Ensure that non-validated results will be shown as provisional (set the mark Provisional switch).

If you are going to provide the race team with start-sequence printouts, make sure the class flag is in the Class Register and the start sequence is correct in the Race Schedule.

As the Entries come in

Populate the Boat Register as the entries arrive. It is important to get the full names, first and last, of all competitors, including the crew. It is embarrassing if nobody knows the first name of a prize winner. Proper design of the Entry Form will help here. The same goes for the name of the club each boat comes from. If you want HAL's Club Results Service to send emails to competitors giving results, make sure the email field in the Boat Register is filled in. Multiple emails can be sent for each boat by separating the email addresses with semi-colons.

If this is a handicap event, make sure you get the right type for each boat and the correct handicap. If you are using bow numbers, enter these as you go. Use the same numbers for things like dinghy parking slots and social tickets.

Do you need any selection flags? For instance, do you need to identify boats that have female helms, or boats that are eligible for particular prizes?

If accepting entries before people arrive, it is useful to make a web page of the entry list (Class Register / Output Boats in Class) and paste it on your web site. Seeing boats already entered encourages other people to join in.

On Registration Day

This is the time to double check all the information you have pre-entered in HAL's Race Results. Print out the entry list and get each competitor to check his or her entry while they are registering. This is the time to catch misspelled names or changes of crew.

Make sure you have correctly identified which boats are eligible for special prizes, such as cadets or older boats.

On the first morning

The event is about to start and this is the last opportunity to iron out any problems without too much embarrassment.

Check the entry list and give copies to the race team. Make round sheets for the race team to tick off boats in the starting area and to use as the race progresses (click Enter Results, select the race, Output Round Sheets). Make a print out of the flag and sound signals (click Enter Results, select the race, then Output Start Sequence).

Double check the arrangements for getting the results ashore and publishing them. If using a mobile phone, make sure its battery is charged and there is plenty of call time available.



HAL's Race Results

After each Race

Your aim should be to get the results into circulation as soon as possible, so that competitors can see how they stand and any mistakes get picked up quickly.

Note the time the race started (not necessarily the scheduled time) and alter the start time in HAL's Race Results if necessary. Note the time of the first and last boats to finish. The time of the last boat often controls when protest time ends.

Calculate the results and check them carefully. Print both single-race results and the overall series results for each class on pink paper. Post them on the notice board. You may want to put them straight on the web with HAL's Club Results Service as well, suitable marked as provisional.

Once protest time ends and the race officer and protest committee, or jury, are happy, mark the race as validated (Review by Series / Review and set the status to Validated) and reprint the results on pale green paper.

Final Results and Prize Giving

After the last race there is always a rush to get any protests dealt with, the results completed and the prize-giving underway. Liaise with the race officer and protest panel, or jury, to find out whether any results need amendment.

Once you have sign-off of the results, print a final set for use at the prize-giving. If you are using tandem series to calculate secondary results, print them as well. Go over the list of prizes and check them against the results.

Make sure final results are on all notice boards and HAL's Club Results Service. Send emails to interested journalists, together with the regatta description, which somebody will, of course, have prepared.