

Report of the 2005-2006 Scoring System Review Committee

Commission: During the 2005 summer series, an Ad-Hoc committee consisting of the past and present fleet captains was commissioned to review the series scoring system and make recommendations to address issues that have been raised, from time-to-time, over the equity and fairness of the system. The members of the committee are: Casey Nickerson, Bob Knowles, Jeff Kirchhoff, Kevin Hayes, and Bob Lemaire.

Philosophy: Series scoring systems are complex. The development of a rule is more about identifying and prioritizing objectives than asserting fairness. To that end, we have tried to revisit the original intent of the controversial elements and to rethink the appropriateness of the solutions in the current fleet. The fleet has tripled in size since inception. Some of the elements of the original scoring system are not scalable to that degree. The relative cost of a fleet+1 finish is now much greater than years ago. The need to have a greater number of races scored to properly qualify the winner is also recognized.

Issues: Various issues have been raised over the past few years. Some are typically transient and are associated with situations that occur infrequently. Others are recurring and have become more problematic with the increasing size of the fleet. The major controversies during the 2005 season were:

- 1) As the J80 class has become more organized in the Northeast, there are more opportunities to attend regional events. Boats competing in many events were allowed byes for as many as six of the series races. Many felt that the resulting small sample of scores was inadequate to reflect proper standing in the lake series.
- 2) The liberal throw-out policy further reduces the number of races considered for the series standings and disproportionately helps those boats with byes.

Background: Contrary to popular belief, our scoring system has never been changed. The wording in the Sailing Instruction has been modified to be more explicit, but the actual scoring algorithm, as applied, has remained the same.

The bye system was originally established for two purposes: To provide a way for each boat to do race committee duty one night of the series; To allow a boat to attend a J80 sanctioned event off-lake. Until the 2005 season, no boat had ever received byes for more than three races in a single series.

The throw-out policy of one for every four races sailed was intended as a way for a boat to be able to miss a night without the otherwise severe penalty of three DNCs.

Discussion: The committee felt that original objectives of the Bye and throw-out policy were still valid, except that we no longer rely on boats to perform race committee duty. Any changes should continue to support the regional J80 events. It is also important that a boat be able to miss one night without incurring a penalty so severe that she loses incentive because she cannot possibly expect to do well in the series.

The previous system tried to do everything for everyone. It wanted to allow a boat to travel (potentially more than one week), miss a night, and still compete for the series win. The committee feels that is overreaching and the core of the problem, and that each of the objectives taken alone is attainable, but collectively, the result is an absentee competitor. In a fleet with twenty boats, the series winner must sail often and well to deserve the series win. Boats that must be absent for more than one night, for whatever reason, need not be given the opportunity to be scored competitively.

At the root of both the Bye and Throw-out elements, is the notion of allowing boats to be able to compete without being there. If we recognize that some significant portion of the fleet may need to be absent one night of the series, for any reason, and allow for that, we can tighten up the various rules that, in aggregate, allow for multiple absences.

Recommendations : The committee recommends that we allow all boats the opportunity to miss all or part of one night using the bye (average score) system, to hold her harmless. What is proposed is to allow any boat the right to receive byes for any or all of the races held on one of the nights of the series. The only requirement is that the boat not race in the race(s) that the bye is applied to. In other words, the boat must be otherwise scored DNC for the race(s).

In the straightforward case, a boat may miss the entire night. This may be to attend a J80 sanctioned regatta, or for any other reason: The boat may be damaged; Last minute crew unavailability; Unwilling to travel to the race because of threatening weather; Illness; Family obligations; Just don't feel like it; whatever, but for only one of the six nights.

In the less obvious case, the rule would be used to exclude only one or two races of the night caused by, for instance, late arrival or serious breakdown during the first or second race (The breakdown race, once started, must be scored, but the boat may receive byes for subsequent races should she need to retire).

This liberalization of the bye policy obviates the need for a generous throw-out policy to allow for an elective night off. It is believed that many boats will suffer the inconvenience of a fleet+1 finish over the course of as many as eighteen races. There will be OCS, DSQ, DNF, etc. With twenty boats, a score such as that could disqualify an otherwise well sailed boat. So it was felt that some kind of throw-out policy should be retained. We propose that one throw-out per series be allowed. As a practical matter, the throw-out should be applied only after the minimum number of six races have been sailed.

A serious reduction to one throw-out should diminish or eliminate any controversy over their use in the computation of average score or the allowance of the throw-out to boats that receive byes.

Proposal: The following scoring paragraph is proposed for the 2006 SI:

***Scoring*:** The low point scoring system of Appendix A to the rules will apply.

Six races shall constitute a series. A maximum of eighteen races per series are scheduled.

The first three races of a regatta will be scored.

Each boat's series score will be the total of all its scores, discarding its worst score if more than six races are held in the series. The maximum number of discards allowed in a series will be one. This changes rule A2.

A boat that did not come to the starting area, did not start, did not finish, retired after finishing, or was disqualified shall be scored for the finishing place one more than the total number of boats that started or were OCS. This changes rule A4.2 and A.9.

Abandoned races will not be rescheduled unless they are essential to meet the six race minimum requirement for a series.

For a race to count in a series, a minimum of three registered boats intending to race must be in the vicinity of the starting area during one of the regatta's starting sequences.

Byes: Each boat will be entitled to receive her average score (after discard) for all races of one regatta (night) in which she was scored DNC. Should the boat receive DNC scores in more than one regatta (night), byes will be assigned to the qualifying races of the regatta (night) that will yield the most favorable result for the boat's series score.

Summary: The committee recognizes that as this is put out for public comment, many will have different insights and opinions. As stated in the opening, no scoring system is absolute, and the system is always a compromise between conflicting objectives. This algorithm has been applied to some of the raw scores in past seasons. The results have been similar to those produced by the old system. The winners have remained the same. The most noticeable effect is that the changes move up those boats that sailed often and consistently well.

A scoring system should be judged by how it addresses the objectives. We think this proposal does that and deserves to be tried out for a season.