GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES
FOR RUNNING A
SUNFISH® U.S. MASTERS CHAMPIONSHIP

MAY 2004

Prepared by Gail M. Turluck
With Thanks to Brian Weeks
Thank you for your inquiry regarding a Sunfish® Masters Championship! We are confident that your club and its committees will work together to make the entire experience rewarding for themselves and the sailors. Masters regattas are a special part of Sunfish life. There’s a bigger element of fun and ease that is a part of these events, though the sailors still take their racing seriously. The material which follows will provide the basic information which is required of a championship host. Your experienced sailors and Race Management team will know where to adapt and adjust to make things flow smoothly.

It is the Class’ intention to have Masters Championship dates set at least a year and a half ahead of time so the date can be included in the Sunfish® Class Schedule. Written proposals by organizations seeking to host the US Masters Championship should be submitted to the USSCA Masters Coordinator by May 1 of the year preceding the event. This ensures that other Clubs and Fleets can adjust their schedules and regattas to permit their sailors to participate in this event. Please work closely with the USSCA Masters Coordinator when setting the date for your event.

1. QUALIFICATION

All Sunfish sailors must be current year International Sunfish Class Association members (dues paid). United States Sunfish Class Association members are issued a membership card that verifies the eligibility. Other NSCA members may have membership cards or they may have to check their eligibility with the International Sunfish Class Association office (P. O. Box 300128, Waterford, MI 48330-0128, 248-673-2750, sunfishoff@aol.com). Request a supply of Membership Application forms from the ISCA Office at least four weeks in advance of your event. Your Registration Committee must see each participant’s Membership Card OR have them complete an application and pay dues in order for them to participate (no exceptions). If it turns out they have paid already, the Class Office will happily return their check to them promptly. If you have any questions on membership requirements, ask the USSCA Masters Coordinator or other Class officers who are present.

All boats should have Class legal numbers on both sides of the official sail. Boats are expected to be legally outfitted, although no official measurement is performed at a Masters event because of lack of time. However, competitor enforcement through protest is possible. The winner of the USSCA U.S. Masters National Championship earns a berth for the following year’s Worlds Championship. This berth passes down through the top 10 finishers and then reverts to the pool.

2. FEES

Fees for a Sunfish Masters Championship range anywhere from $50 to $80 (2004 prices). This event should be set up with practice sailing on Friday and Championship racing on Saturday and Sunday (two days of racing as approved by the USSCA Board). The fees include the racing, a memento (t-shirt, hat, mug, etc.), Continental-style breakfast each morning, after race refreshments, dinner/party/BBQ on Saturday night, and trophies. If possible, it is best to have lunches included, too. This will depend on your budget. You are encouraged to seek local sponsors, utilize volunteers as much as possible, and understand that Masters regattas are not intended to be “money makers” when planning your overall event budget. Low entry fees draw higher participation, which means more sailors!

3. ACCOMMODATIONS

About one-third to two-thirds of the sailors will be traveling some distance to the regatta. It is very important that the host give good information on where sailors can stay. Motels, Bed & Breakfasts, camping and volunteer housing options should be listed with location, cost and contact information.

4. NOTICE OF RACE

The Notice of Race should be sent out at least 6-8 weeks before the regatta. Hosts are requested, well in advance, to send a draft of their NOR to the Masters Coordinator for review. Once the content is approved, you are ready to go on to the distribution phase.
A well laid out flier includes the title of the event, dates, name, address, telephone number and e-mail of host, place, schedule (including time of first race and time on last day that no race will be started after), name of Regatta Chairman (name, address, telephone number and e-mail), web site address for club (if available), a statement that it is a Worlds qualifying event, reminder of Class membership requirement, information on housing, meals, fees, social events (and appropriate dress), etc.

You are encouraged to send a few copies to all the local clubs in your area and to get a set of mailing labels from the Class office. All Class member Masters should receive the notice of our Masters Championships. The Class office can generate labels which will include only Masters sailors. To order your labels, contact the Class office (P.O. Box 300128, Waterford, MI 48330-0128, 248-673-2750, sunfishoff@aol.com).

You may choose to distribute your NOR in the Class newsletter, Windward Leg (make these arrangements VERY early! The Windward Leg is published only three times a year). Or, you might choose to get just a one-third page space in the Windward Leg to announce that your NOR is available and ask people to contact you directly to get a hard-copy mailed to them or to go to the web site and download the information there.

You are encouraged to send the text portion of your Notice of Race as an e-mail message to the Sunfish Class list server on the Internet at SUNFISH@listserv.albany.edu (no file attachments, please). Contact the USSCA Masters Coordinator to have your NOR placed onto the Sunfish Class website.

5. SCHEDULE

The U.S. Masters Championship format has practice sailing on Friday and two days of racing on the weekend. It is important to have a firm ending time for racing on Sunday to allow sailors to make return flight arrangements or have enough time to get home for work on Monday. A typical schedule for the event is as follows:

**US MASTERS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP AT FRIENDLY YACHT CLUB**
**AUGUST 22-24, 2009**

**FRI., AUG. 22**
3:30 p.m. Practice Starts and/or Races  
6:30 p.m. Dinner available in Dining Room

**SAT., AUG. 23**
8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. Registration and Continental Breakfast in Clubhouse  
9:30 a.m. Skippers Meeting  
10:00 a.m. Races 1 & 2, back to back  
12:00 p.m. Lunch  
1:30 p.m. Races 3, 4, & 5 back to back  
After racing Keg beer/refreshments  
7:00 p.m. Steak Dinner at FYC

**SUN., AUG. 24**
10:00 a.m. Races 6 & 7, back to back  
1:30 p.m. No race started after  
1:30 p.m. Lunch & Awards

6. SAILING INSTRUCTIONS AND COURSES

Hosts are requested to have the Sailing Instructions approved by the Masters Coordinator. Please have this accomplished at least two weeks in advance of the event. This is to ensure the plans of the host and the expectations of the incoming racers are approximately the same.

The regatta is to be governed by the Racing Rules of Sailing including US SAILING prescriptions, the International Sunfish Class Association Rules and the United States Sunfish Class Association Rules.
As this is a major championship with a World’s berth at stake, some Olympic course races are recommended. If time starts to run short, you may opt to Modified Olympic, Gold Cup or a Modified Triangle. Sunfish sailors and Masters particularly prefer to have some reaches—so they go fast! Signals should conform to the latest RRS standard. Visual signals are required. Large cylinders or tetrahedron buoys are recommended for marks. Courses should be of appropriate size to the weather conditions so that a race takes about 45-60 minutes to finish.

The starting sequence should be based on the size of the fleet. 75 boats or more: 10 minute sequence. 30-74 boats: 5 minute sequence. The Race Committee boat should have a way to display signal flags so they can be clearly seen by boats at the far end of the starting line. You may wish to have boats as both ends of the starting line. You may also wish to utilize “limit marks” set just inside the Committee Boats to prevent collisions with the Committee boats. Err on the side of having a too-long starting line rather than too-short. A poorly set starting line will bring out the venom even in this group; a square (or 3-5° canted to port) starting line will most likely lead to clean starts.

It is strongly recommended you have one rescue boat for every 15-20 boats in the event. They can double as mark set boats, lead boats (to show where the mark is in fog or rain), and refreshment boats (common courtesy in the Sunfish Class today includes having water and/or soda available at the finish of each race). They need to keep watch on the whole fleet at all times. Should you choose to have an on-the-water jury, a separate boat should be utilized. If you can arrange for more rescue boats, that’s better. Rescue boats are not spectator boats and should have 2 able rescuers aboard.

The Committee should strive to get in at least 7 races, more if possible. It is the Sunfish Class standard to require just 1 race to constitute a regatta. The Class prefers that the awards be distributed and that someone earns the Worlds Berth which is available.

As a number of competitors will fly in for this event, a cutoff is needed on the last day. State a time and make sure the time announced for not starting a race after on the last day is honored. This gives travelers the opportunity to travel home in a relaxed manner.

7. **AGE GROUPS**

To be eligible, an individual must have reached his or her 40th birthday by the first day of racing. In Masters Regattas we utilize Standard Age Groups. They **may not** be adjusted to make groupings of even numbers. Each age group considers itself to be a regatta within itself. Each age group looks forward to the changes which come with an individual “aging out” or “aging in.” The Standard Sunfish Age Groups are:

For Regattas of more than 100 sailors:
- Apprentice Masters I: 40-44 years of age
- Apprentice Masters II: 45-49 years of age
- Masters I: 50-54 years of age
- Masters II: 55-59 years of age
- Grand Masters I: 60-64 years of age
- Grand Masters II: 65-69 years of age
- Supreme Masters I: 70-74 years of age
- Supreme Masters II: 75+ years of age

For Regattas of fewer than 100 sailors:
- Apprentice Masters: 40-49 years of age
- Masters: 50-59 years of age
- Grand Masters: 60-69 years of age
- Supreme Masters: 70+ years of age
8. **PRE-REGISTRATION**

It is important to seek pre-registration for Masters Regattas. It will give your organizing committee an idea of the size of fleet you can expect and will give you the opportunity to determine which age groups you will use. You should indicate a deadline for pre-registration and include a discount for those who meet it (suggest two weeks in advance). You will want to set the deadline to allow enough time to adjust your awards order. You may make your age group determination based on pre-registrations received by the deadline. Call the USSCA Masters Coordinator with any questions.

9. **TROPHIES AND AWARDS**

TROPHIES: At a Sunfish Masters Regatta, trophies are awarded to the Top 3 in each age group and to the Top 5 finishers overall. This is the Class standard and is not open to adjustment, except to add more. These trophies should be traditional or classical in nature (silver, pewter or crystal bowls, trays, mugs or glasses, engraved plaques). The Top 5 awards should become larger as you ascend the order of finish. Gift awards (sail bags, daggerboard covers, drink holders, etc.) are inappropriate awards for this event.

There is a traveling trophy. Help remind the Masters Coordinator to check with the previous year’s winner that the trophy has been engraved and that arrangements are made so that the trophy is present at the regatta site by Thursday for presentation at the end of the Championship.

GAG AWARDS: Masters regattas also have a tradition of including a number of fun awards. These can be simple trinkets of the "gag gift" variety and are intended to keep the event as lighthearted as it has always been. Suggestions include:

- Youngest master
- Oldest master
- Marco Polo award (farthest traveled; maybe one for by car, another for by air)
- Most consistent
- Most inconsistent
- Zipper award (most visible surgical repairs)
- Advil award (most exhibition of pain due to spirit of competition)
- Coke bottle award (most dependent on their specs)
- Golden Bailer award (most capsizes)
- Little Mermaid (Merman) Award (most times overboard)

Your committee’s planning, creation, observation and listening skills will come into play when coming up with these awards. These awards can be hand lettered with a paint pen and are intended to be low budget items. You may present as many or as few of these fun awards as you please.

DOOR PRIZES: Door prizes are currently very popular. Local merchants and marine suppliers will often donate items which you may give away. A good time to do this is the Saturday night social event. It’s best to have a rule that the winner must be present.

10. **MANPOWER**

To be properly prepared to host a Masters Championship you will need adequate help. You will need an overall Regatta Chairman. You will need a Race Committee Chairman with a minimum of two assistants, plus 2 people for each rescue boat. The larger the fleet, the more rescue boats you will need. The worse the forecast, the more rescue boats you will need. You will need a dedicated Scoring Chairman who will have no other responsibilities during the days of the event. You will need enough staff to take care of all of the meals. You will need a Registration Chairman with adequate staff to handle incoming sailors. You will need a Launch Chairman who will be available to sailors as they arrive to give information on where to put their boats, where they can find a hose, where to park their cars and trailers, a hand to unload boats onto dollies, etc. It is suggested you have a Dock Committee which will be available for all launch and retrieval times to lend a hand with dollies and boat carrying (either at launch ramps or on the beach). You will need to have a Protest Committee (minimum of 3) available, and preferably present, at the conclusion
of racing each day. At least one member needs to be a US Sailing certified Judge. Please notify the USSCA Masters Coordinator who your Protest Committee members are at least two weeks in advance of your event. The members of the Protest Committee may not be members of the Race Committee.

11. **DINNERS OR PARTIES**

Saturday night during the event is usually the time for either a party, a dinner or a barbecue. This is to be included in the entry fee but will be purchased for an additional fee for guests of the sailor. The club must decide upon the price. The party can be whatever you want to make of it.

12. **LUNCHES**

Lunch can be done a couple of ways. It is often included in the entry fee, especially where it is served on the water. A usual on the water lunch will have a sandwich, chips, piece of fruit, a couple cookies, and a can of soda. Lunches on land are still often included, but you can choose to have sailors utilize your club’s dining room or snack bar. The difference should be reflected in your entry fee. It all depends on your club’s budget, facility, membership enthusiasm and availability, and the finances of the event.

13. **SPONSORS**

Sponsors may be utilized for your regatta. They can donate a service, a regatta supply or need, or money. You may offer to allow them to hang a banner at the site during the event, to have a booth set up during registration, to include their logo on the event t-shirt sleeve or other memento (tastefully), and to include it on all printed matter (Notice of Race, Sailing Instructions, Press Releases, etc.) generated for the event. Sponsors can give money towards trophies in return for recognition. Make sure your organization is getting fair value for the exposure the sponsor will receive. Also check the RRS advertising rules. If you have questions about finding sponsors, contact the USSCA Masters Coordinator.

14. **PUBLICITY**

The regatta will be big news if your club makes it that way. The sailing part of your event will work out, one way or another. Getting the community involved and aware that this Championship is being held in their area is a great opportunity for you to utilize this event to boost Sunfish sailing and your club in your geographic area.

To do this, you need a Publicity Chairman. This individual will need to start issuing press releases three months in advance. If you can find out the defending champion is planning to come, include that. As you discover other major champions intend to participate, include that information, too. Press releases need to be sent to local newspapers, the nearest major city daily newspaper, radio stations, TV stations, and local cable access stations (if available). The Publicity Chairman will need to be able to be present at the event to answer questions from Press people, to host them, arrange boat rides to watch races (if wanted).

As to the issue of drawing sailors to your event, your club’s reputation, Notice of Race, Internet reminders, and your fleet members’ personal invitations when they go to other regattas will do the most for bringing in a good, competitive fleet.
Once the regatta is over, there’s still one piece of work to take care of. You need to let the Sunfish and sailing world know what occurred, IMMEDIATELY. You will need to send a copy of your report to the USSCA Masters Coordinator, the Class Office, and the Windward Leg editor (addresses available on the Class web page (www.sunfishclass.org), in the Windward Leg and Sunfish Class Directory). Your final report should resemble this:

2009 US Masters National Championship
Friendly Yacht Club, Lake Warmwater, Hometown, US
August 22-24, 2009
36 boats

The regatta was sailed on a gloriously perfect weekend. It was sunny, 82 degrees, with Southwest winds 12-16, both days. John Jones, fresh from a win at the New England Regional, walked away with the championship. Saturday night’s barbecue was followed by a fierce Putt-Putt golf tournament which was won by Janine Green. Melanie Blough was the recipient of the Golden Key award (some plastic baby teething keys), as she couldn’t seem to figure out how to get her boat started! The Regatta Chairman was Bill Smith, assisted by J.T. Marsh and Stu Knapp. The Race Committee Chairman was Jenna Rink, assisted by B.D. Reames, Don Cole, Jim Cobb, and Sally Forth. The Protest Committee was Mike Judd (Chair), Todd Waters and Bruce Kent. Overall event sponsor Super-Duper Products provided for all the event’s social activities and collared T-shirts! (Etc.)

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This report is due in the mail the day after the event is completed and is best emailed the same day as the regatta concludes. It is best to take care of this while the event is still fresh in your mind and before materials begin to get lost. You are strongly encouraged to keep a copy of the entire report (including a copy of the report on a backup floppy disk or CD-ROM) in your club’s files for a minimum of one year. Be sure to keep a copy of the Notice of Race, the Sailing Instructions, all notices from the Notice Board, and any protests with those materials. The USSCA Masters Coordinator’s version of the report shall include a copy of each of these items.

Provide the name, address, telephone numbers (home and work), of the Regatta Chairman, Race Committee Chairman and Protest Committee Chairman. From time to time it is necessary to contact these people after the event is concluded to follow up with a question. You should provide this information on paper to all three people. If you can provide the regatta write-up in electronic form to the Windward Leg Editor, it would be much appreciated.

We wish you the best of luck as you organize this exciting and fun championship. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your Masters Coordinator.

(If you have any comments, suggestions or improvements you’d like to see made to this publication, please contact the Masters Coordinator, Frederick G. “Fritz” Hanselman. 731 Oak Spring Lane, Libertyville, IL, 60048, (847)362-9665 (H), (800)346-4141 (W), offshorechicago@sbcglobal.net.)