HalSail FAQ

How should I prepare to do the results of a major event?

There are a number of things to consider when planning to use HalSail for a major event.

What equipment is needed?

Luckily you do not need much beyond a PC, Mac, or laptop and an internet connection. You need to decide where you are going to enter the results - on the committee boat or ashore? If you are calculating the results ashore, remotely from the race officer's team, you need a reliable communication link. Mobile phone is best as it does not clog up the VHF channels.

Despite the fact that most people will see the results online, either on their own devices or on a display in the club, you will need to print results for the official notice board and to give to officials. So you will need a printer. 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.

Initial Setup

Once the Notice of Race has been published, you can start setting up HalSail. 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 (RET or DNF), for instance?

Set up the series switches on the *Race Schedule* that 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 HalSail 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 selectors? 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 provide a link on the event web site to the HalSail entry list, which is available from the *Results / Public links* menu item. 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 HalSail. 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. Make a print out of the flag and sound signals.

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

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 HalSail 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. Once protest time ends and the race officer and protest committee, or jury, are happy, mark the race as 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. Send emails to interested journalists, together with the regatta description, which somebody will, of course, have prepared.

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