

# ***Odds & Evens - Update 07/06***

Fair and easy to use.

Scoring large fleets of model sailboats has always been a challenge. The challenge being – how to give every skipper a fair chance to sail up to his/her level of ability against all the other skippers entered.

A number of systems have been used such as the Heat Management System, Matrix, Divisions, etc. But a system has emerged recently that is so simple, and fair, that it makes one wonder – “Why didn’t I think of that?” Below are the details for your understanding.

**Terminology** - Each **Race** (finish) in this system counts. So every finish is recorded and adds to that skippers total for the regatta. There are no Heats. Instead, we have alternating Odd and Even Races. We refer to them as Odd #1 and Even#1, then Odd #2, and Even #2, and so on.

Odd races include boats that finished in an Odd position in their last race (1,3,5,7, etc). Even races include all the Even position finishers for the last Race.

**Number of Boats** - The total number of boats that can be handled with this system is twice the number that you feel comfortable starting on one start line. Most model sailors find that 14 boats in a race is getting hectic, some tolerate 16.

Let’s say you agree that 14 is the maximum number of boats that you want to start in any one race. As soon as you have 15 boats entered, then you break the fleet into Odd and Even races.

If you have more boats entered than twice the number you allow on the starting line, then you can double the regatta capacity with a second venue and rotating sailors on an infrequent basis.

**Odds & Evens** - The name tells it all. If you finish 3d in your last race, you are **Odd** (nothing to do with your personality). If you are 6<sup>th</sup>, you are **Even**. The entire regatta, whether one day or multiple days, is arranged in alternating Odd and Even races.

**To start the regatta**, all skippers are randomly assigned as Odd or Even for their first Race. There is no need to “seed” this first race by skill levels, since this system compensates by how it works.

Begin the regatta sailing Odd #1. At the end of the Odd #1, finishes are recorded on the Odd #1 score sheet. Then the Even #1 sails. Again, finishes are recorded on the Even #1 score sheet.

**Now! The second set of races is ready to start.** Odd #2 is called. All the odd place finishers in Odd #1, and Even #1 are in this race. Next, Even Race #2 sails, likewise all the even place finishers in Odd #1, and Even #1 take to the course.

When you are ready to start Odd and Even #3, only the finishes in Odd #2 and Even #2 are used for positioning in Odd and Even #3. And so on.

What this does is to evenly shuffle the fleet based only on whether you finish in an odd position or an even position in your last race. That means that the first place finisher will go to the Odd race next time, and the 2d place finisher will go to the Even Race next time. That goes the same for the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> place finishers.

**Scoring** – Every time a skipper races, he is vying for the best position in that race since his accumulated score is what counts. Because the odd and even finish positions keep shuffling the sailors EVERY RACE, each skipper sails against everyone else with a much more random and fair arrangement.

So a first place finish in the Odd race is worth the same as a first place finish in the Even race – and it doesn’t matter whether it is the first RACE of the series or the 15th race. At the end of the regatta, it is the individual accumulated score that counts.

## ***Specifics***

**DNF, DNS, DSQ** – Once a regatta begins, the number of boats in the odd and even races can not be changed (as far as scoring goes). For example. The regatta starts with 23 boats. That means that the odd race will have

12 boats racing. Let's say that one boat drops out of the regatta half way through. For scoring purposes, the Odd fleet will still have 12 and the Even 11 (for scoring purposes). Now, a DNF or DNS scores as last in that race. A DSQ scores last place plus 1. So if we have a DNS in the Odd race, he gets 12 points even if there were only 9 boats in the race. The DSQ boat in that race gets 13. Yes, this takes some mental gymnastics to understand why we do this, but I know you will come up with the justification eventually.

**Who Starts Next** - The very best system to get the right sailors on the water is for the Race Director to use a bull horn. He simply calls the participants by sail number (or name) for the next race – and requires that they answer "here"! Requiring an answer gets everyone's attention, and no one misses their next race. This method has proven faster than any other, and it insures that you have the right skipper's attention for the next race.

**Protests** – Since the outcome of protests only affects the overall score, and not the positioning of boats in the next set of races, protest hearings can be postponed until an appropriate break in sailing.

**Scoring** – Scoring is very simple, since each race is scored like a single race. Compiling the score is simply a matter of adding up all the finishes of each competitor and applying any "throw out" rule in affect.

To make it easy, the Race Finish Sheets are given to the score keeper who records the finishes to each skipper on the running score sheet. The Race Finish Sheets are maintained as backup.

Each race has a numbered Race Finish Sheet. So in the third race, the finish sheet has a place to record the finishes of both the Odd and Even race #3.

**Is there a downside?** It is my personal opinion that there is no downside to Odds & Evens. Some top skippers complain that they are randomly placed in races with less qualified skippers and that has an adverse affect on their ability to compete to their level. My printable response to that is "good sailors know how to keep clear and out of trouble no matter what the skill level of their opponents." The clear upside is that it helps sailors of all levels to be constantly mixed with the best.

For questions or suggestions, please contact Steve Lang, RC Laser Class Secretary, at 303-670-4670