

HCA Competitor Ranking

The North American Points System

by Rob Jerry, HCA 2nd Vice Chair

For more than a year, members of the Hobie Class Association (HCA) have been developing a points system that could rank sailors across the whole North American Region. The system was envisioned to enable comparisons between one-design Hobie sailors from all over the region, which would both be fun, useful for rewarding members on a regional basis, and increase regatta attendance.

While this seemed like a good idea, actually doing it was a whole other story. There is no such thing as a perfect points system especially when the goal is to compare people who sail in different size events, sailors with different levels of competition and those in different geographical areas. Bruce Andrews, Matt Bounds, Lee Jerry, Rich McVeigh, Ed Muns, Bob Merrick and I looked at many different scoring systems, from those already in use by Divisions, to those used by other one-design classes. Almost universally, there were problems when the systems were expanded to include the entire region.

Many of the systems that we tested favored areas with large fleets. In those systems, the size of the regattas determined the number of points earned. Sailors in smaller regattas had no chance of ranking very high in the system, simply because there were not enough points available to them. Since the Hobie Divisions are very diverse in terms of regatta attendance, this did not seem quite fair.

Another common problem was that many systems did not take into account the quality of competition. In these systems there were no weighting factors or

any difference in points for different size regattas. Basically, what happened in those systems is that sailors who sailed in small regattas and won most of them were overly compensated. Another problem in these systems was if a sailor came in last all the time, they could still be awarded a fairly high number of points, because they would receive points for the place with no recognition that it was last. Once again, given the size and differences across the North American Region, these didn't seem to be ideal systems either.

We considered all these issues, as well as the fact that sometimes there has to be a certain level of compromise to make things work. But it took developing each system and entering a season's worth of data to evaluate each of them and make these determinations. The balance is a system that keeps the points available to all winners similar so that everyone across the region has a competitive chance, yet varied according to regatta finish.

The points scale takes into consideration both size of the fleet and competition level. In an event with 2 boats, first place will receive 50 points and last place gets 1 point. In an event with 100 boats, first place gets 100 points and last place gets 1 point (last place always gets 1 point). There is a linear distribution of points from first place to last place and from a 2 boat event to a 100 boat event. It sounds complicated, but it really isn't. The formula that produces the points for a given event is shown in Figure 1. An abbreviated points matrix is shown in Figure 2.

We also built in other aspects of this system that can increase accuracy. For example, the system includes your best five regatta finishes. If you sail fifteen events, we take your very best results for your ranking. If everyone does at least five regattas, everyone will be counting the same number of events, which levels the playing field even more. B and C Fleet sailors are included too, albeit their scores are factored in at a lesser weight.

$$\sum_{x=1}^5 f(x) = \frac{P \left(1 - \frac{50A + 4,800}{98} \right) + \left(\frac{A(50A + 4,800)}{98} \right) - 1}{A - 1} \Phi$$

Where
 P = event finishing position
 A = event attendance
 Φ = fleet factor (B Fleet - 0.33; C Fleet - 0.15)

Figure 1 - Season Points Formula

What if you have to work race committee? RC points will be the regional average points for your particular class. One regatta per year, per sailor can be counted towards your points. RC points will count as one regatta and fall under the other parameters of the points system. Three people per regatta can qualify for RC points. It is the responsibility of the individual sailor to notify the regatta scorer that you are eligible for RC points for that regatta and what class you would like the points to be counted in. There is no way for the HCA scorer to know who should receive RC points any other way.

The point system has been finalized and will up on the HCA Web site when all the scores have been entered for 2004 (about mid-January), including the RC points. We'll keep it updated every week in 2005. The column for a regatta will turn yellow after an event date has passed, and green after the HCA Scorekeeper, Theresa (Fluffy) White, has received the scores. If you don't see the column turn green in a week, you need to bother your division chair to get the scores in. Why? Because the scores will not count if received later than seven days after the end of the regatta. This may seem like a short deadline, but once the scores are totaled how hard is it to fax or e-mail them to hobiescores@yahoo.com? The longer the delay the easier it is to completely forget about doing it. So, remember to check the Web site, and if a regatta has not turned from yellow to green—bug the regatta score keeper to get the scores in.

In the Hobie 16 Class, the rankings will be used to determine the allocation of pre-qualified places for the North American Championships. In the other classes, we are still researching possible rewards. Any suggestions on incentives or awards are welcome (keep in mind our bank account is not bottomless!). Please e-mail them to me at rastahobie@earthlink.net. Lastly, use the system for what is really important, bragging rights and self adulation. Walk around and proudly say, "I am the (___) ranked Hobie (___) sailor in North America!"

Hobie 16 North Americans Qualification

2005 marks the return of the supplied boat Hobie 16 North American Championships. Hobie Cat graciously offered to supply 35 boats at no charge. The first 20 youth teams and first 15 women teams that preregister will split the boats for their disciplines. For the Open, 70 teams will share the 35 boats in round robin fashion for the four semifinal days. Up to 47 of those teams will be pre-qualified prior to the event. Up to 3 additional teams may also be selected as pre-qualified by the HCA from petitions. The remaining 20 teams will be the top finishers in the two-day Qualifier round of 35 boats. (Any unfilled pre-qualified or petition slots will increase the number of teams advancing from the Qualifier.)

Fortunately, the HCA was developing the region-wide point system in 2004, so it was decided to use it for determining the pre-qualified teams. There was a lot of discussion and debate leading up to the final details of the new system and how to apply it to pre-qualification. With the event being held in July and the sailing season not starting for many divisions until May, there was not enough time in 2005 for qualifying events. In future years we could not guarantee the ability to hold the North America Championships at the end of the season. So, prior-year points will be used, in this case 2004. This precipitated another problem in that many long-time Hobie 16 North American participants don't regularly sail the Hobie 16 in their division's points regattas. Had we all known in advance that 2004 would be used for pre-qualifying, some of these people might have worked on Hobie 16 class points in 2004. The three petitions and the Qualifier round provide avenues for anyone to attend the event. While not perfect, this solution represents a diligent effort to address many different inputs and issues.

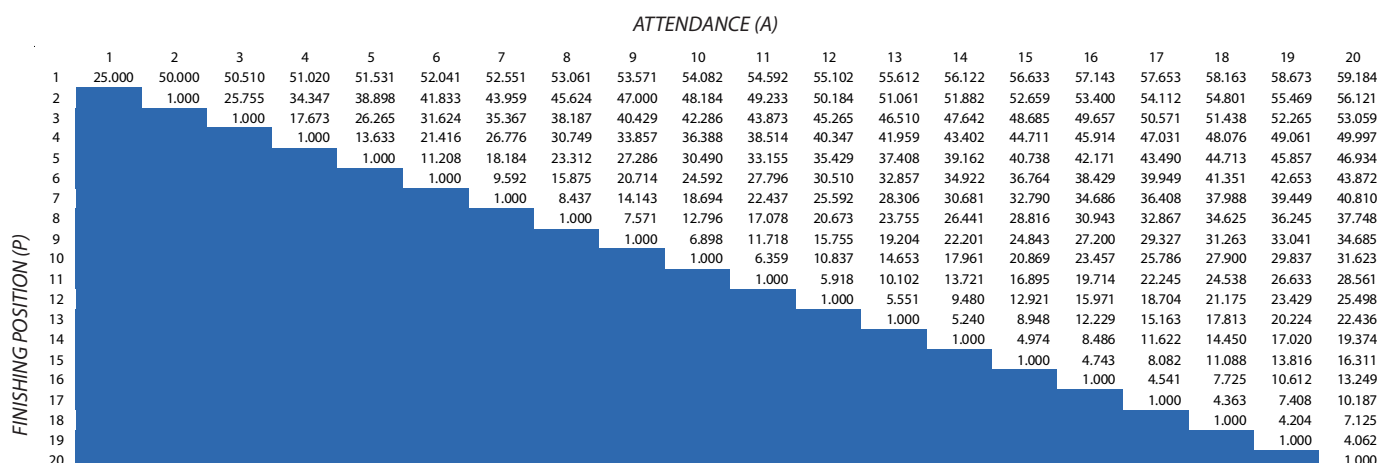


Figure 2 - Abbreviated Points Matrix