



EVALUATION REPORT

SKIFFIEWORLDS2022

SASI board, December 2022

After a tremendous week of racing and fun, it is time to reflect on how SkiffieWorlds has been perceived and where improvements are to be made. In general, all comments received have at least to some degree contained a positive message. To start with I list the positive email received from Eastern ACRC.

Dear Marc, Stefan and all the organisers and volunteers for SkiffieWorlds 2022,

We hope you're well and are recovering from all the work and excitement of Worlds. Thank you very much for organising the biggest and most exciting skiff racing world championships to date!

Eastern Club members had a really excellent time and were delighted to have the opportunity to visit Zeeland and compete in such a fantastic event.

We were incredibly impressed by the pre-championship organisation and communications. The organisation and programming of such an ambitious programme of heats and finals was incredible.

The in-race technology was absolutely amazing too – our home-based club members, friends and family were absolutely thrilled to be able to follow our progress race by race, in real time. It really helped make it feel like the full club was involved in the event, in a year that not all our members felt able to travel to the Netherlands.

We also loved meeting up with old rowing friends and making new ones. The venue, and the big stripey tent were superb for facilitating that. We also loved exploring Kortgene and further afield – what a beautiful area and we are all deeply envious of your cycle path networks.

Please do pass on our thanks to everyone involved – we know it was an enormous community effort: from safety boat drivers, committee members, tent organisers, first aid station, and everyone in between. All the effort was very much appreciated, and we had a fantastic time.

Kind regards,

Catriona and Emma, EACRC Co-Secretaries

On behalf of everyone at Eastern 😊



Introduction

By way of approaching this evaluation we shall first list the strong points perceived by participants at SkiffieWorlds as were received by comments and reviews on social media or by email. Subsequently a list of weak points is made based on the input to identify those areas that need further attention and scrutiny.

From these some main shortcomings are identified by SASI for further scrutineering.

Following from this a factual account of the key issues identified is given and the perceived responsibility.

Additionally, to this the effect of the omissions leading to the most damaging effect to the clubs is discussed and remedies identified.

Finally, recommendations are made for future SkiffieWorlds in order to prevent the issues from recurring



Comments

SkiffieWorlds2022 received comments through its website as well as on messages published on Facebook. Apart from this we have received letters by mail containing observations by contestants. I have collated and categorised these as follows:

Strong points perceived by participants at SkiffieWorlds2022:

No	Comment		Category	Resp
3	Schedule ran very well with little slippage in time	Race	organisation	DARA
2	Grandstand great addition	Venue	organisation	VME
2	Facilities were good	Venue		VME
	On water umpires did an excellent job	Race	organisation	DARA
	Shore based umpires took a balanced view of incidents	Race	Organisation	DARA
4	Live tracking great addition	Race	Organisation	DARA
	Pontoon access well managed	Venue	Organisation	VME
3	Drone footage good	Race	Organisation	DARA
	Traffic control/start-line control was excellent	Race	Organisation	VME/DARA



Weak points perceived by contestants at SkiffieWorlds2022:

No	Comment		Category	Resp
3	Posting results on time	Race	communication	DARA
2	Posting of notices; weather warning/ postponement to racing	Race	communication	VME/DARA
	Transparency in scoring system	Race	communication	SASI
3	Scoring methodology unclear	Race	communication	SASI
	Calls to start line haphazard	Race	communication	DARA
3	No meaningful commentating	Race	communication	DARA
	Last minute reschedule W280	Race	communication	DARA
2	Finish line issue	Race	organisation	DARA
	No ranking of non-finalists	Race	organisation	SASI
2	Obstructing other waterway users/ behaving irresponsibly	Race	organisation	VME
	No public address system	Venue	communication	VME
2	Tent shelter at the shoreline	Venue	organisation	VME
	Toilets too far away	Venue	organisation	VME
	Access to spectator area/ mobility	Venue	organisation	VME
3	Unsafe pontoon/ unsteady pontoons	Venue	organisation	VME
	Shuttle bus	Venue	organisation	VME
	Picture quality online bad		technical	VME/DARA
	Faulty tracker		technical	VME/DARA
	Tech needs to be 100% reliable		technical	?
	Start line incidents/ calling-no calling	Race	Organisation	DARA
	10, 5, 2 min call not adhered to	Race	Organisation	DARA
	Communicating finalists after heats	Race	Organisation	DARA
	Space racecourse too small	Venue	Organisation	VME/DARA/SASI
	Turn buoys not equally spaced	Venue	Organisation	VME



	Finish line horn drowned out by spectators	Race	Communication	DARA
	Communication prior was chaotic		Communication	VME
	Website hard to navigate		communication	VME



Main shortcomings encountered by SASI were:

1. Finish-line used for first 2 days not as described in script leading to unfair racing where outside lane travelled 70m more than the inside lane of the racetrack.
2. Time keeping was done by mobile phone app and kept in handwritten ledgers. No means of communicating results was present for the first 2 days due to technical failure between umpire tower and public. There was no contingency plan for this.
3. Start line buoys and Turn mark buoys were not laid in straight line causing much time and effort correcting.
4. Umpire tent and structure inadequately protected from rain and wind, causing threat to man and equipment.
5. Communication of race results and schedule changes/structure was not clear and there was no formal script in place detailing the responsibilities.
6. Communication failed at times due to language barrier.
7. The Chief Umpires lacked sufficient experience to lead the event.
8. Morning briefing hampered by inadequate sound and visual help.
9. Pontoons perceived by some contestants as unsafe and unsteady.
10. Scoring system unclear. No scoring for non-finalists.
11. No clear idea of financial restraints to organisation were communicated between SASI and VME/DARA



Factual report of main problems identified

At the outset SASI had tasked DARA with organising SkiffieWorlds 2022. DARA, the NCA of the Netherlands was responsible for the organisation of the racing. DARA appointed Veerse Meer Sloepenrace (VMS), later changed to Veerse Meer Events (VME) to organise the venue and structure of the event.

VME had produced a script for the event which contained a detailed outline of the timeline and responsibilities of the different parties. Members from SASI had planned to attend a test event at Kortgene on the 18th of Sept 2021 to check arrangements and provide umpire training but covid restrictions at the time made the visit impractical.

In establishing a cause, causative factors in the failing of an adequate race organisation and structure at SkiffieWorlds we ought to take a look at the timeline and responsibilities of the organisation.

1. An electronic communication link by physical cable was established by start of race between the umpire tower and the start ship Attina. The communication link was put in by VMS/VME in aiding the umpiring effort. On start of racing the umpiring team decided to use VHF radio to communicate with the start ship instead.
2. An electronic link between umpire tower and the main tent was not established until day 4 of the event. This link would give Clubs and Rowers direct information on their race times as well as notices in real time. This link was part of VMS/VMEs responsibility.
3. The umpire tower had the ability of an electronic means of timing available and was installed on the Monday morning. During the rain squall on Monday afternoon this malfunctioned and was not able to be repaired during the days after. This feature was to be delivered by DARA.
4. The start line, turning line and halfway line buoys were put in by a buoy layer ship from RWS (Royal Dutch Waterways Management) on the order of VMS/VME. They only put in the outer markers of lane 1 and 10 of both start line and turning line to the



specified GPS coordinates, and dropped all intermediate buoys as approximates in between. This led to significant time and effort by casual SASI volunteers to be re-aligned.

5. The established team by DARA for the task of manning and performing the duties of Umpire was lacking in experience and manpower. SASI met with DARA 2 months prior to the event in the Netherlands. Inspected the site and discussed and held a training meeting for the chosen chief umpires by DARA. On various occasion SASI met with VMS/VME in Kortgene to discuss the progress of the organisation by them. SASI met on a regular basis with DARA and has on multiple occasions challenged the robustness of the organising of the race. This has continuously been rebuffed as being in hand.

6. The installation at the umpire tower was established on opening day of Skiffie-Worlds. In the afternoon a mock dry run of racing was performed where a finish line was established to be between a point on the tower and a green lateral marker buoy marking the fairway. This was in contradiction with what was in the script as the established racecourse. The transit of this finish line disadvantaged the outer lanes of the course by 70m in comparison to the inside lane. VMS/VME warned the umpiring team in advance of racing that the change of finish line would change the race course from what was described in the event script.

7. The calculation of the winning team and ranking was haphazard and failed on more than one occasion to be correct. This is the responsibility of SASI and was failed partly due to inadequate means of keeping track of races and partly a lack of consensus on establishing a ranking for SkiffieWorlds. There appears not to be a formal rule of establishing points at SkiffieWorlds other than the experience from previous competitions, where a best of six races would gain points towards the final ranking and taking the heats into account. SASI failed in setting the procedure for this in advance.

In all multiple factors led to an inadequate race control at SkiffieWorlds. First and foremost, the race organisation which DARA took on was inadequate and lacked experience. They were further hampered by inadequate electronic means, which were partly promised by VMS/VME and partly failed by itself. SASI failed to adequately govern and establish oversight of the event. When failings became known SASI helped out to realign the start and turning buoy line and quickly took over and helped race control in switching back to basic time keeping.



Impact on clubs of the raised issues:

Problem	Description	Perceived impact on clubs	Action needed	Action for future events
Electronics failure	Due to the lack of electronic time keeping and fall back to a manual way of timing some clubs might have been disadvantaged due to lack of differentiating between finishing boats. Additionally due to a lack of an electronic/ photo finish system no post race scrutineering could be made.	Low	Not deemed necessary	For future SkiffieWorlds an adequate electronic system and backup system needs to be in place with a documented fallback to a basic system of manual timing.
Communication failure	Due to a lack of direct communicating of results as well as postponement clubs might have been disadvantaged by not having the preparation time for finals and races to follow from a postponement.	Low	Not deemed necessary	For future SkiffieWorlds an adequate system of direct communication with participating clubs needs to be in place and be tested before start of racing. An adequate fallback system needs to be in place and be documented.
Buoy placement start/turn	Due to initial placement of buoys and less well distanced turning and start line buoys an increased risk of clashes was possible for racing craft.	Medium	Not possible	For future events, a careful placement of buoys lines is needed and a protocol for the establishment is to be produced by SASI and adhered to in future.
Umpire inexperience	Due to the inexperience of the Umpire team clubs might have been	Low	Not deemed necessary	For future events, the Umpire team should consist of at least 2 experienced/ senior



	disadvantaged in the decisions made.			umpires with help from less experience umpires.
Finish line transit incorrect ⁴	Due to the wrongful selection of a finish line transit clubs in the outside lanes of the course were disadvantaged in the first 2 days of racing.	High	<p>The clubs in the first race days have been identified insofar as finals and medal allocation are concerned. It has been determined that further action is not possible at present apart from a frank explanation of events.</p> <p>Therefore, all participants in these races will be acknowledged as having been disadvantaged.</p>	For future events, a trial run and time out procedure needs to be implemented before start of racing.
Ranking calculation	Due to the calculation of the ranking mistakes, clubs were disadvantaged in believing their true stance in the worlds ranking for too long.	Medium	Further action at present has been to recalculate the manual result sheet and establish a ranking for all clubs based on heats and finals. Publication of this ranking has been made available.	Scoring and ranking process to be evaluated and publicised in advance of SkiffieWorlds 2025 for scrutiny of NCAs.

Recommendations:

1. Apply a pre-race check/ time-out procedure to run through race setup and mock race to check if all procedures are in place



2. Waterproof and windproof structure with good sight pre-requisite for the umpires tower/hut.
3. For timing races an adequately documented/scripted fall-back system ought to be in place in case main system fails.
4. A dedicated system for informing rowers/teams needs to be in place, for both the results as well as notices during race days, with an adequate backup system in case of failure.
5. Start buoys and turn marks need to be on a weighted line with additional anchoring. 500m markers need to be adopted
6. An effort needs to be made to increase the course size to more than 10 lanes (which would be the minimum lane size).
7. Scoring system needs to be explained and communicated well in advance of SkiffieWorlds.



Appendix 1

Worlds Host Criteria (December 2022)

1. The course shall be salt water (or brackish)- out and back to be 2,000 metres (+or- 10 metres;) there shall be 15 lanes spaced a minimum of 20 metres apart
2. The number of lanes may be reduced but must be sufficient to allow the full racing programme to be completed within the time scale
3. Start, finish and any intermediate line of buoys shall be parallel and on the same bearing and readily and easily maintained in position throughout the duration of the whole event (Tolerance allowed to be + or – 5metres from the inner to outer lanes)
4. Lanes shall be delineated by turn buoy markers, with intermediate (500metre) markers and any additional marks used to indicate skiff turn zones - where possible there shall be means of ensuring that skiffs finish in their assigned lanes
5. Consideration shall be given to laying the marks for turns, intermediate markers and finish line on long lines suitably anchored and tensioned
6. It may also be prudent for a SASI or NCA Board Member to attend a week in advance to supervise and ensure that the course marking is to specification and well secured.
7. Lanes shall be deployed and orientated such that contestant skiffs in each lane have an equal opportunity i.e., equally sheltered and any tidal effects shall be the same across all lanes. There shall be a minimum depth of at least 1 metre and preferably 2 metres across all lanes at all stages of the tide.
8. Opportunity in advance of the event to test and verify all technology required, event infrastructure including reliability of buoy positioning.
9. There shall be sufficiently sheltered water that we can be confident of running the entire event over the week.
10. The host shall be able to work with local clubs and their national associations and may be a consortium of interested parties.
11. The host shall be able to work with local clubs and their national associations to provide sufficient number of skiffs to lend to groups travelling from overseas.
12. The hosts shall make provision for loaned fully race ready skiffs for attendees unable to transport their own, and in addition have a pool of equipment to loan e.g., VHF radios.
13. There shall be safe secure and sufficient facilities and infrastructure to store skiffs out with the racing schedule and to launch, berth, change crews and recover between 50 and 100 skiffs.



14. There shall be reasonable transport infrastructure to the site and where possible sufficient and secure storage areas for skiff trailers and ancillary equipment
15. A suitable location shall be identified for the safe and secure weighing, measurement and scrutiny of the entered skiffs.
16. There shall be sufficient local mix of accommodation for 1,500 people (catered, self-catering and camping etc)
17. The site shall be easily accessible for people to come from overseas, with connecting transport readily available.
18. Access to a large, covered space for opening and closing sessions and suitable for prize-givings and parties.
19. The host will be required to programme for a weeks racing and fit in all the race categories within that week (Race categories to be confirmed later by SASI)
20. The flagship event is the Mixed Open Category which should be held on the final day of competition.
21. The schedule of events shall so far as is possible take into account the age categories of the participants.
22. Lane draws shall be made in a timely manner and distributed to participating clubs in advance and where possible use shall be made of the pictorial register to ensure that officials and umpires are conversant with the skiffs colour schemes.
23. Readily accessible spectator areas and welfare facilities for competitors- consideration might be given for the installation of a "grandstand" close to but not too adjacent to the finish line.
24. Any grandstand or commentary shall not interfere with the process at the finish line.
25. Waiting club areas for secure storage of kit. Spare oars and other equipment. Facilities for recharging of VHF and WT Radios.
26. Any finish box shall be of sufficient height to clearly see across all finishing lanes and be a substantial structure such as to protect the occupants and any technology and equipment from the elements whilst maintaining a clear line of sight.
27. Results shall be posted in a timely manner and consideration be given for an ongoing record of any Points Competition as decided by SASI.
28. Regatta infrastructure shall be provided - this to include start/finish line umpire locations and facilities for recording of finishing order, timing of skiffs and display of information to competitors .
29. Utilising drone and drone camera footage should be in place particularly as an umpire resource to supervise turns as a priority function - a secondary function using large screens may enhance spectator experience.
30. Use shall be made of technology for supervision of turn marks, lane discipline and for identification of finishing order .



31. The host must be able to provide sufficient facilities and boats for umpires, officials and safety officers for the supervision of races and to carry out safety duties.
32. The Host shall be able to provide a suitable social programme throughout the event including daily catering and welfare facilities.
33. Sufficient first aid, health and welfare facilities and practitioners; including location of defibrillator equipment.
34. Host to confirm any anticipated costs for participants e.g., ferry costs.
35. Host to confirm reliability of funding and insurance for the event.
36. Host to outline anticipated legacy for the local community and organising club.
37. Host to outline any specific environmental innovations, challenges and solutions



Appendix 2

Financial report SkiffieWorlds

Income

Sale of merchandise Shirts, Badges & Posters:	€ 5633,65
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Expenses

Medals:	€ 3328,14
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Purchase Shirts, Badges & Posters:	€ 1814,13
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Miscellaneous:	€ 65,38
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Total:	€ 5207,65
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