

National Activity Competition Council Voting Protocols

Generally, issues for consideration by Committee members are discussed over the fall, winter and spring and voted on at the annual meeting, which for Competition Activity Committees usually takes place at the National Championships in the summer. Chairs and committee members should make every effort to resolve issues at the annual meeting. However, it is recognized that the use of e-mail for discussion and voting by National Activity Committees has become pandemic. It is convenient, quick, and allows broad inclusion of voting committee members and affiliate members.

This protocol is intended to standardize and expedite the process and minimize the potential for misuse. Exclusive use of e-mail for discussion and voting involving competition rule or bylaw changes should only be used if all the members of the voting body have verified internet access. If not, email discussion should take place in conjunction with a newsletter, telephone, or conference call. This is to avoid exclusion of those members who lack internet access. Robert's Rules of Order (Newly Revised 2000 edition) allow for e-mail voting; "Electronic mail and other means of electronic communication can be tailored to comply with these requirements". The requirements being:

1. A method for voter authentication and
2. A method for the designated person (i.e. Secretary or Chair) to receive the ballots.

Introduction and discussion of competition rule modifications or bylaw amendments should be submitted to the Chair of the respective Activity Committee for consideration in accordance with the Committee's time restrictions. Changes to the competition rules should be acted upon by the elected/appointed voting committee. Changes to the Committee's bylaws should be acted upon by the full affiliate membership.

Issues that require additional discussion and formulation beyond the annual meeting may be deliberated via electronic mail. Issues developed into motions for change should state exactly the existing wording of the item suggested for change and any new wording or deletions. A vote on the motion should take place in the late fall or early winter (Oct-Dec) for enactment in the following year beginning January 1st.

To initiate an e-mail meeting of the voting committee to discuss unresolved issues from the annual meeting or new issues that need immediate attention, the Chair should send an agenda to committee members outlining the item for discussion and set a time frame for execution. The time frame should give ample time for committee members to consider the item both among themselves and also to get input from the general affiliate membership. Activity committees have various time requirements that should be followed. The agenda should only address a couple of items for discussion (more items may be included if they are considered noncontroversial such as typographical or 'house cleaning' changes). Members should be given a time frame for the focused e-mail discussion by the voting committee (generally one week). All correspondence should be directed to the Chair with copies to the committee members. At the end of the time frame devoted to discussion, the Chair should ask for motions regarding the issues. Once a motion is tendered and seconded, the Chair puts it to the committee for a vote.

If multiple motions are offered, the Chair should deal with them in chronological order. The Chair can dispense with later motions if a vote on a motion makes the following motions mute. For example: if a motion "to restrict participation to only open canoes" passes then a following motion "to allow the participation of motor boats" would be mute.

Specific E-mail Voting Protocol

1. The Secretary should prepare a draft ballot and forward it to the Chair (the Chair can prepare the ballot if a Secretary is unavailable). Motions seeking to change rules or bylaws should state exactly the original wording and the proposed new wording. No commentary or discussion should be included on the ballot. If additional discussion is needed for clarification of a ballot issue then that issue is not ripe for inclusion on the ballot.
2. The Chair prepares the final ballot and electronically mails it to the voting membership (elected or appointed Committee members for competition rule changes or full affiliate Committee membership for bylaw amendments).
3. Votes are cast by replying to the ballot e-mail and indicating their choice from the various options available.
4. When a completed ballot is received by the Chair or Secretary, an acknowledgement is returned to the voter. The completed ballot is added to the archive message storage for this vote.
5. If a ballot is deemed unacceptable for any reason, it is returned to the sender with an explanation and can be recast (if still within the allotted voting period) or considered a non-valid vote

- depending on the specific circumstances.
6. At the end of the voting period (it is suggested that one to two weeks is sufficient time) the results are tabulated and an e-mail containing the results is sent to the voting list. For voting committee issues, the results should list members by name and how they voted.
 7. Members can only protest their own ballot. In the event of a protest, the original ballots with full headers must be made available for audit.
 8. Unless otherwise stated in the bylaws, all motions are approved by a majority of votes cast.
 9. The Chair should only vote to make or break a tie. In other words, the Chair should only vote when his vote will affect the outcome.

Once a motion has been voted on it cannot be reintroduced until the following year unless passed on a "motion to reconsider". The motion to reconsider can only be made by one who voted on the prevailing side within one week of the dissemination of the voting results. If the motion to reconsider carries, the Chair calls a vote on the original motion.

General email Discussion Etiquette:

- Write a clear, concise subject line for every message.
- Do not attach files unless you have confirmed in advance the recipient will be able to download and open the attachment. Check your inbox regularly.
- Avoid capitalizing your messages. It is the equivalent of shouting.
- Use capitalization sparingly to emphasize a word or two.
- Correct grammar and spelling in all messages and always put your full name at the bottom of the message. Most email programs now contain a spellchecker, leaving little excuse for sending poorly composed messages.
- Do not engage in email 'wars'. If you receive nasty or insulting messages - ignore them.
- Avoid subtle humor and sarcasm that can be easily misinterpreted.
- Pick up the telephone and call if the information you need to convey is critical or you need clarification of an issue that is difficult to obtain from email.
- Do not send a message to a long list of recipients who do not need to hear from you. Always check the address on responses to group mailings to make sure you are replying only to the author and not the entire list.
- Show restraint in quoting from the original message when sending a reply. Retain only small portions of the original message if relevant to your response.