



Telford Sailing Club
Dispute, Complaint & Redress
Procedure



Version 1.1: 16th Nov 2025.

Version Control

Version	Changes	Changes made by	Approved by / date
1.1	New Document	Manuel Greenwood	16/11/2025

1. Introduction

This procedure sets out the steps by which any member, guest, participant or group of participants of the Club may request a review, redress or appeal of a decision, action or omission of the Committee (the “Committee”), the Sailing/Race Committee (if applicable), a panel, or any officer of the Club. It applies to:

- Governance decisions (membership, policy, sub-sections, etc)
- Complaints about conduct, training, social or administrative matters
- Racing decisions (protests, redress requests, etc)

Where any conflict exists between this procedure and the Club Constitution, the Constitution shall prevail.

Where a complaint raises safeguarding or criminal concerns, this procedure is bypassed and the matter is immediately referred to the Club Welfare Officer and handled under the RYA Safeguarding Policy.

2. Definitions

- **Member:** full, associate or temporary member of the Club.
- **Dispute:** a disagreement about a decision of the Committee (or sub-committee) that a party believes is unfair, incorrect, or contrary to the Club’s rules or policies.
- **Complaint:** a concern raised about conduct, service, training, administration, facility or other non-racing matter.
- **Redress:** a request in a racing context when a competitor’s result/score has been made significantly worse through no fault of their own by a committed error (rule/sailing instructions/race committee action).

- **Appeal:** a request to review a decision made under this procedure (governance, disciplinary or racing).

3. Conflict of Interest

Any person in a decision-making role should declare any interest in the matter and be excluded from the process if necessary. Panels must consist of persons with no direct involvement in the original decision or dispute.

4. Governance Dispute / Membership Decision Route

Step 1: Informal resolution

- The parties should attempt to resolve the matter informally by discussion or mediation with a neutral officer (e.g., Vice Commodore) within 7 days of raising it.

Step 2: Mediation

- If unresolved, a mediator (club member or external person) appointed by the Commodore (or committee) within 7 days of referral. Where appropriate, the Club may appoint an external mediator. The mediator has 21 days to attempt a settlement.

Step 3: Formal Panel Hearing

- If still unresolved, within 14 days a panel of three is appointed (members not previously involved). Panel members must be demonstrably impartial, have appropriate knowledge relevant to the matter, and must declare any relationship with the parties.
- Parties are notified at least 14 days in advance. They may submit written statements, attend hearing, be accompanied by a fellow member or supporter (not acting in a legal capacity) at any hearing. Legal representatives or paid advocates are not permitted at internal club hearings. Any supporter must be a club member and must declare any conflict of interest.
- The panel reviews evidence, hears from parties, deliberates, and issues a written decision within 7 days of hearing.

Step 4: Appeal (if applicable)

- If the Club's constitution allows, the decision may be appealed to a further independent appeal panel or to the general membership via an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM). The appeal must be lodged in writing within 28 days of the decision notification, stating grounds of appeal. The appeal panel may uphold, reverse or reduce the remedy but may not increase any sanction.

5. Complaints Procedure (Non-Racing)

- Member submits complaint in writing to Club Secretary, specifying nature of complaint, date, parties, and outcome sought.
- Secretary acknowledges within 5 days, assigns investigation to a person not involved in decision.
- Investigation completed within 21 days; investigator reports to Committee.

- Committee decides outcome and communicates in writing to complainant and respondent within 14 days of report.
- If the complainant is not satisfied, they may request a review by a senior officer (e.g., Commodore) or appeal panel, within 14 days of outcome notification.
- The Club may decline to progress complaints it reasonably considers to be malicious, trivial, persistent, repetitive, or vexatious. The Club may also cease consideration of a complaint if the behaviour of the complainant becomes unreasonable or abusive. In such cases the Club will inform the complainant in writing with brief reasons for the decision.

6. Racing Disputes, Redress & Appeals

- The Club's Sailing Instructions shall adopt or reference the Royal Yachting Association Rules Disputes Process, including Advisory Meetings, Arbitration, full Protest Hearings. [Royal Yachting Association+1](#)
- A competitor whose result is made significantly worse through no fault of their own may request redress under rule 62 and guidance. [Royal Yachting Association](#)
- A competitor may appeal a protest committee's decision (or refusal to reopen) under rule 70, by lodging intention within 7 days and full appeal form within 15 days. [Royal Yachting Association+1](#)
- The decision of the appeal body will be final (unless further appeal to RYA/World Sailing permitted).

7. Timescales and Notification

- Ensure all notifications are in writing (email or letter) and clearly specify hearing dates, procedure, grounds, representation rights.
- Provide clarity on time-limits for each step (informal, mediation, panel, appeal).
- Maintain confidentiality throughout, only revealing outcome (and sanctions if applicable) to those directly involved, unless broader publication is required by Club policy.
- **Right to Pause Proceedings.** The Club may suspend or amend this procedure at any stage where required for safeguarding reasons, on legal advice, or on the advice of the Club's insurers.
- **Protection of Volunteers.** The Club will not tolerate abusive, threatening, or intimidatory behaviour towards volunteers or panel members involved in this process. Where such behaviour occurs, the Club may cease consideration of the matter or take disciplinary action.

8. Record-keeping

- The Club Secretary shall keep a record of all disputes/complaints, decisions, panel membership, outcomes, appeals, and sanctions for a minimum of 7 years.
- The record should include names (with consent), dates, written statements, hearing minutes, decisions.

9. Remedies / Sanctions

- The panel may adjust the original decision, reinstate membership, rescind sanction, provide redress or refund, etc., as appropriate.
- For racing redress: the panel may adjust scores as per rule A9 (average points, etc) or declare a race void.

10. Communication of Outcome

- After a decision, the Club shall notify both parties in writing of the outcome, the reasoning (in summary form), the remedy/sanction, and any appeal rights.
- If sanction involves membership suspension or expulsion, the Club may need to follow its constitution for general meeting ratification.

11. Finality

- Unless additional external appeal rights (e.g., via RYA under racing rules), the decision of the appeal body shall be final and binding on all parties.

12. Review of Procedure

- This procedure shall be reviewed by the Committee at least every 3 years or sooner if significant issues arise.

13. Data Protection & Confidentiality

- All personal data processed under this procedure shall be handled in accordance with UK GDPR and the Club's Data Protection Policy. Information will be shared only with those who need it for the proper handling of the case. Records will be stored securely and retained only for the period specified in Section 8.

Approved by the Committee on;