

Have you ever wondered how a wakeboard or wakesurf competition is judged? What will the judges reward? What will they penalise? Or maybe you'd like to run a boat wakeboard or wakesurf competition and need to know what's involved. The team at Wakeboard UK explains.

If you're competing in either a boat wakeboard or wakesurf competition you will be scored on the overall impression your runs create and how they compare, subjectively, with the other riders' runs. There are no set scores for specific tricks. But there's more to it than simply turning on the style.

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Photos: Mark Osmond, Mich Rowley & Mantis Pro Media



CALCULATING THE SCORES

- There are 3 judges who each give a score out of 10 for each of the criteria (execution, intensity, composition).
- The scores of all 3 judges are added together, divided by 3 and displayed as part of the overall score.
- To calculate the rider's result, the 3 averaged criteria scores are added and displayed as a total score (out of 100).
- The calculated scores are cross-referenced to the judges' placement of the rider which will always override the total score.

Photo: Mantis Pro Media

HOW TO WOW THE JUDGES

// BOAT WAKEBOARD

All titled events, whether that's the UK Nationals or the World Championships, are governed by the International Waterski & Wakeboard Federation (IWWF) rules. The judges award a maximum of 100 points to each rider based on their overall impressions of the routine performed over two passes. The judges take into account 3 aspects of the rider's performance:

➤ EXECUTION, INTENSITY AND COMPOSITION

➤ Execution (33.3 Points)

The level of perfection to which each manoeuvre was performed.

➤ Intensity (33.4 Points)

How big the moves were performed and the technical difficulty of the tricks executed.

➤ Composition (33.3 Points)

The overall composition of the routine in terms of the rider's ability to perform a variety of manoeuvres in a flowing, creative sequence.

The judges score the first rider in the heat subjectively and each subsequent rider's performance is scored higher or lower than that baseline. The judges both score the riders and place them, and each heat is judged independently from the other heats on the day.

Judges do not deduct points for a fall but falling is a clear disadvantage for the rider. He or she will not get any credit for the attempted trick and will lose valuable time and course on the water. Falling at the start of a pass will probably cost the rider 2 or 3 tricks before the boat is up to speed.



HOW TO WOW THE JUDGES

Rider : Mitch Wise Photo : Mark Osmond

Advice for Riders

Riders are encouraged to perform a smooth flowing routine with a wide variety of tricks. Each manoeuvre should be different, adding its unique style, should display a high technical level and should be executed as cleanly as possible and taken to its limit.

Repeating tricks isn't good and you are far better off mixing up your run to get variety. But judges are looking for style, plenty of grabs, a variety of tricks and not just heelside either. Having a few spins in your run helps; having none means you'll be scored down on composition. In the more experienced divisions, a rider is also expected to have raley-based tricks and, even more, to push harder with mobes, landing blind and more complex tricks.



/ Colin showing his son Alexander what we look out for

It is important to understand that intensity is in part how high a rider has performed the trick, but the more complex or technical tricks also score higher in the intensity category too; likewise, if the rider is brave enough to grab the invert. But if the landing is not smooth and solid, expect a reduction in the score for execution. As for grabs, make them solid. None of us wants to see slaps and tickles on the board, not if you're competing. All of this is dependent on your level and who you're riding against.

Another focus is the rules relating to the course. The course should be between 370 and 400 metres long, with start and end buoys, and each pass is between the buoys. In most competitions there's a rider or two who will start the trick run too early. This isn't good as that trick won't be counted - and that goes for both passes. The rider should cross/hit the wake close to but after the start buoy. Starting before and landing after it simply doesn't cut it. Don't think it's just the rookies. It happens in the Open categories from time to time. Judges call this out in the boat and the trick is not scored.

A small word about timings. If it's your first event, leave plenty of time to be on site, attend the rider briefing and ensure you are on the dock ready for your time. The judges try hard to make the events professional and rocking up late isn't good. Put simply, you are likely to be scratched from the competition. Also, it's hardly fair on the other riders who made the effort.

// WAKESURF

Wakesurfing competition is in its infancy compared with wakeboarding but look out for more international events. The scoring principles are similar but there are a few differences. The judges score the riders in each of 4 criteria rather than the 3 for wakeboarding and there are some subtle differences in their definitions.

- ▶ **Execution** - how well the tricks are performed and the level of control/fluidity maintained throughout each trick and the entire run.
- ▶ **Intensity** - how populated with tricks the run is, ie, if the rider goes trick after trick or takes breaks between tricks to prepare for the next one.
- ▶ **Difficulty** - how difficult each trick is, based on any number of variables.
- ▶ **Variety** - the variety of tricks performed.



Rider : Ant Edwards

The judges score each criteria out of 10, so each judge will award a maximum of 40 points to each rider based on the overall impressions of the routine performed. Riders are not penalised for falls.

↓ The role of the calculator

Calculators are crucial to the smooth running of any competition and the first faces a rider tends to see when registering at an event. Once registration is complete and the running order for the heats is produced for the judges in the boat, the event is under way. The scores are either called in from the boat via radio or handed over via old school paper version. Either way the calculators input the data into the computer and produce the sheets for the next round of heats.

It's an exciting role as they get to see the scores and positions before anyone else, therefore the information needs to be kept private. The system calculates the positions and scores from the data that is input. The chief judge in the boat then finally checks and signs off the scores and positions and answers any issues or queries.

↓ Becoming a judge or calculator

Running these competitions relies on qualified judges and calculators. The IWWF has courses annually in locations in Europe and further overseas. Being a judge or calculator is a great way of getting involved in the competitive side of the sport as well as networking and socialising with like-minded wakeboard enthusiasts. As a judge you'll need to become familiar with the extensive IWWF rules. As well as scoring, they cover areas such as safety, competition categories, the course, boat, scheduling and timings, competition format, to name just a few.

If you're interested in learning more about becoming a qualified judge or calculator and want to help grow our sport, then please e-mail Colin Hart at wakejudge@mac.com

↓ Running a grassroots or club competition

If you want to run a competition and don't have access to the judges to score it subjectively, have you thought about running a competition on a points-based scoring system instead? The multi-discipline Cutting Edge competition run by Simon Waring of Wake and Ski Boats has such a system and at Wakeboard UK we helped with an update to their boat wakeboard scoring last year. All the information you need and further resources for clubs to use to run a wakeboard or wakesurf competition are on our website at www.wakeboard.co.uk and if you would like to know more about organising a competition please contact us at info@wakeboard.co.uk

You can find the full sets of wakeboard and wakesurf rules on the IWWF website. Go to - iwwf.sport