

## Protocol – Actions when Fixture in doubt

**Background.** 10-20 point to points a year are usually called off. Some are abandoned and others postponed, for which there is a separate protocol (the AS is key to this so keep them informed). In the past, these were often late calls, even if it was fairly obvious that a meeting could not run, but the effect was relatively small as most attendees were local. Nowadays, in the winter months, when fixtures are most likely to be called off, we have fewer fixtures and people are travelling long distances. It is therefore vital that they are kept informed as early, quickly and fully as possible, recognising the potentially negative impact of social media if information is not forthcoming.

Equally, we have to accept that the weather will not always be as forecast, and therefore there will occasionally be a need for late decisions not to run.

**Decision-making.** No-one wants to call off a meeting, considering all the hard work and effort that has gone into its preparations, not to mention the financial cost. However, the sooner a meeting can be practically called off the better, providing the decision is based on the facts and information available. It is strongly recommended (and vital for the HBLB grant) that this decision is made with the agreement of the following:

Clerk of the Course

Local Inspector (consider asking National Inspector for advice if a difficult issue)

Chief Steward

Chairman of P2P Committee

After all a problem shared is a problem ...

**Timing.** If it is clear that a fixture is not going to be able to run, everyone should be informed as early as possible. There are specific deadlines which you should consider:

- **Before Entries open on Friday before race day.** If a decision can be made, this will stop entries being opened, which allows participants to plan accordingly.
- **By 0800 on Monday.** Again, this allows participants to enter elsewhere and entries to be closed before most have entered.
- **By Wednesday?** This is normally to reduce costs for the fixture for things like printing race cards and ordering food and drink.
- **By Friday.** This allows participants to plan their weekends. It also allows fixtures to inform their officials in plenty of time and consider postponement dates and ensures everyone knows what is going on before entries open for the following weekend. NB: the earliest fixtures to postpone are more likely to get the dates they want.
- **Over the Weekend.** At this stage, everyone is on tenterhooks as they try to plan; both the fixture and the participants. It is therefore vital that the fixture is honest and provides **accurate and full** information on the situation as it unfolds. A report should include:
  - Is the course raceable at time of reporting?
  - Include information on going etc. Take a video clip of a stick going in at strategic points.
  - Any action being taken to take out parts which are not raceable (fences, sections of track). This will help if any unhelpful clips are put up on social media,
  - What you are doing going forward, e.g. inspections.

**Inspections.** The course should always be inspected by the Clerk of Course, Chief Steward and Local Inspector. As it gets closer to raceday, more formal inspections announced to the public may be necessary if there are concerns:

- **Precautionary Inspections.** if the course is felt to be safe for racing, yet the forecast and/or weather, or other influencing element, indicates any doubt that it will remain so, a future precautionary inspection **must** be announced. **This is not optional and should involve at least the Clerk of the Course and the Chief Steward, and will normally be first thing on raceday morning.** This tells everyone there may be an issue with racing and ensures they check.

**NB:** A precautionary inspection may lead to declaring a full inspection at a later time if a course is found to be unsafe.

- **Inspections.** If at the time of announcing any inspection, it is felt that the course, or any associated part of it, is or may be unsafe/unfit for racing then it is a full INSPECTION. In other words, you are checking to see if the course has improved enough to race and people must be told.

**Timing of Inspection.** The time given for the inspection is the time at which its result will be announced, not when those tasked with carrying out the inspection walk out to do so. Sufficient time must be allowed for conducting the inspection to ensure the result is announced as close as possible to the time given for the inspection, as that's when everyone will start checking website and social media.

**Keeping People Informed.** There is no point in doing something if no-one knows about it, so you must report fully on your findings as they happen. Firstly, keep the AS and Area PRO fully informed as they may be able to take on much of this reporting. Point-to-point people use a variety of places to find information, so please ensure any updates you have are put on at least the following ASAP:

- Point-to-point website. The fixture or someone in Area should have access to the website to put up changes. Please check you know who has access to make changes on [gopointing.com](http://gopointing.com) and, if you don't, call the PPRC on 01933 304795 to sort this out well before the fixture date.  
NB: The PPRC are not always available, particularly at 7am on a Sunday morning.
- National P2P social media. Call the PPA CEO on 07501 452817 or Jake Exelby on 07703 106938 (they may be driving).
- Area website/social media.
- Fixture/course website/social media. NB: give owners the details to your sites when you send out car passes.

**Conclusion.** If the above procedure is followed, everyone will be fully informed and it will take the heat out of any situation. Indeed, most people will only feel sympathy for the difficult situation in which the fixture finds itself.