Using WhatsApp Groups for Slalom Events

WhatsApp groups can provide an excellent tool for the dissemination of information and providing updates to your team, paddlers, and supporters before and throughout a slalom event.

WhatsApp Groups provide the ability for you as an organiser to send out:
- pre-event information, including start lists;
- updates and requests on the day;
- copies or completed protest forms;
- results;
- in fact, anything that can be put in words, a photo or a document.

This guide provides an outline on:
- setting up the Group for an event;
- limiting who can send out messages; and
- closing a Group after the event,

as well as some recommendations based on the use over the past season at various events.

Please note: The following instructions are based on the Android and IPhone apps, which unfortunately are not identical!   For more complete details, including variations if you are using the Web, Desktop or KaiOS versions of WhatsApp, please refer to the WhatsApp guidance online at https://faq.whatsapp.com/.

How to create your Group for an event

It is recommended that a Group is created on an event by event basis. Ideally, this is done a couple of weeks beforehand, so that the link / QR code for signing up can be distributed to the paddlers with the initial event information and start list.

Android:
- Open WhatsApp > tap **More options** > **New group**.
- Alternatively, tap **New chat** > **New group**.
- Search for or select contacts to add to the group. At this stage, we suggest choosing a fellow organiser. Then, tap the green arrow icon.
- Enter a name for the group, e.g. the name and date for your event. (Note this is limited to 25 characters.)
- You can add a group icon by tapping the Camera icon, such as your club logo. Once set, the icon will appear next to the group in the CHATS tab.
- Tap the green check mark icon when you're finished.

IPhone:
- Go to the Chats tab in WhatsApp.
- Tap **New Chat** > **New Group**.
- If you have an existing chat on the Chats tab, tap **New Group**.
- Search for or select contacts to add to the group. At this stage, we suggest choosing a fellow organiser. Then, tap **Next**.
- Enter a name for the group, e.g. the name and date for your event. (Note this is limited to 25 characters.)
- You can add a group icon by tapping the Camera icon, such as your club logo. Once set, the icon will appear next to the group in the Chats tab.
- Tap **Create** when you're finished.

Adding Admins

Once you've set up your Group, it is recommended that the number of people who can post information to the group is limited to 2 or 3 organisers / officials, so that it is useful and does not become an open forum.

Android:
- Open the WhatsApp group chat, then tap the group subject.
- Alternatively, tap and hold the group in the CHATS tab. Then, tap **More options** > **Group info**.
- Tap **Group settings** > **Edit group info**.
- Choose to allow **Only admins** to edit the group info. Tap **OK**.
- Tap **Send messages**.
- Choose to allow **Only admins** to send messages.
- Tap OK.

IPhone:
- Open the WhatsApp group chat, then tap the group subject.
- Alternatively, swipe the group to the left in the Chats tab. Then, tap **More** > **Group Info**.
- Tap **Group Settings** > **Edit Group Info**.
- Choose to allow **Only Admins** to edit the group info.
- Tap **Send Messages**.
- Choose to allow **Only Admins** to send messages.
- Tap OK

If you want to add further admins to help out, possibly including the Chief Judge.

Android:
- Open the WhatsApp group chat, then tap the group subject.
- Alternatively, tap and hold the group in the CHATS tab. Then, tap **More options** > **Group info**.
- Tap the participant you want to make an admin.
- Tap **Make group admin**.

IPhone:
- Alternatively, swipe the group to the left in the Chats tab. Then, tap **More** > **Group Info**.
- Tap the participant you want to make an admin.
- Tap **Make Group Admin**.

Letting people join the group

Having set up your group, it is time to send out an invite so that people can sign-up.

If you're a group admin, you can invite people to join a group by sharing a link with them. This can be by way of a link within the published event information, or the use of a QR code on social media and/or on a notice at the event.

Android:
- Open the WhatsApp group chat, then tap the group subject.
- Alternatively, tap and hold the group in the CHATS tab. Then, tap **More options** > **Group info**.
- Tap **Invite via link**.
- Choose to **Send link via WhatsApp**, **Copy link**, **Share link** through another app, or **QR code**.
- If sending through WhatsApp, search for or select contacts, then tap **Send**.

IPhone:
- Open the WhatsApp group chat, then tap the group subject.
- Alternatively, swipe the group to the left in the Chats tab. Then, tap **More** > **Group Info**.
- Tap **Invite to Group via Link**.
- Choose **Share Link**, **Copy Link**, or **QR Code**.

Throughout the Event

Once you have set-up the group and invited people to use it, people will join and it is ready to use during the event, to pass on text messages, photos and/or even full documents.

A couple of important points to consider:
- People can only see messages that have been posted since they joined the group; they cannot access messages posted previously. If you have issued pre-race information, it is worth resending it every few days and maybe the day before the event.
- Please remember the messages are going out to a wide range of people; do be very careful what you choose to post <u>before</u> it is posted.
- Data protection is important – ***please do NOT post personal details, e.g. dates of birth, to the group***. It is always better to use the group to ask an individual to come to control if you need to check any such data.

After the Event

Once the event / weekend is finished and everything finalised, including any posts about lost property/kit left behind on the riverbank, you should look to close down the group. You will see that many people will leave the group themselves.

Unfortunately, Whatsapp have not made this very easy and you cannot close the group without first removing all the participants one-by-one, and then deleting the group.

NB: Unless there is a very good reason to do so, for data protection purposes, it is recommended that you do not save a copy of the message log.

Android:
- Open the WhatsApp group chat, then tap the group subject. Alternatively, tap and hold the group in the CHATS tab.
- Tap the participant's name > **Remove {participant}** > **OK**.
- Once you have left the group (and it has no other participants), you can delete the group:
- Open the WhatsApp group chat, then tap the group subject.
- Alternatively, tap and hold the group in the CHATS tab.
- Tap **Delete group** > **DELETE**.

IPhone:
- Open the WhatsApp group chat, then tap the group subject.
- Tap the **participant's name** > **Remove from Group** > **Remove**.
- Once you have left the group (and it has no other participants), you can delete the group:
- Open the WhatsApp group chat, then tap the group subject.
- Alternatively, swipe the group to the left in the Chats tab. Then tap **More**.
- Tap **Delete Group** > **Delete Group**.

If you have any feedback on the use of Whatsapp or any other tool at slalom events, please let a member of the Slalom Committee know and/or include a note on the Competition Report form.

Thank you.