

Using WhatsApp Channels 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. Although ideal for disseminating information, WhatsApp groups allow individuals to be contacted who may not want to be directly contacted or who are under 18.

It is proposed therefore to use WhatsApp Channels for the dissemination of information at Slalom events. Although they can be found by anyone with a WhatsApp account in the case of a Channel everyone's information is kept confidential. It is a One Way information flow from the organiser / Admins to everyone who has subscribed to the channel.

WhatsApp Channels 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 Channel for an event;
- limiting who can send out messages; and
- closing a Channel after the event,

as well as some recommendations.

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 Channel for an event

It is recommended that a Channel 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.

Channels can only be created by logging into your WhatsApp account on a laptop or PC.

Login to your WhatsApp account (You will need your phone with you to be able to login)

Select 'Channels' on the left hand Short Cut bar

Click the + sign and create your Channel by following the instructions on the screen

Copy the link and share it in your Event information

Adding Admins

Once you've set up your Group, it is very highly 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. It should not become an open forum over which there is no control.

Android:

- Open the WhatsApp Channel chat, then tap the group subject.
- Scroll down the list and select the option **Invite Admins**
- Select the person who you wish to be an Admin from your list of contacts
- The selected person will now need to accept a request to become an Admin for the channel
- Tap OK.

iPhone:

- Open WhatsApp and from the bottom menu select 'updates', and under Channels select and open your Channel.
- Tap on the channel name at the top and scroll down to Invite Admins.
- Select the person (or type a number) and select ok – they will receive an invite.

If you want to add further admins to help out, possibly including the Chief Judge. Then follow the above process on a Laptop or phone

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Letting people join the Channel

Having set up your channel, 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 in the top of the Chat you have the option to Share Channel Link
- You then have the option for a QR Code and a Channel 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 WhatsApp, go to Updates then your channel where there is the option to Share Channel Link.
- You then have the option for a QR Code and a Channel 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**.

Throughout the Event

Once you have set-up the channel 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 should be able to see messages that have been posted in the 30 days before they followed the channel, so pre-race information should remain visible to new followers.
- Please remember the messages are going out to a wide range of people; do be very careful what you choose to post before 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 channel as it is publicly visible. People may stop following the channel after the event. It is very easy to remove the channel after the event.

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 Channel chat, then tap the group subject.
- Scroll down and select Delete Channel.
- You as creator will then need to enter your phone number to confirm ownership to delete the channel.
- After a few seconds the Channel is deleted.

iPhone:

- Open WhatsApp, go to Updates then your channel where there is the option to Share Channel Link.
- Tap on the Channel name at the top of the screen to open the Channel Info.
- Scroll down and select Delete Channel and confirm you want to delete it. This cannot be undone.

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.