

Wakeboard Boat competitions – A Quick Guide



Wakeboarding is classified as a 'free sport' and as such is not always contest driven, however contests are a great stage on which to put your skills to the test and drives athletes to push to higher levels. The competition scene is growing fast at a grassroots level in the UK as large numbers of new riders take to the water. Contests can also be a great way of meeting new friends and new people to ride with.

Competing is not for everyone though and should be enjoyed if you want to participate. Riding well in a contest environment is a skill in itself and can be a challenge, which comes with the reward of great personal achievement. Learning to become a good contest rider is about preparation and experience, practice makes perfect.

JUDGING

In a wakeboard contest you are judged on 3 criteria – **Execution, Intensity** and **Composition**.

What do the 3 areas mean?

Execution is the way that you perform the tricks, style and cleanness of landings. A smooth trick with a nice solid grab would score over a scrappy move with no control.

Intensity is related to the amplitude of a trick, not only how big it is, but how technical a move is too. A large clean Raley will score more than a low sketchy one, a KGB will score more than just a back roll.

Composition is the mix of tricks that are in your two passes. A good balance of grabs, spins, inverts and hitting the obstacles if there are any in the course. A good balanced run will score better than one heavy with a certain category of tricks. It's important to remember though that a good wakeboard run is not about fitting in as many tricks in as possible, it's about quality tricks that flow together.

The judges scores each area as follows-

Execution: 33.3% Intensity: 33.3% Composition: 33.3%

With that in mind, it can help you build your competition passes. Try and base your run on 2 passes of 5 tricks, so about 10 tricks in total. The amount of tricks in a run may vary depending on the contest sites due to the length of the lake and possible obstacles in the course (kickers and sliders).

Each rider is scored out of 100, there are 2 or 3 judges (depending on the level of the event) and each judge will score your run and give in his scores to the calculators to process. Your final score is calculated from the average of the judges scores. Your scores are only relative within the group in which you rode and should not be 'cross checked' against riders in other groups as they were judged independently. A score of 55 in rookies will not be relevant to a score of 55 in the pro division. Each group's scores can vary dependant on the diverse ability in the group.

There are no fixed scores for tricks and it is down to the judges and their interpretation of each individual run. Wakeboard judging is very subjective much like snowboarding or gymnastics, as some judges may like to see different styles and tricks to others. Always listen at the riders briefing for important information like course details such as start and finish buoys if being used. It is frustrating to feel you have not been judged fairly when your tricks may not even have been included due to technicalities.



Other things to consider –

When putting a run together make sure you start with a trick that you are very confident with and build your run from there, putting your least consistent trick at the end of your run. Normally two falls are allowed with your run finishing on your second fall, however when obstacles are in the course you may be given an extra fall on the obstacles. Another good reason to listen well to the riders briefing.

PREPARATION

Before the contest –

If you are not used to big wakes it's good to take a practice set on a competition boat with the correct ballast set up, wakes can vary massively with the amount of weight in a boat.

On the day –

Always remember to give your equipment the once over before you ride, check that you have all necessary items, that your bindings are firm on your board don't forget your helmet if you plan to hit the obstacles, you could get disqualified if you hit a slider or kicker without a helmet.

On the dock –

Make sure you know what tricks you are going to do and are ready on the dock with your line prepared in tangle free coils and make sure they know what line length you want. You may also want to tell them your boat speed, but remember this may vary from boat to boat so it may be best to take the drivers advice.

Although it is a competition doesn't forget why you ride a wakeboard so relax and enjoy it!

On the Water communication to the boat –

Make sure you know the signals to inform the boat officials any alterations or problems that may occur to you on the water.

The following signals apply

- Thumbs up –means go faster
- Thumbs down means go slower
- Pointing to an item of equipment means a problem with it
- Pointing back towards objects means debris in water
- Raising hand overhead means request for a re-ride
- Fallen rider must signal to tow boat and safety boat that he/she is OK and /or is injured.

Should your equipment fail you on the water than a rider has four minutes to repair the equipment problem. Equipment can either be repaired on the boat or at the dock if needed. Time starts either when the rider gets on the back of the boat or when the rider returns to the dock when there is a case of a broken board or binding. A rider must return to the point of where the problem had occurred before the four minutes have elapsed and be back on the water and to the satisfaction of the Chief Boat Judge.