



The first thing is to wish all members and their families a very Happy and Healthy 2015, with lots of enjoyable sailing.

We started the First Series for IOM's last Sunday (18th January) with eight members taking part. It was a pleasant but cold morning with very light winds from a vaguely Westerley direction and these increased in strength and moved more towards the North as the morning progressed. As usual Tom has posted the full results on our website but for the benefit of those members without access to the internet I can tell you that John Hanton ran out a comfortable winner, Vinnie Zammit was second and yours truly somehow managed to get into third place somehow adrift of John and Vinnie. Terry and Tony acted as race officials for the morning and did a very good job.

We are now into our winter break and the club is officially closed until **Wednesday 11th February**. However the restaurant management have advised us that anyone wishing to sail a boat on a Wednesday or a Sunday morning is welcome to do so, just be sure to shut the gate when you leave. Any club equipment used must be put securely away at the end of proceedings. Please bear in mind that there will be no toilets available and no tea or coffee. Personally, I am going to use this break in our sailing programme to overhaul my boat and prepare it for the coming new season.

Some important dates for your diary;

- a) **Sunday February 15th** - the second event of the **First Series 2015 for IOM's**. Race Officer, Peter Sutton and John Carment.
- b) **Friday evening 20th March - Rules Seminar and Buffet meal**. Details to be confirmed later. This seminar will be hosted by Peter Fitt, who is a rules expert from the RYA. Some club members have previously attended seminars conducted by Peter and can confirm that he is first class at this and answers all questions in a friendly and easy to understand way. We will need examples of incidents on the water for Peter to discuss, so if anyone has such an example, where they are unsure of how the Rules apply, please write it down and pass it to a committee member for inclusion on the night. It will be a very good quality buffet meal subsidised to club members but visitors will have to pay the full cost. The cost to club members is £5.00 and to visitors £10.00. I will publish full details nearer the date.
- c) **Sunday 5th April - Shearwater and 2002T Open for R6M's**. Race officials, David Grint and Terry Burton. I hope that all six metre owners will enter and support this event.

A couple of reminders concerning the club rules. Please keep an eye on the Race Programme in order that you are aware of when you are scheduled to act as race officer. If anything should happen to prevent you from taking your turn, you should arrange for a suitable substitute and advise David, our race secretary, accordingly. On the occasions that you are race officer, please try to have the briefing at 10.00am, you are not obliged to wait whilst late comers get ready to sail.

I have noticed that it tends to be the same small group of members, week in and week out, who help with setting out the equipment at the start of the day and putting it away when racing has finished. Please lend a hand with this if you possibly can, it is an easy and quick job with plenty of willing hands but can be quite hard work and take some time when only one or two people are involved.

RESOLVING RACING INCIDENTS. This has been published before but here it is again. Some of you will know that myself, Terry Burton and Vinnie Zammit attended a one day course for 'Rules Advisors' last Thursday. The concept of Rules Advisors was introduced by the RYA (Royal Yachting Association) because they were finding that sailors were reluctant to go to full protest hearings so incidents on the water were left unresolved which is unsatisfactory to all those involved in the event.

When there is an incident on the water - say, contact between two boats - a number of things can happen as a result;

1. A boat acknowledges fault and completes a penalty turn - incident resolved.
2. Neither boat acknowledges fault and no penalty turn is taken, so one boat protests the other. The protested boat then takes a penalty turn - incident resolved.
3. Neither boat acknowledges fault and no penalty turn is taken, so one boat protests the other. The protested boat does not take a penalty turn and lodges a counter protest. At this point no further action can be taken by the two boats concerned and it is imperative that there is no further discussion or argument concerning the incident. The Racing Rules of Sailing do not allow for discussion or argument on the water they demand that either a penalty turn is completed or the incident is taken to a protest hearing off the water, after the race is finished, when a decision can be made and an appropriate penalty imposed - usually disqualification of one or perhaps both boats. In the past any hearing off the water had to be conducted by a full protest committee and many competitors are deterred from this because of the formality involved but we now have another option - an arbitration by a 'Rules Advisor'. This is not as formal as a protest hearing and the potential penalty not as damaging to a boats score because instead of disqualification the penalty will be a 20% scoring penalty calculated

according to RRS 44.3(c). In other words if, for example, the guilty boat crossed the finish line in third position in a fleet of fifteen a 20% scoring penalty would worsen that boats result by three places so it would be recorded as having finished sixth instead of third. The position of the other boats will not change so two boats may receive the same score. The 20% calculation is subject to a minimum of a two place penalty and a maximum penalty of a DNF score.

The system works like this;

1. An incident has occurred and a valid protest is lodged within the normal time limit - RRS E6.3.
2. All parties agree to opt for arbitration and meet the Rules Advisor (or alternatively go straight to a full protest hearing).
3. The parties complete a protest form and describe what happened, and the Rules Advisor will decide if witnesses should be called.
4. The Rules Advisor explains what rules may have been broken and whether anyone was in the wrong.
5. A boat in the wrong is asked to accept the exoneration penalty - a 20% worsening of that boats score.
6. No one is disqualified.
7. If the exoneration penalty is not accepted, the protest may go on to a formal protest hearing.
8. The 20% scoring exoneration penalty is available for breaches of rules of RRS Part 2 (rules 10 - 24), RRS 31 and 42.

If the protestor is seeking redress the protest must be heard by a full protest committee.

The hearings will be conducted in front of all those taking part in the racing in order that we can all learn and understand the RRS better and ultimately improve the racing experience for everyone.

This system of arbitration has now been introduced for all Sunday racing.

Quite a lot to take in but your committee strongly believes that the adoption of the RYA Arbitration procedure will improve the quality of racing for everyone and we ask for your co-operation in making it work.

A copy of the Club Rules and Race Programme 2015 is associated. Please print these off and keep safe for future reference.

That's all for now so fair winds, good luck and I'll see you on Wednesday 11th February.

Pete.

enc: Club Rules. Race Programme 2015.