



The Christmas and New Year celebrations are now well behind us as is our annual dinner and prize presentation evening which I think you will all agree was very enjoyable and another great success. We now look forward to the new season of racing and given the generally high standard of sailing and with everyone capable of winning I predict a hugely enjoyable, very competitive and closely fought season of racing. You have all had a copy of the 2016 race programme but just in case you have mislaid it another one is associated with this newsletter. Please print it off and keep it safe for future reference. Once again we have a packed programme of racing with something for everyone; there are 21 events for the IOM class (including our Norfolk Trophy open event, which is also the final round of the EDCS championship series). There are 8 events for the RM class (including the Broadland Trophy open event, which also includes the ED RM championship and GAMES 5 events) and there are also 8 events for the R6M class (including our Shearwater open event which also includes the 2002T-1 series). Please try to support as many of these events as you can.

An intrepid band of members gathered together at Filby last Sunday (17th) for what should have been the first competitive race of the new season - IOM First Series (1) - only to be confronted with a partially frozen Broad and no wind at all. The decision to spend the morning in the warmth of the restaurant drinking coffee and talking radio sailing wasn't a difficult one.

We are now into our short winter break which is a good opportunity for us all to carry out essential maintenance on our boats and rigging in preparation for the season ahead. Sailing at Filby starts again on Wednesday 10th February and on Sunday 21st February the new season kicks off in earnest with the first of our RM series. On the same day there is the Belton Memorial Trophy - EDCS 1 at Chelmsford so if you don't have a marblehead, get yourself down to the Blackwater for a good day racing IOM's.

I am sorry to report that the following members have not renewed their membership this year; John Banester, Ian Clark, Charlie Ellis and Derek McSparron but I am delighted to be able to tell you that we have a new member - Geoff Josey, formally of the Brentwood and Chelmsford clubs who has moved up to Norfolk. Welcome Geoff, I hope you have many happy years sailing with us at Filby. Associated with this newsletter is an up to date list of members names and contact details. Again I suggest you print this off and keep it safe for future reference.

A very important date for your diary;

Friday evening 18th March - Rules Seminar Social Evening and Buffet Supper.

This will be similar in format to the one held in 2015. Graham Louth who is the RYA's Eastern Region rules guru will be leading the event and giving the correct interpretation, according to the RRS, to all those incidents on the water which sometimes have us confused or uncertain. Please make a note of any situations that you have encountered on the water about which you are unclear so that they can be put to Graham so that he can explain them. The emphasis of the evening will be on friendly participation the object being to learn and have fun at the same time and remember, there is no such thing as a stupid question. As last year there will be a very nice buffet supper which will be subsidised to club members but for which any visitors will have to pay full price. The evening will cost club members £5.00 and visitors £11.00. If anyone has any questions or suggestions regarding this event please direct them to me or any other committee member. I will need to know definite numbers beforehand with the necessary payment so that the buffet can be ordered accordingly.

We always enjoy some tremendous racing on Wednesdays and Sundays and it is always great fun and conducted in a good spirited and sporting manner but if there is ever a racing incident not resolved on the water by a boat completing a penalty turn, as a club it is now and has been for some time, our policy to refer such incidents for arbitration in accordance with the procedure developed by the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) and once again a summary of how it works is set out below. and I suggest you print this off and keep it handy for future reference as required. This is an alternative and less onerous procedure than a full protest hearing although the option to go to a full hearing remains.

RESOLVING RACING INCIDENTS. 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 and incidents on the water were often 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 require 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 process is now in place for all Sunday racing.

That's it for now folks but don't forget;

The Rules Seminar on Friday 18th March with buffet supper provided. If you would like to attend please let me know asap - remember it's payment with the booking - £5.00 for members £11.00 for non-members and everyone is welcome.

Fair winds and good sailing.

Pete.