

Sailing Committee Meeting Minutes 22/09/25

Start 20:03

Present (Via Teams): Liam Murphy, Andrew Cole, Ross Malloy, Julie Harrison, Liz Pescod, Bernard Price, Matthew Connor, Steve Bell, Rafael Matarazzo (Standing in for Tony Woods)

Apologies: Andy Draper

Minutes of Last Meeting 20th February 2025

Agreed outstanding items to be covered under individual headings below

Racing

Course Setting

RM is ready to move forward with use of Buoyzone (BZ). Notified the committee of its pros and cons: useful for getting marks in right place and assessing course size, specifically with input of wind speed and course axis. Not all helms are trained in BZ, Ross plans on training more helms over winter period in build up to BM.

It takes approx. one day to train a person and RM thinks there would be benefit in training ROs. Basically, you need to read a procedure and then go out with someone who knows how to use it.

SB queried licensing and cost of BZ. RM said we have free version currently. Paid version is £6/mo. Paid version only really necessary if ROs use it too.

SB queried need for ROs to use – thought goal was for BZ to be used to set up preliminary course but then down to RO to finalise when on the water. Per RM if ROs arrive early enough, can go through the settings with the mark-laying team, getting wind readings, establishing course length and position of Committee Boat. Need reminder to ROs to show up 'on time', Liz mentioned recommended arrival time on Sunday is 9:30am. Ross to remind staff to get courses set early.

MC & AC suggested dropping a reference mark for committee boat position when laying preliminary course so RO knows where to head to.

LP noted that pin-end laying seems to be improving.

Slow H/C Course

New course is a success, generally positive comments regarding it.

Pontoons

A few complaints are still coming in. RM to continue monitoring.

Launch and Recovery

Winches not always working and ropes not long enough. Per RM, Marlow Ropes no longer make the specification of rope and the offered replacement was insufficient. Appreciating other factors such as water level - hopefully set to rise. Working on a solution.

MC mentioned obstructions at low water level where skiffs launch. RM is unable to remove them and is using exclusion zones to combat.

Regarding single hander launch/recovery, Rafa noted more assistance between sailors, but asked for more proactiveness from staff after a handful of instances where help was obviously needed.

Handicaps

Andrew asked LM if Wednesday Evening Series results uploaded into PY database. LM said it would be actioned soon.

Sunday board racing

Junior windsurfers racing going well. A small group of Technos have started racing. It is worth mentioning to dinghy racers the specifics around windsurf racing alongside dinghies. SB to send reminder message to dinghy fleets to show understanding.

Winter Membership

Club is offering winter membership, 4 months for 3 and no joining fee. Plan to email no. of local river clubs and class associations to promote this deal.

Wednesday Evening Series - Twilight mini-series

Proposal for earlier (6.30pm) starts at beginning and end of series.

Rafa elaborated: Twilight mini-series to avoid the short evening races at start and end of series. Idea is not to extend the series overall but just have an earlier start time for the first two and last two races of the series. LM mentioned that Datchet does this but that there is quite a small turnout for the early and late races.

Ross mentioned staff/PBL2 drivers aren't allowed to drive after sunset, any accidents after sunset would void insurance. Also need to consider staffing (staff usually have break between 5 and 6pm in summer after running courses in the afternoon).

Majority of Committee not in favour of the twilight idea as proposed. Concern that many people would not be able to make a 6.30pm start time. Comment that, since there are 22/23 races in a normal Wednesday Evening Series, there is plenty of scope for the first and last races to be treated as discards for those who prefer not to do the short races. Suggestion that If ILCA fleet wants to propose a twilight series before and after the normal Wednesday Evening dates, perhaps they can come up with a formal plan for that. Rafa to advise Tony Woods and to be discussed further with TW.

Separation of Ilca fleet from handicap fleet on Wednesday Evenings:

Per Rafa, overwhelming majority of ILCAs prefer to keep it as a combined handicap race. General view of committee agreed with this. Wednesday Evenings are handicap racing.

JH mentioned that Wednesday Evening Series results are the primary source of our reporting to the RYA PY scheme and excluding ILCAs from the handicapped fleet results would mean we would have very little to report.

Agreed no problem if ILCA fleet happy to do the work to split out the ILCA results for purposes of awarding the ILCA trophy at the end of the series.

Courses

Majority of ILCA fleet do not like P Course. Agreed that P course is not always very well laid – in principle it should be no different from the N course in terms of angles and length of legs but it is a difficult course to lay well (RM mentioned that Buoyzone does not accommodate P courses). General view is that it is still good to have a range of courses on Wednesday Evenings to accommodate different boat classes. Agreed that we will try to improve the P course laying next year and see how that goes.

Suggestion that there should be no requirement to go through the start line on upwind legs discussed but discarded due principally to need for lap counting.

Starting Sequence

AC mentioned having a 3-minute start on all Sunday series instead of 5-4-1.

Committee voted on making all club race starts 3-2-1 from Spring Series onwards

Inversion and Entrapment

MC asked whether staff are fully briefed on entrapment recovery.

Ross confirmed our inversion guidance is “Right the boat as best you can”, and mentioned other recovery techniques we use. Safety boat course emphasises need to right the boat to capsize position ASAP. BUT we can’t put safety crews at risk by, e.g. requiring them to go under a boat. Safety boat crews have knives and can cut rigging or sails if necessary/possible.

Separate ILCA 7 from ILCA 6 results:

Question within the ILCA fleet about results for ILCA 6s versus ILCA 7s. Goal is to encourage ILCA 6 sailors. ILCA fleet to be requested to make formal proposal as to how they want results to be captured.

Fleet Report:

400s and 200s: Lack of 400s and 200s sailing regularly at present. AC plan to offer training day for 400s.

Skiffs: Per MC, we have lost another 800 but may get an extra 700 for the winter. Talk of RS training day for 700s and skiffs. (NB RS association provides grants for training days.)

Saturday club: Booming

Junior pathways: QM is now recognised as a Pathway Club. This gives us access to an RYA mentor; race coach course discounts, branding. The formal launch is coming up.

Club Racing:

Including bank holiday in May and August as part of race series this year. May worked, August didn’t. (JH mentioned no publicity for Bank Hol August race this year.)

Agreed August is always difficult.

Thoughts of creating a bank holiday race series of sprint races

Run over three bank holidays

5 short races a day, 2 laps, L course, two separate starts - ILCA and Gen Handicap

8 out of fifteen to count so there is incentive to come on at least two of the dates

Need to draft new NoR and SIs for this

Need to publicise before each bank holiday.

TBC before start of 2026.

Would still run Honeypot Pursuit on the remaining Bank Holiday (6th April 2026).

Need to confirm dates for Club Racing for 2026

Open Meetings:

Junior Champs this year, numbers were low. Coincided with a Topper qualifier weekend without realising. Need to choose a better date next year, maybe October.

Cadets – 60 boats. Generally went well; although per SB Chris Simon commented that we should really provide the PRO for events like this rather than leave in the hands of external (class association provided) RO.

Not likely to have 700s or 800s next year. Maybe 200s or 400s. LM to reach out to them.

International Canoe event approved. 4th, 5th and 6th April 2026.

RO Training

Last training session was in June. SB and LM to organise one more RO training session before end of year. Dates TBC.

Bernardo Gollo promoted to RO.

AOB

Rowing: Still under discussion

Winter talks - Suggestions

Stick Daring

Nick Craig

RS21 coach

Rules?

Next Meeting

Liam to create poll for February meeting, late February/early March, although note that any outstanding Wednesday Evening and Bank Holiday format questions need to be resolved before then.

End 22:10