Sailing Committee Meeting 15/10/26 - Start Time: 20:03

Present: Liz Pescod, Ross Malloy, Tony Woods, Liam Murphy, Andrew Cole, Julie Harrison & Steve Bell

Apologies: Matt Conner, Bernard Price, Andy Draper

Opening Comments

- LP acknowledges this will be Ross's last sailing committee and the committee thanks Ross for all he has done, wishing him the best for his new role in December.

Racing

- TW suggests we should create a separate ILCA 6 Start for Sunday Racing. He believes there could be up to 15 sailors who would commit to racing ILCA 6s regularly with particular benefits for youth and female development.
- This means 3 separate starts on a Sunday morning. However, the committee agree that a separate 6 start should be more manageable from a timing point of view now we have 3 minute starts throughout the year. They also acknowledge that separate (individually smaller) starts could reduce general recalls within the ILCA Fleet.
- SB mentions the extra complexity for RO teams. The committee agree that we will use the Frostbite series as a trial for the ILCA 6 separate start. Noted that:
    - Four course boards will be required
    - Separate ILCA 6 flag to be used
    - ILCA 4s to start with 6s (and do a lap less as currently)
    - ROs will not be required to identify whether a finisher is an ILCA 6 or ILCA 7 – just to log the numbers in order as currently. It is up to competitors to enter in the correct category in the series. As long as LM has the sail numbers he can enter the results into the right category.
    - Anyone entering the series as an ILCA 7 who chooses to use a 6 sail on a particular day will continue to be scored as a 7.
- SB to inform the race officers of the new change to the starting procedure before the Frostbite series begins.
- LM to work with SB to draft Frostbite race documentation that encompasses the new starting sequence.
- TW to remind ILCA fleet of the need to have the correct sail number on their sail.
- AC suggests that the Mixed Handicap fleet should start first on Sundays. Discussion around why ILCAs are first start on Sundays

- TW and LP note that ILCAs are slower, so the aim is to shorten wait time between races. Agreed to revisit this question later next year after seeing how the separate ILCA 6 start goes.

Changing flag colours

- It is agreed by the committee that overall the new flag colours are a positive impact to the racing. Agreed that similar changes will be brought into the Wednesday Evening Series for 2027 to avoid confusion.
- Tony asks for short yellow flag to make rounding leeward mark easier.
- RM to Action.

Course Setting

- LP notes race officer feedback about the mechanics of course setting.
- LP mentions that proper procedure should include race officers turning up at an appropriate time, communicating with the course safety team and ensuring they are happy with the course set by the safety team.
- SB says he thinks pre-laying the course is a good thing. It's for the race officers to take responsibility for course layout and request changes if necessary.
- RM says safety helms are happy to take ROs out in ribs to review course.
- SB will advise Race Officers of this and remind them of the need to arrive and go afloat in time to make any changes needed.

Gates vs Leeward mark

- The committee discusses the use of leeward gates within Sunday Racing.
- The point was originally discussed earlier in the year via email chain.
- After discussion the committee confirms agreement not to include gates due to the impracticalities of laying and adjusting.

General Recall procedure

- LP mentions request for safety teams to drive across the front of a recalled fleet flying First Sub **as soon as** the general recall is signalled. RM to remind safety teams.

Handicaps update

- The committee review and agree the updated QM Handicaps proposed by AC
- JH questions why we don't just use PY values for the club handicap. AC says current methodology is to use 5 year data where the stats indicate strong confidence in the data.
- AC will wait for RYA and Great Lakes to publish February/March update and re-review before the Wednesday evening series.

Bank holiday racing – sprints vs pursuits

- LP notes that the daily turnout for bank holiday sprint racing and bank holiday pursuit racing was roughly the same. Suggests switch up the format for next calendar year.
- The committee agreed the following for bank holiday racing in 2027:
    - March 29th (Easter Monday) Sprint Racing
    - May 3rd (Early May Bank Holiday) include in Spring Series Racing
    - May 31st (Spring Bank Holiday) Honeypot Pursuit Race
    - August 30th (Summer Bank Holiday) Sprint Racing

Calendars

- The committee has reviewed and approved the 2027 Club Racing calendar.
- LM to update the club's google calendar with the 2027 racing calendar.
- RM is happy to carry on the informal twilight sailing on the Wednesday evening of March 31st. The committee agreed that a September 8th twilight would be too late.

December 27th running racing

- Based on last year's attendance, agreed that Sunday racing should happen on Dec 27th with an early close after racing.

Fleets

- RS200 Fleet Update – All continuing as normal, coaching event being organised.
- RS400s Fleet Update – all continuing as normal. Not planning Gold Fleet events for 2027.
- Skiffs Fleet Update – 2 new joiners, seeing more consistent group activities.
- SB notes the Flying Fifteens have 1 new boat that has joined, bringing the total up to 5.
- ILCAs – all continuing as normal, bigger youth presence.
- AC mentions crew shortage within double helms within the club.
- AC suggests set aside some time at the next sailing committee for specific discussion on fleets. The committee agree.

Youth Groups

- RM says Sunday coaching is seeing high numbers.
- Still challenges to get kids racing outside of Sunday afternoons.
- AC suggests getting youth sailors to crew for members. RM says current cohort is still quite young, give it time for them to grow for some boats e.g. RS400s.

Events Calendar

- LP addresses feedback from ILCA Thames Valley racing on July 28th, in particular surrounding managing high volumes of visiting ILCA Sailors at the club and implications of fitting into the club racing format.
- The point is recalled that the Thames Valley used to be a standalone event but got integrated into club race due to unsustainable turnout numbers and would struggle as a standalone event.
- RM suggests including a race briefing to help communicate with sailors about operating at the club.
- TW to gather feedback from the ILCA Fleet regarding having the Thames Valley as a standalone event again.
- LM to produce entry pricing for a Thames Valley open event.

ROs and AROs

- SB says race officer training has been going well. However, development of Assistant Race Officers to Race Officers has been not so progressive.
- SB has run 4 training sessions this year with average of 2 participants.
- LM mentions that some AROs still find the idea of Race officering intimidating.
- LP raises question of whether we need 3 race officers on committee boat for Sunday racing.
- SB and LM Say the 2nd ARO is useful for producing 2nd set of results to cross reference and manage bigger fleets.
- TW Suggests use of video cameras to help with tracking finishes – if we had reliable video equipment it would be easier to manage with two ROs.
- The committee agrees to reduce rookie racing and keelboat cup race officer duties to 1 for the time being but to maintain three ROs on Sunday, ideally with focus on placing inexperienced race officers with more experienced race officers to learn.
- LM and RM to review powerboat refreshers for ROs – maybe winter Sunday afternoons.
- SB to organise a Race Officer Update meeting.
- LM suggests the creation of a Microsoft form to better track race officer risk assessments each year.
- The committee approve and its implementation will take place in the new year.

AOB

- SB will continue as PRO whilst continuing to look for someone to take over.
- Proposal for Adam Wickenden to be part of sailing committee agreed.
- AC suggests once a year face to face meeting.

- RM Says could be an issue during May and June & September, but should work.
- Suggestion for meeting on a Sunday afternoon after sailing.
- LP and LM to find a date for next committee meeting, in-person, in late February/early March timeframe.