



February 2009 Newsletter

Things are moving apace in preparation for the 2009 season.

The 2009 programme is almost complete, but I can reveal the following early season events:

- Saturday 1st March - Compound and Clubhouse Work Party – Let's get the place ready for the new season!
- Saturday 8th March - Compound and Clubhouse Work Party – Let's get the place ready for the new season!
- Saturday 15th March - Compound and Clubhouse Work Party – Let's get the place ready for the new season!
- Saturday 22nd March - Compound and Clubhouse Work Party – Let's get the place ready for the new season!
- Thursday 26th March 1900 Hrs – Introduction to race management at Prestwick – For all members.
- Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th March – Safety Boat Training
- Saturday 4th April – Compound Opens & Assistant Coach training
- Sunday 5th April – Easter Egg Race
- Thursday 16th April - The New Racing Rules – Session for everyone of all levels of experience.

The session on the rules is designed for all members, particularly those new to racing. However, it will be beneficial for all members to attend as the recent changes to the rules will be introduced, and the specific changes to the rules as implemented at Prestwick.

It is also worthwhile all sailors, no matter how experienced, remembering that the rules have developed over the last few years to be much more about keeping boats apart – an VERY much less about using aggressive tactics around the race course.

The aggressive, competitive nature of the rules in the past has often been very intimidating for all but the keenest racers. This has been recognized over the years, and the rules are now very much about keeping boats apart, and aggressive maneuvers, so frightening to so many, are no longer allowed!

I would like this philosophy and level of sportsmanship to be reflected by all the members of the club. This is particularly important as we have dinghies at both ends of the speed range. It can be very frightening for a Topper or Optimist sailor to be borne down on by a Musto Skiff doing 20 knots. The RYA recommend that because the fastest dinghies are so much faster than the slow dinghies nowadays, that the fast dinghies must consider that all other dinghies on the race course are stopped, and they should consider them as stationary obstructions.

All the fast dinghies at Prestwick should keep clear of the slow dinghies - sail around them – it's much quicker than forcing a Topper to tack right in front of you!

The session on the 16th of April will concentrate on keeping boats apart, and what to do as boats get closer together. This will be well worthwhile attending for all members.

Rules Disputes – Arbitration – This will be adopted by PSC in 2009.

If an incident on the water in fleet racing is not resolved by a boat taking a penalty (one turn for touching a mark, two turns for breaking a rule of Part 2 of the Racing Rules of Sailing, retiring in other cases), then the normal outcomes are:

- a protest hearing which may result in a disqualification: this appears to be becoming less common
- a boat retires after finishing: this can happen
- nothing happens, because there is no protest, and no retirement: this is becoming too frequent

The RYA understands a reluctance to take matters to protest hearings, but no one in the sport should condone disregard of the rules. The RYA therefore has recommended that clubs should consider adopting:

- (a) an Exoneration Penalty which is less severe than disqualification, and is available after racing for many infringements; and
- (b) An Advisory Hearing and RYA Arbitration, two new quicker ways of resolving disputes.

Full details will be included in the 2009 Sailing Instructions

Neil Beveridge

Sailing Captain.