



# OFF SOUNDINGS CLUB

STEVEN M. PURDY, Race Secretary  
904 Stonington Road  
Pawcatuck, Connecticut 06379

(860) 599-1157  
steve\_purdy@compuserve.com

April 8, 2004

To: Off Soundings Club Board of Governors

Subject: Crew Size

The Off Soundings Club has traditionally not considered crew size as an issue in its races, although some organizations are finding that a necessity as crew weight differentials in varying conditions become a significant factor in boat performance for some types. Egregious use of crew weight to influence performance is completely contrary to the basics of performance handicapping, i.e., PHRF. PHRF numbers are based on a well-sailed normal boat, well equipped for racing, with a competent normal size crew and competent skipper. Some organizations and classes do specify total crew weight limits recognizing the influence that crew as ballast can have on some designs. Our J class, for instance, leaves their class requirement (1650 lbs.) in effect for OSC racing, but does not require a formal weigh-in.

At the beginning of the season I had an inquiry from Jesse Waters, skipper of FIREWATER, a custom Cook 37, as to whether there were crew weight limitations for Off Soundings as is the case in western Long Island Sound. I discussed this with Norm Rabe and replied that at the time there were not crew limitations of any kind for Off Soundings events.

Since then, I have received a number of entries for high performance boats with unusually large crews and/or unusually large numbers of 'non-racing' guests. It appears that based on the variations between heavy weather and moderate conditions that we experienced in both series last year the skippers may be 'banking' extra crewmembers at the venue to be aboard in the event of heavy weather. This will result in the use of truly 'live' ballast to compensate for weather conditions, which is contrary to the purpose and intent of PHRF handicaps and may result in unfair racing. There is nothing now in our instructions that says that a vessel must sail with ten because they register ten, they could use 1 or 50. In the past this has been fine, no one has significantly abused it as far as we know. However, that may be changing.

Following are vessels registering to date with a total of ten or more individuals:

Yacht Name	Master	Type	LOA	Entered Crew	Non-racing Guests
FIREWATER	Jesse Waters	Cook Custom 37	37	10	3
HOOLIGAN	Peter Brinckerhoff	Evelyn 42	42	10	0
SONGLINES	Zeke Wolfskehl	Express 37	37	10	0
RICOCHET	Tom Lee	J/120	40	10	0
VOLUNTEER	Jonathon Lathrop	Lathrop 39	39	10	1
RIPPLE	Hugh O'Brien	1D35	35	9	2
SAGACIOUS	Bob Geary	Express 34	34	8	2
DRAGONFLY	Skip Young	J/105	34.5	6	9
RELENTLESS	Kevin Horrigan	J/105	34.5	7	7

My feeling is that this could become a significant issue and I would like to nip it in the bud in a relatively simple way. I have discussed this with Norm and he understands the issue, but feels that the Board should participate in the decision.

I propose that we add a sailing instruction that requires that an entrant sail with within plus or minus one of the number of crew that he has declared as 'persons aboard during races' on the Entry Blank. No weighing, no specification as to who those persons might be or what size they are, simply that the skipper sail with more or less the number of persons that he planned to race with, i.e., the right number for his boat in normal conditions. I would then include a column on the Entry List for registered number of crew. Enforcement would be in the normal way, by protest by other entrants or the RC and potential disqualification.

Example: 1.6 Crew Size—Entrants must sail each race with within plus or minus one of the number of persons stated as the 'persons aboard during races' on the series Entry Blank.

There is no requirement that this should have been pre-announced in the Notice of Race. It could be effective immediately. I would inform all vessels already registered by e-mail, or phone, if necessary, and offer them the opportunity to change their declared number of crew and guests once by the entry deadline, May 20, with a refund of fees if applicable.

I feel that this issue has some urgency, and can be implemented fairly and quickly; however, I will follow the consensus of the Board as to when, and if, it should be implemented. If this seems too precipitous I recommend implementing it for the Fall Series starting with a note in the Notice of Race.

If we are to proceed my objective is to get the notifications out on Tuesday.

If you have comments your rapid response by telephone or e-mail would be appreciated.

Best regards,

