



OFF SOUNDINGS CLUB

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Dear Skipper:

The weather goddess did well by us for the Spring Series, perhaps trying to make up for the vagaries of last season. A little precipitation on Friday, but generally fair skies, and a capful of breeze both days made for fast races and early finishes. We can hope for similar in the fall, but it will be what it will be and we will sail in it within reason.

I usually take the opportunity of this mailing to discuss procedural matters, so here goes:

Spring Results: OSC Scorer, Pam Melch, got caught between a rock and a hard place on time with a very busy June, family and work, plans for a wedding, the OSC Spring Series, RC work for the Mudheads, the wedding, a post wedding trip, and was not able to complete her audit of the spring results for this mailing. When she returns and completes the audit we will post the final results on the website and distribute them to competitors by mail and e-mail. The printed version will be mailed with the Fall Final Notice. My error in not subtracting the Starting Differentials when preparing the preliminary results for posting on the website just contributed confusion. Thanks to all of you who commented and thanks for your patience.

Entries: Apparently there was some confusion with the change in Measurers over where the entries are sent. They come to me, the Race Secretary. Several went to Paul Jennings, the Measurer, he is supposed to receive measurement and handicapping data only. This adds a day or two to the entry process as Paul has to forward them to me.

An issue that crops up periodically is that when time gets short people send entries to me by overnight services that require a signature. Please don't do that. Invariably I am not at home when they attempt to deliver and I get a notice telling me that I have to pick up the item at their office. This results not in speed, but in at least a day's delay and a lot of inconvenience. Twice this spring I had to leave work and make a 50 mile round trip to pick one of these up. I am no longer going to do that. If you send me something requiring signature and I'm not at home to sign for it you will eventually receive a notice from the carrier that it was undeliverable. I will not have received your entry by the deadline. If you are short on time call me and we'll work something out. You don't need any proof that I have or have not gotten your entry other than my word and an entry acknowledgement.

Normally, I get entry acknowledgements out by e-mail or mail within 48 hours of receipt. If you send an entry and don't hear from me within a week or so, please check in. Things do get lost in the mail. The exception will be in the early part of the registration period for this fall. I'll be on vacation for a few days after the Notice of Race goes out. If you're inclined to get your entry in early, please do so, but you may not hear from me for up to 10 days. All should be back to normal within a week of my return.

Handicaps and Measurement: People sometimes ask why the lead times for Off Soundings entries are so long. One reason is that we distribute the Sailing Instructions and Entry List by mail prior to the race, rather than on the water, so everything has to be complete two weeks in advance. I don't see that changing, it's a safety issue. Given the conditions that we often sail in transferring documents to 150 boats on the water would be an unsafe act.

Also, to provide fair racing we have to reconcile handicaps from at least four PHRF areas., ECSA, western LIS,

eastern LIS and Narragansett Bay and that takes time. The Measurer does that by bringing all boats to an equivalent of the handicap that they would have if they were handicapped by PHRF-ECSA. If you have an ECSA handicap it is reviewed on-line, otherwise your OSC Data Measurement Certificate and any other comments that make on your Entry Form are reviewed and the information is used to synthesize a PHRF-ECSA equivalent handicap for your boat to get everyone on even ground. Because of this OSC Data Measurement Certificates dated within three years of the Race Date will be required for non-ECSA boats for the foreseeable future.

Note that the responsibility for recognizing and dealing with any errors in the handicap or OSC Data Certificate and for keeping them correct and valid is yours. In the interest of fairness and consistency any changes, correction, or appeals of your handicap must be completed and transmitted to the Measurer by the Entry Deadline. The OSC Sailing Instructions change Rule 78 of the *RRS* to that effect.

Classification: Most every season there will a skipper or two unhappy about the classification of his boat, especially if the boat borders on being high performance making it possibly eligible for either a high performance or 'conventional' class, or if the handicap puts it on the border between two possible classes, i.e., it could be at the bottom of one class or the top of another. OSC has two concerns to be balanced, fair and fun racing and balanced class sizes. We do our best given those considerations. If you have concerns about your classification we are always open to hearing about it and why you feel that you're in the wrong class. Generally however, class changes will not be made after the completion of the entry list and will not be made within a racing season. The reason for the latter is that the series results are used to determine season perpetual trophy results and classification needs to be consistent within the year to make that work.

The impression that the Measurer and Race Secretary decide in isolation what the classifications will be is incorrect. There is a classification meeting for each series with 5 to 10 Race Administration people in attendance and often the club flag officers as well. Experienced racing sailors, club handicappers, race officers, and naval engineers and architects are well represented in this group. Border line cases are seriously considered as the classes are finalized. Our objective is provide fair and interesting racing.

Equipment Standards: Since the publication of the new OSC Equipment Standards this spring the Officers and Governors of the Off Soundings Club have been concerned that they only recommend, rather than require, the ability to reduce sail, specifically a mainsail that can be reefed by at least 40% or a storm trysail and a small or furling jib. This was done at my recommendation as there was at the time little interest in establishing an enforcement capability for the standards, so they were essentially advisory. The club has always operated on the principle that good seamen will operate in the best interest of themselves, their crews, fellow competitors and the rescue services that might be called on to aid them in an emergency. There is now concern that that may not be the case, and about ultimate safety in the conditions in which we often sail.

Therefore, a discussion about requiring sail reduction capability and an inspection program to enforce it is on the Board agenda for this fall. This is advance warning that some of you may need a trip to the sailmaker this winter to continue competing in Off Soundings Series. We will inform you directly as soon as action is taken one way or the other. Much of this revolves around Class Rules that do not require, or possibly prohibit sails that meet, or specify sails or inventory restrictions that do not meet, the OSC criteria. The *RRS* Definitions specify that class rules are rules. Therefore, class rules including sail and equipment specifications can be changed for an event by the Organizing Authority. Also, the fact that class rules do not specify something does not mean that an Organizing Authority cannot specify it for class boats sailing in its events.

If you have comments one way or the other please address them to me and I will ensure that they are included for consideration in the discussions and attributed to you..

Good Sailing,

