



OFF SOUNDINGS CLUB

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January 31, 1999

TO: Rodney S. Johnstone
FROM: Richard H. Roberts
SUBJECT: Off Soundings Club Racing

I am writing in response to your letter of October 25, 1998 commenting on the Off Soundings Club's trend in recent years away from our traditional pre-selected race courses using government marks. We appreciate such comments, especially when articulated as well as yours were. We have received some comments from others that express similar views.

The Board of Governors takes such comments seriously and attempts to move in the direction to satisfy the largest number of participants, which should encourage people to come out. It must be recognized that input from those racers that look for "the More Perfect Race Course" also are weighed in any deliberation on changes.

For the 1999 season, the Race Management Team of myself, Bob Geary, and Kim Granbery will institute a compromise of once again providing for the use of pre-selected courses available for selection by the Race Committee while also providing for the use of courses developed on the day of the race using a course board. The thrust will be to use the pre-selected courses whenever the fleet can get a race out of it. The tailor-made courses would be used for unusual conditions. The selected course will be signalled by a numeral pennant, and government marks will be used to the maximum extent possible. We think that this approach will result in getting closer to "yesteryear" and still providing the necessary flexibility to get a race in for most everyone.

Your comments relative to the difficulties of using drop marks in high seas and limited visibility are well taken with first hand experience by the Race Committee Chairman in the Spring Race Series of 1997 and 1998. There presently is every motivation to avoid this given similar conditions. But, we must remember that Race Committee Chairman Kim Granbery was able to devise a relatively short course keeping in the lee of Block Island last June; it required the use of a drop mark to make it work but it enabled us to get a race in on that Saturday. Having flexibility is essential.

Although your letter did not specifically criticize the Sailing Instructions, you did note simplicity. The Race Management Team has made an extensive review and has found some areas for improvement. Areas being simplified include eliminating the special mark configurations (leeward gates, windward offset marks) and the abandoning of our practice of having a recalled class do its re-start last. The Racing Rules require that a recalled class is to re-start next and changing that Rule to have that class re-start last resulted in the complicated Sailing Instruction we've been carrying.

I will be interested in your comments after you've had a chance to sail under these changes in 1999.

Sincerely,

Richard H. Roberts
Race Secretary

cc: Commodore Anderson

bcc Geary
Granbery
O'Connell