

OOD News - December 2021

Dave Lee is taking over the role of Sailing Secretary for 2022. Robin Charles and Michael Bagge are continuing as Vice Commodore and Results Manager, respectively. Both Dave and Robin would welcome comments and suggestions on how the Sailing Committee might improve matters relating to all our boating activities - you can leave a message for them using the [CONTACTS](#) page on the website.

The Sailing Committee is midway through its annual review of the race formats used for the Sunday and Wednesday series. In the past 18 months there has been a significant change in the demographics of the boats entering the series and the committee is considering whether we need to adjust the fleet structure to reflect these changes. Any changes will not be introduced until the start of the Spring 2022 series.

Here is a quick update on "OOD-related" things that have happened since we returned to racing in April.

Retiring Sailing Secretary - Mark Elkington

Website

You may have noticed that I have restructured the "racing" menu on the website to provide a sub-menu for OODs. This is a good place to start when you have an upcoming OOD duty and want to refresh your memory on aspects of race management at SYC.

Race Box Upgrade [\[race box pic\]](#)

Ian Purvis has done a marvellous job of reconfiguring the race box desk. The electronics for the lights signalling have been rehoused in a smaller box and set into the desk centrally to give more visibility of the start line. The camera screen is located on the left and the raceManager screen remains on the right.

The VHF radio was becoming particularly difficult to hear. It has now been replaced and relocated centrally so that it is easier to access wherever you are sitting at the desk. Ian also intends to install a headphone option so that the radio can be used without disturbing the other OOD activities during a race. I still need to spend some time tidying up and clearing junk that seems to collect in the race box - but I hope to have that done before Christmas.

Race Courses - New Buoys and Suggested Courses

[\[new buoy chart\]](#) [\[course board article\]](#) [\[course guide\]](#)

You may have seen the recent announcement on our website that two new racing buoys - 33R and PB have been introduced. The racing buoy chart has been updated accordingly and some other cosmetic changes were made to improve its clarity.

The attempt to make it easier for newer members to understand which course they should be sailing has been patchy at best. Please try and use the course label boards (small white boards with fleet labels), and show the blue "course set" board when you have finished setting the course.

Probably the most important factor in a good day's racing is the course set by the OOD. This generally means setting courses which are not processional - i.e not having one-sided beats or long close reaches. In particular try to set courses for the fast and slow handicap that have a true beat, a run, and a reach, and for the asymmetric and multihulls try to set a windward/leeward course. You are of course free to use your own judgement on setting the courses - but if you need help there is an extensive course guide in the race box which describes courses for each wind direction, and alternative courses for low-tide conditions. The guide also contains hints on instructions to give the Safety Boat crews when laying the marks, and specifically gives you a picture of what the course board should look like. [Note: this guide will be updated each year in March]

Finally after setting the course remember to take a look at the boats sailing as they launch. You should use this information to judge if your original plans for the beat(s) and run(s) are still correct. If not, don't be afraid to spend a few minutes resetting buoys, or if necessary raising Flag C and setting a new course.

Abandoning Races [[abandoning races article](#)]

We tend to think about abandoning races when there is no wind or too much wind, but there are other reasons that you may wish to abandon a race. I recently produced a short article describing three typical scenarios for abandoning a race; how you do it; and how you might be able to take advantage of our rather unique sailing instruction on abandonment to produce a result from an abandoned race.

Camera System [[camera pic](#)] [[camera guide for OODs](#)]

It has taken a little time to get the camera system fully installed and configured. Some of this delay has been due to the need to upgrade our internet connection to cope with the camera data load, but this also gave us time to experiment with the camera configuration to get the best video output for our needs. Again, Ian Purvis and Aidan Whiteley have put in a tremendous amount of work to get the system installed and working effectively. The system now provides high resolution video of the entire race without requiring the OODs to take any action and provides an accurate backup record of finishing times for all competitors. Michael Bagge (Results Manager) and I can access the video playback remotely and it has been a "game-changer" in how we can respond to members disputing finishing times/positions. OODs can also use the camera playback system to check starting issues and finishing times - I have written a brief guide on how to do this.

Increased Turnouts [[EasyTimer article](#)]

It was great to see the huge turnouts when we returned to racing after the last lockdown. We broke the 60 boat mark on several occasions in early summer. Turnouts have fallen back a bit since then - but they are still running at nearly 20% higher than before the pandemic. The downside for OODs of course is that we have more boats to record, and this means that you have to be a bit slicker with screen scrolling on raceManager. To respond to this I developed a more compressed representation of the timing page which does not require scrolling. You can switch between the normal Timer page and this **EasyTimer** page at any time. Feedback from OODs that have used EasyTimer has been positive - so give it a try next time you have an OOD duty.

New RaceManager [[sneak peek - new raceManager](#)]

Despite a gestation period *significantly* longer than an elephant it is finally 'probable' that I will be able to release the completely rewritten raceManager software sometime in 2022. I started this project in

early 2015, with the aim of making the system easier to maintain and introducing an underlying data structure that provides more flexibility for the future (*in other words fix all the embarrassing bits of code in the original system!*). I also wanted to get it into a state that I could publish on github as a free software resource for anyone who wants it. Little did I think it would take me six years.

The new system retains much of the character of the old system. Where I have introduced changes they are mostly hidden from an OOD, and the changes you will see are an attempt to resolve issues with the current raceManager that most often confuse OODs. I plan to run at least one communal training session for OODs at the club before the new system is introduced and there will be a demo system available for you to use from the website. I also plan to run Thursday evening “refresher” sessions most weeks over internet video (Zoom). These will last about 30 minutes and are targeted at “just-in-time” training for the OODs the following weekend - but anyone will be welcome to join in.