

## **HRSC Club Handicap System Guidelines**

### **1. General Principles:**

1.1 HRSC Club Handicap is an empirical 'single number' yacht handicapping system that aims to provide fun and competitive racing for any type of monohull keeled sailing yacht.

1.2 There is no measurement required or numerical formula for establishing an appropriate Club Handicap number for a particular yacht, and no fee is charged. The Handicap Committee will use known information about a yacht, type or class in comparison with other yachts in the fleet plus, if needed, past results in local regattas and major events, e.g. Hamble Winter Series, Cowes Week, Round the Island Race.

1.3 A yacht can expect to see a plus or minus 'drift' in its Club Handicap number in relation to other yachts when compared with other handicap systems to reflect its competitiveness in relation to those other yachts in the HRSC club fleet. This is seldom more than +/- 10 points of rating, and one point of rating is equivalent to 3.6 seconds per hour of sailing.

1.4 After a race series is completed handicaps may be adjusted to reflect more accurately actual performance over the series to ensure fair racing, encourage continued participation and improvement, but also not over-penalise good sailing, which is encouraged.

1.5 As an example, yachts racing with dirty bottoms will not get a handicap adjustment to compensate for the loss of performance.

1.6 The Club Handicap list is used for the Wednesday Evening yacht points series racing and as the basis for the starting times in the club pursuit races, plus any other event as directed by the HRSC Sailing Committee.

1.7 By convention the HRSC yacht fleet is split into classes, currently three, based on relative speed, i.e. split by handicaps, not overall length or other criteria.

1.8 As guidance for the owner of a newly presented yacht the following typical information will assist the Handicap Committee:

Is the yacht a known class? Specify if a variant, e.g. Folkboat, Nordic, International, etc.

Specify any significant modifications, e.g. a taller rig or a different keel

Does the boat have untypical features. eg. an inboard engine or fixed propeller?

Any other notable features affecting performance?

Does the yacht have any rating or handicap, either current or from previous years?

1.9 The administration of the system requires the Handicap Committee to remain attentive and informed to gauge the satisfaction of the competitors with the racing and results. Competitor feedback to the Handicap Committee can be sent via the Rear Commodore Sailing, as no direct contact is currently available.

## **2. Note about Single Number Handicaps**

In racing fleets comprising a wide range of yacht types, i.e. light and heavy displacement, cruiser, racer, sportsboat etc., a set of single number handicaps is never precisely correct for all boats in a particular race because relative competitiveness, i.e. relative speed round the course, will vary depending on the wind conditions, whereas in a class that contains similar style boats consistently closer corrected times are more likely. Nonetheless in either scenario over a race series consistent performance and good sailing should be rewarded.

While it is generally accepted that separating planing and displacement boats makes for better racing that is not practical with a small fleet as at HRSC, and in recent years the handicap fleets have successfully included sports-boats such as 707, J/80, and 1720s.

## **3. System Operation:**

3.1 In line with the general principles above the Handicap Committee is tasked with setting a fair handicap for each yacht based on the typical performance of that type, by making use of any available information, eg. previous ratings and past results relative to other known boats.

3.2 While one-design boats are generally easier to rate a yacht that is 'out-of-class' may have significant differences to the norm that will affect performance and thus also its club handicap number.

3.3 A newly arrived yacht joining the fleet will be given a provisional club handicap and its performance monitored, and after its first series of races the handicap is reviewed.

3.4 While it is expected that boats will be properly equipped with adequate sails, a plus or minus adjustment can be made to reflect a highly specified boat compared to one that declares she will only set a mainsail and small jib, for example.

3.5 Club Handicaps will be reviewed at the end of each series. A poorly performing yacht may be given a downward adjustment to encourage further participation, while a yacht or yachts winning too easily and too often in most conditions can expect upward adjustments. An overall win in a tightly contested series may only warrant a small adjustment, if any. Competitors should note it could be decided that no adjustments are necessary.

3.6 Although split into racing classes, handicaps across the entire fleet should be reasonably accurately related to facilitate all-in racing, including start times for pursuit races.

3.7 The Club Handicap list (including club members' yachts not currently racing) is to be published on the HRSC website with the date of the last review.