Dear Skippers & Members,

Over the winter period, there has been plenty of activity behind the scenes to prepare for the 2018 sailing season.  Just to keep you in the picture, I hope you will find the following useful background, and an incentive to join in!

Ratings and Handicaps

Currently, Class 1 is a keen select few who want to race competitively, and a great opportunity to sail against some of the best sailors in Plymouth!  If you are keen to race your yacht in Class 1 with a rating, then I would encourage you to apply for (or renew!) an IRC Certificate through RORC.

Tony Head (the PPSA Handicap Manager) has stated that 2018 Port Handicaps (PH) will be published around Easter.  Given the early races are coastal and vary in length and format, the Sailing Committee have agreed that PH handicaps will not be adjusted after each race, except for a ‘Corinthian’ type trophy in Class 2 of the Autumn Series (see below).  However, to maintain the level playing field, the Sailing Committee will analyse the end of season results and submit proposed PH adjustments to the PPSA Handicap Manager based primarily on the Autumn Series, but taking into account other races where relevant.

Race Categories

There has been a lively debate across the PPSA Clubs (in consultation with the RYA) over the Equipment Categories (issued by the World Sailing Organisation, previously ISAF) that should apply to Inshore and Offshore races staged around the south coast.  This has not been easy as many of the International definitions are open to interpretation and views across the Clubs have yet to converge.  While the debate continues, the YYC will run the races under the same Equipment Categories used last year until there is greater clarity i.e. the Autumn Series, Fowey, May Triangle, Eddystone Race, and 3 Creeks Race will be Category 4 Races; and the Trebeurden and Guernsey Races will be Category 3 (with Liferaft).  I do not anticipate any radical changes to these Categories, but some races may require some additional enhancements when specific guidance is received.  This is the same for all the Plymouth Clubs, and skippers should read the Sailing Instructions carefully.  Note, that while the Organizing Authority reserves the right to inspect any yacht racing, the YYC currently do not have the expertise and capacity to conduct inspections to ensure Category compliance, so the onus is directly and only on the yacht owner/skipper to judge if the craft and crew are fit to race and compliant with the regulations.

The Programme

The latest programme is on the website and will be updated when changes are made.  I will also notify skippers of any key changes and information by e-mail as in previous years.

Autumn Series

While the Autumn Series looks set to be as popular as ever, the timing and programme has prompted some comment.  In order to find the best compromise, the intention is to run the Series Races from 9 Sep to 14 Oct, with the Series lunch on 14 Oct.  The final race of the season will be the Pursuit Race on 21 Oct, suitably celebrated afterwards at the Club.

Your Sailing Committee are keen to encourage those in ‘cruisers’ to race in Class 2, and so we intend to award a ‘Corinthian’ like trophy (similar to the Cockerel Trophy in the dinghies) in the Autumn Series for Class 2.  Last season, we shadowed the Class 2 results (using the Class 2 PH number that endures for the whole Autumn Series) with the PH handicap adjusted after each race.  While last year the prize was not awarded to the adjusted PH, this year there will be some silverware and mugs to compete for, aimed primarily at those who turn out time after time with little to show for their efforts but good sailing yarns!  In order to process the results, we will continue to use the HAL software tool.

Other Yacht Race Preps

The new Block Entry Form has been finalized and I will e-mail it to prospective yacht skippers as well as placing it on the website.  Fees have not been increased and the Block Fee of £45 remains excellent value for the majority of the races (except Trebeurden and the RNLI Passage Race) so please don’t delay paying your fees.

The Sailing Committee are now busy making arrangements for the season ahead and I hope to publish the ‘Notice for Races’ and ‘Sailing Instructions’ in a timely manner.

A Plea for Help!

Currently, we rely heavily on very few key figures to run and support the races ashore and by boat.  We are not keen to self start/finish races unless there is no alternative, so it is essential that we continue to grow a pool of Race Officials and helpers for the future if we are to run our own and open events safely. If you, or you know of someone who fancies acting as a Race Officer/Starter/Finisher/willing helper, please let me know!

I hope your preps for the season are going well, and I look forward to seeing you in better weather on the water.

Best Regards

Ian Kennedy

Yacht Secretary

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Please note:  I have not received any communications from previous e-mails that you do not wish to receive updates, and I have assumed a ‘soft opt-in’ to my updates.  However, if at any time you do not wish to receive these e-mails, I will remove you from the YYC Yachts mailing list.  Additionally, if you believe someone would benefit from these e-mails, then please ask them to contact me and I will happily add them to the list.