

Challenges within clubs

Club racing, is it appropriate to all the membership and how do we encourage more sailors to get involved?

Not necessarily for everyone in the club, possibly in some clubs because of its current format? Some people just want to go sailing/cruising, for others it might be more appropriate if the format of the racing was changed.

To encourage more people into racing, look at how the training within the club introduces and feeds into the racing. Often in clubs it doesn't at all.

To get more sailors involved, suggestions include looking at the style of races particularly when trying to bridge the gap between training and racing:

Suggestions include:

Racing by stealth,

Novice racing (are deemed a novice if it's first year of club racing)

Personal handicap series on different night of week

Shorter race series,

Identifying new racers within club racing (ribbon on boom) so people know not to shout/be aggressive about rules

Shorter race length (one club present ran 4, fifteen minute pursuit races on a week evening during summer – very informal, quick starts, and no results at the end other than looking where you had finished yourself.)

Buddy system – pair good racers with new/novice racers, encourages help/advice on the water, and bar chat after which will help integrate new racers into the club, and hopefully allow them to learn quicker/make friends which should encourage them to participate more regularly

Quality race management – fair racing with simple courses is more fun.

Quick and non-intimidatory resolution process for issues on the water (advisory/arbitration)

Better understanding of club racing procedures – guides within the club/on website etc.

What does a successful club look like and what is the key to their success?

Size isn't important

The activity the club offers, and appreciation of the club members (i.e. membership think the club is delivering the activities well) defines the success of a club.

Low membership turnover

New members not disappearing after the first year of membership – (club providing activity for new members to introduce them to the club, club activity and club membership)

Good communication within the club and to its members of what is happening within the club, activity that they can get involved in, and opportunities available to members.

How well do you communicate to your membership, Programs, opportunities and progression paths within the club. How can we make this more affective?

E-mail: A lot of communication is now by e-mail – one of the challenges of e-mail is it is often mass mailing and impersonal, therefore not always read by everybody. Some clubs were trying to personalise e-mails to specific groups within the club (fleets/Juniors/racing etc), and manage groups for targeted e-mails

Networking sites: Some were using networking sites such as facebook – Child protection concern with allowing young people to be “friends” on these sites. What you can do is set up a page, which you update, and people can become a fan of this page, and get updates that are posted, without being a “friend” of the co-ordinator.

Monthly Calendars: Having monthly calendars available which were up to date (maybe on website)

Club Website: If regularly updated will be visited and viewed by membership more often – needs a balance between 1 person controlling content and a “free for all”

Phone: One club made a commitment to ringing all sailors who had taken part in a level 1 and 2 course at the club to see if they needed any more information about joining the club or getting involved in club activity.

Member pathway: There was a discussion of producing a flow chart with a club to show what the club can offer to it’s members and how members can progress and how they can get involved in the different activity that the club offers

Look at giving new members roles within the club, so that they can meet and integrate with long standing members, have a volunteer co-ordinator which can help members to get involved with other areas of the club’s activity.