

NATIONAL HANDICAP FOR CRUISERS (NHC)

Frequently asked questions

Q: We have some boats at our club that are not on the base list, how do we get base numbers for these boats?

A: If a club has boats which are not on the base list the club should email a consolidated list of design names along with Hull lengths to technical@rya.org.uk. The club will then be emailed with base numbers which will be added to subsequent editions of the NHC base list.

Q: At our club we have two boats of the same design type. One is a bilge keel with fixed blade propeller. The other is a fin keel version with folding blade propeller. The base list only has one number for this design type, what allowances should we give the bilge keel fixed blade propeller version?

A: No allowances should be given. There are multiple variations seen between any two boats of a given design type. All of these variations will have an effect on the boats overall performance. The progressive nature of NHC (ie the regular updating of each boat's handicap after every race) will quickly reflect the effect of differences between the boats. Manual allowances are therefore completely unnecessary. In the above example giving the bilge keel version of a design type an allowance in its base number is not only unnecessary but might also be unfair. She might for example be actually sailed with a larger rig and be lighter than the fin keel version.

Q: Will boats be able to deliberately sail badly for the first part of a season so that they get a handicap that allows them to easily win the second part of the season?

A: As NHC is a performance handicap system the handicaps are adjusted after every race, based on the boats last race performance. If a boat decides to deliberately sail badly its handicap will gradually reduce. A boat would need to grossly underperform for a prolonged period of the season in order to guarantee wins later in the season. When such a boat starts to perform to her true potential her handicap will go back up making it hard to "sand bag" her results in a manner that will allow her to win a series/ season of races. Note also that the system is designed such that handicaps increase faster after good performances than they fall after poor performances. Every boat will have to continually sail to her true potential in order to win a series of races.