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The Guildford Handicap System.

Guildford Model Yacht Club has used a race handicap system since the early 1980s and it has worked exceptionally well to bring some equality, ensure that the trophies go to different homes each year and encourage everyone in the club to search for improvement in their sailing.

The system works like this: the race on the water is sailed in accordance with the normal rules, but with no subjective handicap imposed because such handicapping on the water is incompatible with this method. To avoid confusion caused by the word 'series', it is used here in the full size context of the RRS: a specific number of events.

1. The race scores of all club events are recorded using the current scoring system and are added up after applying the discards in the normal way. These scores are converted into percentages of the possible score.
2. These percentages are compared with each skipper's handicap which is also a percentage. Plus or minus handicap points are awarded depending on whether the percentage score is better or worse than the skipper's handicap. The highest number of plus points wins.
3. The results of the best events, that is half the total events in the series plus one, are used to get a result for the series.
4. At the end of each series personal handicaps are revised to take account of the performance during that series, for use in the next series.
5. When a newcomer joins he or she is awarded a handicap on the results for the first event and that handicap is reviewed again after three events.

The intention is simply that each skipper sails against the rest of the fleet in the normal way, but competes against himself to decide the results of the handicap events, the series or the annual club championship. The incentive is therefore to raise your game a little bit above your own standards for a chance to win.

The detailed procedure is easy to operate because it is just an extension of what needs to be recorded at the lakeside anyway. You may need to refer to a racing system, like the **HMS** or **EORS**. We find the latter is more user friendly for club use, and will be used in the procedure set out below. You will also need a calculator.

- a). Record the points in the normal way, 1 for a win, 2 for a second etc.
- b). Discard the worst scores, normally applying after 4, 8 and 16 races are completed and add up the remaining scores to get a result on merit.

c). Convert these scores into a percentage by using the following formula:

maximum = DNS score x counting races, **minimum** = the number of counting races

$$\% \text{score} = (\text{maximum} - \text{score}) / (\text{maximum}-\text{minimum}) \times 100\%$$

What this formula is saying is, that the skipper who wins every race will have a percentage score of 100%, and that the skipper who fails to finish or start in every race will have a score of 0%

Example: The event consists of 8 races, 2 discards, with 12 boats sailing.

Mr. Average scores in the event two x 5th, one x 6th, two x 7th, two x 8th, and a DNS (13). After discards Mr Average's event score on merit is 38.

For the event the **maximum** is $13 \times 6 = 78$, the **minimum** is 6.

$$\% = (78 - 38) / (78-6) \times 100 = 55.5 \text{ rounded to a whole } 56\%$$

Mr. Average's had previously been given a *handicap* of 53%, so he scores **plus 3 handicap points** for this event.

d). Each competitor's merit score is converted to a percentage and an order produced for the handicap results.

e). If there is a tie when these handicap scores are compared, the tie is decided using the tie breaking clause in the racing system using the merit scores. It is decided in favour of the boat with the most first places, and when the tie remains, the most second places and so on. If on a rare occasion the tie should still remain it is decided in favour of the boat with the best score in the last race in which there is no tie etc.

Guildford Model Yacht Club really do recommend this idea. If anyone has any queries on implementing it, contact me, *Roger Stollery on 01483 421 801*