

PHRF Committee Meeting
Yacht Racing Association of Long Island Sound (YRALIS)
November 21, 2024, 8pm
Location: Virtual Meeting - Zoom

In attendance; Rick Sinclair, June Kendrick, Mike Colucci, Jon Zaskorski, John Scagnelli and Alistair Duke (Chair).

Absent with apologies: Paul Kueffner

New Members

Following a drive to identify new members, Jon Zaskorski and John Scagnelli joined the Committee meeting as guests following an expression of interest. The members of the Committee and the guests each introduced themselves and provided some background on their experience and skills. The Committee spent some minutes explaining the role, the time commitment that comes with being a member of the PHRF Committee and answered some questions. The guests stayed for the remainder of the meeting and contributed to the discussion.

Agenda Items

1. Alistair provided the Committee with an update on what the YRA is doing about the situation surrounding the OAs misuse of the YRALIS PHRF Rule during the Intercollegiate Offshore Regatta. The YRA has made contact with the Organizing Authority and requested dialogue to ascertain how the situation came to be and to very clearly impress on those involved that the PHRF Committee is available to deal with the handicapping questions that the organizers tried to sort out for themselves. The YRALIS PHRF Committee requests that any OA contact them if they have questions about a boat's rating, or the existence, validity or availability of a boat's certificate. The YRALIS PHRF Committee expressly requests that OAs not apply their own adjustments or interpretations to the Rule or the published ratings, however well intentioned.
2. Collaboration with PHRF NB on matters of cross-regional interest. Alistair has been in touch with PHRF-NB regarding their frustrations over the lack of support for PHRF exhibited by the national governing body (US Sailing) in recent years.
 1. YRALIS share NB's view that the failure to publish a national book of ratings, as was compiled up until approximately 2017, creates a gap and adds complexity for the various regional PHRF handicapping bodies.
 2. YRALIS does not share NB's view that US Sailing needs to be offering trial certificates for new boats using other rating tools at its disposal.
 3. YRALIS share NB's view that a forum for PHRF Committee cooperation would be beneficial, since the regional boards operate almost entirely independently today.

Aside from specific questions from time to time, each region operates alone. Opportunities for collaboration, consistency and cost containment are not being realized due to the lack of a venue for those conversations to happen. YRALIS to propose that a Northeast-region PHRF board conference call be scheduled for early 2025 as partial mitigation for US Sailing's failure to lead in this area.

3. 2025 PHRF Rule. The Committee considered a number of modifications to the Rule for 2025.

1. Stored Power, particularly electric winch handles. Decision - no change, section I 1 1.3 already adequately covers this area. Electric winch handles should be declared, but slow speed systems are unlikely to attract any adjustment.
2. Symmetric spinnaker inequity given the rapid advancement of asymmetric designs in recent years. Decision - any boat with an exclusively symmetric-only spinnaker inventory will be eligible to apply for a small rating credit. This is done in an attempt to avoid rapid technical innovation obsoleting more classically rigged boats. The Committee feels strongly that no owner should feel that they have to modify their boat to remain competitive under the PHRF Rule, and some symmetric boat owners are of that view. This will go some way to countering that trend.
3. Modification of Shoal Draft models W/L ratings to grant more relief than the typical 6s offset provides. Decision - potential for 2026, too much work to have this ready for 2025.
4. Definition of Non-spinnaker sailing. Is the use of the word spinnaker, which has a specific definition in the rule and is not inclusive of many flying sail variants, misleading or open to exploitation as flying sails that do not meet the definition of a spinnaker continue to proliferate. Decision - No action needed, since the Non spinnaker regulations - particularly J C (i) and J C (ii) - are sufficiently specific.
5. Double Handed adjustment. An adjustment to correct for the performance potential between a fully crewed boat and a double handed boat when sailing the same course, permitting overall results to be more equitable. This was keenly debated with other factors such as (i) DH permitted use of Autopilots, (ii) LIS predominantly light winds often favoring smaller crews, (iii) winning results from some DHers in recent years, and (iv) reluctance to re-open a crew-weight adjustment into the Rule, all being incorporated. Decision - No change.
6. Include a limitation to prevent or discourage review of a boats rating too frequently. ECSA, for example, prevent any rating appeal from being re-filed on a frequency of less than 3years. Decision - No change, YRALIS wishes to remain more open than this.

7. Rename the “Distance” handicap to “All Purpose”. This is purely a label, since the definition of “distance” in the context of a handicap has been revised and developed significantly in recent years to mean anything that isn’t a simple windward-leeward course, irrespective of course length. However, “Distance” has a specific meaning in the context of scoring, since some trophies are specifically awarded for winners of long-distance races. This use of the same word in different contexts, plus the desire for OAs to use the Distance rating for shorter races that are not W/L mean “All Purpose” is a more appropriate name. Decision - Upheld, dependent on the software being able to be easily updated with the same.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the PHRF Committee will be January 9th.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9.45pm

Submitted by:

Alistair Duke