

Response from Bill Beglin

While my racing last year was limited to a handful of races as skipper and several as crew, I have raced extensively over the years and would like to offer my comments on the program as I may be racing more this coming season. I also think this survey should be sent to all members. Who knows who might be racing next year and participation is open to all members whether they raced the previous season or not. Good suggestions can come from unexpected places! The corollary would be the social committee. We ask all members for comments/suggestions without regard to their previous years participation in those events. I also think since last years controversy was thrown out in front of the entire membership, we might get some feedback from non-racers regarding their feeling/thoughts on the program which could help to understand the non-racers views.

1.) Your overall opinion of the 2007 season.

Very good - The use of the committee boat, new marks, auto start timer, race instructions, training, welcoming of new racers, timeliness of results postings etc. were all done with consistency and raised the bar for our racing program. I think the participation level was a clear indicator of that.

2.) What changes would you like to see? (for example, number of races, number of regattas, types of races.

Overall quite good, I will let those that raced in the majority of races comment on the quantity. I think the coordination with the social committee could be improved realizing that last year it had been planned that way and some things beyond Rick's control changed that. I'm sure with Mike in charge of social, he and Rick will optimize the coordination of events. I think it might also be worth considering a split season with a spring series and a fall series. This might allow those that have a bad start to the season, can't make some of the races etc. to still be in the 'hunt' for a top finish in one of the series. In a single full season series, many skippers know they are all but relegated to the lower positions by mid year and this can definitely be de-motivating. It would also allow new racers to have a chance to be among the top finishers in the fall series as their skills improved.

3.) Your overall opinion of the Committee Boat

Very good, more power would be helpful, but compared to using members boats, it is fantastic and Ernie, Rick and Steve did a great job of outfitting and taking care of it.

4.) Your opinion of the Committee Duty Selection Process.

I've combined my comments with my thoughts on potential improvements.

I think mandatory committee duty eligibility is appropriate. All racers that are signed up for the current season should be in the pool with a very few given a waiver at the discretion of the race director. For example those completely inexperienced racers that would have difficulty running a race properly. They could however be included in a race committee with a more experienced crew.

The chosen skippers should be 'responsible' for committee duty and allowed to select a weekend as in the past. Weekend swaps should be allowed as well as substitute race committees if the responsible skipper cannot make that date. These changes would have to be approved through the race director as he needs to know who is going to do committee on a specific day. As far as scoring the best I have seen is to give the responsible skipper a finish position for that race(s) equal to the average of his total season or series finishes. If the responsible skipper doesn't show or make acceptable substitution arrangements they would be given DSQ's for the number of races held that day with a minimum of 1 should the races be canceled for lack of wind.

It would seem the main goal in committee duty assignment is to insure:

- Well run races and accurate scoring
- Ability for the race director to know that a committee will be there and not have to chase around at the last minute
- Penalties for a racer that is responsible for a weekend and simply ignores this responsibility or dumps it on the race director.
- Used as a vehicle to train new racers how to properly run a race.

I feel very strongly that committee duty should not be used to penalize the previous years top skippers or even the current years top skippers. I realize this past years approach was well intentioned to help level the playing field and the specific circumstances that created the problems could likely not have been foreseen. But now that we have more experience it should be reviewed. For example, what about a guy like Bruce Cameron. He may not race at all in 2008, but he is clearly one of the top skippers in the area. (Winner of our last two Pig Regattas as well as a proven winner at his previous club, Eagle Creek in Indianapolis) Since he did not race much in 2007, under the current rule he would be excluded and would clearly have an advantage. The Tacy/Hauser issue at the end of the year was a similar issue. Ernie, clearly one of the top skippers, was not included in the mandatory race committee pool only because he was not the 'skipper of record' despite having skippered a number of top finishes in 2006.

I honestly don't think any artificial means to handicap skippers is ever going to work well. There are just too many variables that cannot be anticipated. Where do you make the cutoff, how do you account for new racers etc. I think the split series would help in this area. Racing is racing. In most all occasions when you make the fewest mistakes you do well. I don't think that should be diluted by artificial handicaps.

5.) New Events you would like to see.

None

6.) Suggestions on how to fix what you are not happy with.

see my comments above. I don't think it's a matter of not being happy, just the goal of continuous improvement on what is already a very good program.

Major issues. I do think when a major disruptive issue arises, as occurred this past year, the board should be brought in earlier. The race director position is a very demanding one and should be given the assistance/council of the board when such issues arise so the burden is not all on that person.

Thank you for considering my thoughts.

Bill