

Clyde Yacht Clubs' Association Handicaps

The off-season has seen some hard work by the CYCA to update their handicapping system.

As reported in our November edition, handicaps and C-series sail numbers are managed by the Association of behalf of its constituent clubs. Both represent lower-cost alternatives to the "national" provisions offered by the RYA and RORC/IRC.

CYCA handicaps have traditionally been expressed in "minutes per hour" – which is a terminology which has some merit – but more and more it is the Time Correction Factor which is all that really counts. Recognising this, the Association has implemented a major change whereby minor rig or design differences can be reflected in handicaps by using the long-established Other Adjustment Factor. The new news is that this factor no longer works in 0.25 min/hr increments; a "1" allowance now counts for just 0.05 min/hr (+ or -) and all boats with existing adjustments have had their factor multiplied by 5 to maintain the same handicap.

The CYCA database now requires that any boat given an Adjustment Factor allowance must have the reason documented on the system. Although a little bit of retrospective tidying up has to be completed, this information is already being included in the regular upload of boat details to the CYCA website. Owners of affected boats are being sent revised certificates – free of charge. Most boats are unaffected.

The new facility will result in handicaps being assigned which include increments of less than 0.25 min/hr, and so a bit of interpolation will be needed by those looking up old conversion tables. But the formula still holds good: $TCF = (60 - \text{min/hr}) \div 60$.

Alongside these changes the Association is also releasing a revised Handicap Application form, with new definitions and illustrations to ease the process of supplying key dimensions. The form requires regular revision to reflect evolving hull, keel and rig designs, a good example being furling headsail systems.

Historically these have been clunky above-deck installations; normally robust, but often with fairly dire effects on headsail cut and performance. Newer systems have moved the ball forward significantly, with hidden drums and well-cut sails which sacrifice less in performance. And so a new measurement has been added – Furling Drum Height – on the basis of which the Adjustment Factor can be used to offer handicap relief which is less than the standard 0.25 min/hr traditionally awarded.

The opportunity has also been taken to enable owners to select from a wider range of keel design templates from which to describe their boats, and to converge on a common set of sail and rig measurements compatible with those used by RORC/IRC.

Perhaps less welcome will be the news that the fees have gone up! A new application goes from £30 to £50, whilst an amendment request goes from £10 to £15. Explaining the rationale, Hon Secretary Donald McLaren says "rates have been frozen since 2000, despite normal inflationary pressures on the Association's costs. We have introduced significant administrative efficiencies over the period, but have decided that now is the time to introduce new rates. These will hopefully coincide with a downward revision in constituent club subscriptions to the Association, to be addressed with Club Delegates in March." And although this increase is marginally above the general RPI increase in the period – as a result of the changed policy on CYCA revenue – Donald also points out that the cost of a Clyde Handicap remains considerably cheaper, and is a one-off as opposed to an annual charge, compared with an IRC rating.

C-series sail numbers will also cost more, increasing by £5 to £20 and £30 for next-in-sequence and out-of-sequence numbers respectively.

The Association, as always, welcomes feedback. As with its constituent clubs, it is a band of volunteers trying hard to provide a useful service to the yachting community.

Web: www.cyca-online.org.uk

Email: office@cyca-online.org.uk

Phone: 01436-821234

(office manned on Monday/Wednesday/Friday mornings)

Mail: PO Box 5438, Helensburgh, Argyll & Bute, G84 8WH

PS: anyone with a furling headsail which previously FAILED to merit an allowance – because of the drum being below deck – should contact the office to discuss whether an amendment is worth pursuing.