

Race Director's Penalty Box. Sept. 11, 2015

Subject: 2 HOUR TIME LIMIT AND COURSE SETTING.

This week's race was the third time this summer that substantial portions of the fleets did not finish (DNF) because the course was set too long for the two hour limit. In the summer, winds often decrease or die completely after sunset. Race Committees need to be aware of this and set courses which the slowest boats can finish in the time frame. Alternatively, they should be prepared to shorten course if necessary. In this week's race, the course could have been shortened to buoy six and most boats in both divisions would have finished. The problem is, with inexperienced race committees, it is often too late to shorten course by the time they realize that the wind is dying. The faster boats are already nearing the final mark. Races like this have a detrimental effect on the series scores for many competitors, especially when it happens more than once and all the races cannot be dropped.

Next, there is an inherent inequity built into having a set time limit for a race. Doing so gives an unfair advantage to boats with lower PHRF ratings. It is not uncommon for a higher PHRF boat to be "timed out" shortly before finishing a race. If the boat had been allowed to finish, it would have scored ahead of some of the lower PHRF boats which did finish. I am sure this problem is more prevalent in the B Division where all boats race under the PHRF system, but it also effects the Combined Series scores of the A Division. There is an easy fix for this problem. That is to have the 2 hour limit based on Corrected Times instead of actual finish times. This will cause the Race Committee to have to stay out and finish boats perhaps 5 minutes longer than the 2 hour limit (this time can be calculated for the slowest boat in each division). Most Race Committees have been doing this already as they stay out to make sure all of the boats get in safely. Perhaps this will make RCs consider setting shorter courses. Our goal is to make the racing fair and fun for everyone. As Race Director I will work to enact this change in future SIs.

Finally, I want to remind everyone that finish times are to be recorded to the nearest second. The nearest minute is not good enough for calculating corrected times. We certainly miss having Starr Malouff's excellent service as Race Committee, but I'm sure, as we all get more experience, these problems will become less frequent. Feel free to ask for advice about the course from the Race Director or other experienced sailors.

Dan Griggs – Race Director