

Ahoy!

The Future of Keelboat Racing in TBYC meeting, held November last year, was attended by more than 35 (recorded) sailors who are racing or want to race on a keelboat. Of that number, 15 were boat owners who said they wanted to race their boat, but needed some help. This is great news for our keelboat racing fleet!

The following is a list of issues and ideas raised that, if addressed, would improve participation: The list is based on notes taken by several participants, but is not necessarily complete; it is not prioritized, and is presented without comment...

- Very limited social programming. No convenient location (compared to Anchorage, or Breakwater Taphouse) for post-race gathering. Downtown bars are too far away. Post-race gathering stimulated discussion, exchange of best practices, ideas, crew, and was lots of fun. A resource for new crew and new skippers to access expertise re boat handling, strategy, tactics, rules, etc. in a social setting. Our keelboat racing fleet used to be a community, but has devolved into "silos", small groups that have little interaction with other crews and skippers. No more pier parties. Used to have party rafts in Sawyer Bay and Tee Harbour prior to racing the next day.
- No white sail (jib-and-main, or JAM)) racing class. (Perhaps with a separate course or enhanced traffic separation to avoid conflict between novice and experienced skippers/crew. New skippers and their teams especially want to avoid yelling!
- No separate course for novice racing class
- New Crew program has not operated for two years due to Covid. Is it attracting the right kind of people for racing crew?
- There is a need for new skipper/new team support: crew recruiting, training, retention; boat preparation; boat handling (especially spinnaker work); boat speed; rules; coaching/mentorship (on-the-race course guidance/instruction?)
- Advertising and promotion of sailing opportunities for crew as novices (e.g., New Crew Program), and/or experienced sailors (e.g., at Lakehead University, high schools, community [but especially young adults]. Need updated multi-platform communications (e.g., Instagram, Reddit, and ?) in addition to media like print, Facebook, the Key, etc. The Chronicle Journal used to have weekly coverage of keelboat racing with photos and scoring. What about posters, handbills, bulletin boards? Invite magazine writers (Walleye, etc) to race and write an article. Television (feature, or regular reporting; we can supply video?). Inside the breakwall racing attracts spectators ("golden days, before racing outside the breakwall).
- Boat grant program: exists in some clubs and one design fleets. A program to make a boat available to skippers/crew to try keelboat racing.
- Fleet Captain needs volunteers in addition to the present Race Committee to plan and execute desired changes; especially social programming, communications/advertising/promotion/, New Skipper program, and JAM (jib-and-main) class.

- Novice crew and skippers might benefit from assisting with Race Officer duties.
- New Skippers program - structure program to teach novice skippers basics of rules, crew organization/management, tactics, sail trim, etc.
- “Used” Crew program: enhance existing knowledge and skills of experienced crew.
- Club-level support for skippers to recruit and train crew. (Expansion draft; crew exchange or loan; on-boat, in-race coaching.) As opposed to skippers competing for crew and training them independently.
- Free sailboat ride event to recruit crew; as intro of advertising to New Crew and Crew Bench program. Perhaps 2-3 events spread out through the season.
- Crew Bank: a roster of experienced racing crew that wish to race but cannot make a full-time commitment.
- Discounted fees for new boats entered in club racing program, or free trial for limited number of races.
- Greater awareness and/or enforcement of TBYC Code of Conduct and emphasis on sportsmanship.
- No crew left behind protocol.
- Best practice sharing forum using experienced skippers as a resource. Temple Reef does post-race debrief by winning skipper(s). “Mistakes made/lessons learned” format? Q & A?
- Crew and/or skipper exchange (or “share”) program.
- Crew “expansion draft” for new boats.
- .In the “golden age”, racing around fixed navigational buoys meant that race courses had reaching legs, and wind angles were always different and/or changing. More fun for trimmers.
- More boats racing means more fun for everyone.
- Opportunities for all female crew?
- COVID and Marina Development have been factors in reduced participation.
- It is very difficult to teach or learn while racing. Intensity and rapid pace work against successful learning. No opportunities to reset/repeat. Practice does NOT make perfect; “perfect practice makes perfect”.
- Some sailors have experienced yelling and other abusive behavior.
- Club newsletter (the Bulletin) should be used to advertise and promote racing and associated activities.
- New skippers and/or crew assist with race officer duties to get observer perspective on starts and mark roundings, as opposed to participant on-the-boat, in-the-moment perspective.
- Use video tools to record starts; for teaching/learning only. Disqualified as evidence at protest or request for redress hearings.

If you wish to add to this list, please contact me directly.

Bob Vander Ploeg
 TBYC Fleet Captain
 bobvdp60@gmailcom
 807-630-3745