

RYA EASTERN REGIONAL COMMITTEE

REPORT FROM TP CHAIRMAN/Regional Communicator

The Training Panel (TP) has not met since the last ERC, due to work commitments by members and a slight health issue suffered by the chairman.

However, things have not been standing still. We have now successfully sold all four Bic Techno windsurf boards and a number of the rigs. The Regional Treasurer and I met with the regional windsurf coach Philip Winfield at Otley College to review and discuss the future of the windsurf fleet.

Philip has taken charge of the Naish Kailua boards and rigs, the windsurf trailer base (we have to build a new storage box and make a couple of modifications over the coming winter months), and the remainder of the Bic Techno rigs which with some additional masts and gear he can utilise with the six Kailua boards.

We are selling the four stand-alone 7.8m (very large) windsurf sails at £350 each. Two of the sails are unused and two have had a couple of outings. All come in rig bags. Pass the word on please!

The windsurf fleet will be centred at the Oulton Broad centre (currently part of SWSA) where Philip will be able to monitor their use and ensure they are well maintained. Philip has volunteered to clean and refettle all the kit over this winter, which frankly is a great weight off my shoulders.

We have divested ourselves of all the Optimists, the Optibats have stayed at Snettisham Beach SC, and one fleet of the GRP Optimists has gone to Thorpe Bay SC and the other to Blackwater SC. We have had a number of enquiries concerning the Fevas, one from as far away as Cornwall but so far no firm offers. We also have a fleet of Toppers for sale, but again whilst some clubs showed interest no one has stumped up. Both are being re-advertised.

Initially we are looking to purchase one fleet of Optibats and one 3-boat fleet of RS Teras, plus a new fleet of Toppers. If the Fevas don't sell we are suggesting they be put back into service and marketed hard. It would also mean hanging on to the older Topper fleet for another year and would seriously interfere with the new bi-annual rollover plan for the fleets. So if any of you hear a whisper that one of your clubs is looking to invest in training boats, please put them in touch with me!

We are proposing the charge for fleets in 2012 be set at a flat rate of £50 a day for all fleets. On longer-term hires we increase our income but lose a little on the two-day hire. Special arrangements are available for clubs or schools wanting to use the boats during term time.

On-Line booking system:

Nigel Mower has spent a good deal of time revamping the SailRacer system and has frankly received no support whatever from Simon Lovesey. We have investigated

with our website host transferring the existing scheme direct onto our own regional website. He can't do it because of the format in which it is written. I am discussing with him the possibility of he and Nigel working together to develop the system on our own website. We can then write to Simon and have the old one discontinued. The new site will include on-line payment systems.

It is further proposed that once this system is in place that clubs will be asked for an up-front deposit — deductible from the final hire fee — to cover damage or theft of gear, the cleaning of boats or late return. It is proposed to set this deposit at £100 per fleet (the equivalent of the normal two-day weekend hire).

The appointment of Lance Cooper as regional bosun has paid dividends in terms of fleets going out in a much-improved state. This has been recognised and commented on by hirers. We have concerns over two clubs who returned boats in poor condition with bits missing – one of them even complained they'd received the boats in that condition!

I must give public recognition to the work that both Nigel and Lance do on our behalf.

HONDA YOUTH RIB

We didn't do too well this year. However, when asked we like to say we're giving youngsters from other regions the chance to have a win! Our two entrants in the national final actually turned in potentially championship winning times at our regional final but didn't reach the same level at the national. There were some complaints that course was different from that we used in all our heats and regional final — Hamble assure me it was the same course!

Nigel Mower has successfully taken over from me as OC HYR in the region. We have achieved a breakthrough with an additional venue for a heat, at Hamilton Marina Lowestoft. I would be grateful if NSBA reps would pass this back to their clubs as we're trying to encourage more participation from Norfolk. I will let them have the date as soon as it is confirmed.

Dates have been provisionally set for area heats and the final, Island YC have again volunteered to run the regional final, which will be on the afternoon of June 23 2012. Nigel is planning to hold a meeting of all the participating clubs towards the end of January.

In the New Year we shall be mounting a strong publicity campaign to increase the number of clubs and youngsters coming through the system. The aim quite simply is to win the national final in the Olympic year in both classes. We will stand an excellent chance in the senior group as our previous double junior champion Steve Curtis is returning to the competition. We hope to organise a number of special training sessions with the help of clubs, so if anyone has RIB-type rescue boats and can spare them for a couple of hours on a Saturday morning, please let Nigel know.

A key factor in this competition is that it is based very much on Powerboat Level 2 skills test. So clubs wishing to bring youngsters between eight and 16 up to standard for their rescue boat crews should consider most strongly taking part.

GC.CTP. 8.12.11

REPORT OF REGIONAL COMMUNICATOR

Publicity work is a usual keeping me busy. The amount of material pouring out of Hamble has to be seen to be believed. I estimate that one in three press releases is not relevant. Much of it I suspect is produced to show event sponsors that RYA is being active. In this region alone more than half the output is of no relevance to our readers, a point I shall be making most strongly at the Regional Communicators annual conference next February.

To reduce the level of press releases sent from the region I am encouraging regional and local editors to regularly visit our website and lift material as they require. In the case of our two regional sailing papers, Anglia Afloat and East Coast Sailing, this appears to work well and we are getting several pages of coverage.

As ever we have a major problem of communication with both clubs and personal members. We're not alone in this; Hamble faces it on a national scale. From the point of view of this region and its committees I would like to see information centrally generated being transmitted not only direct via the website but also through you own area E-mailing lists. I know some of you do already, but most of you don't.

The core of our publicity is the website. Committee papers are loaded on, technical material and advice too. While we have something like 600 people who use the site, I don't think many people on this committee regularly visit it. Certainly, with a couple of exceptions none of you ever comments on its presentation or content.

This is a shame. If you regularly visited the site and interacted with it, you'd be able to suggest your own area committee members do the same and in turn they spread the message to their own clubs.

As a new development we now host HASA news and details on our website. So HASA members wanting to check what their officers have been up to have to come through our site to get to their pages. It'll take time, but I'm convinced that everyone will benefit in the long run.

WEBSITE

Our webmaster Gerry Askham will be able to report directly to the ERC in future as he is also the new chairman of BaCASA (the Blackwater and Colne Area Sailing Association) the new name for BACSPA, and will be attending ERC meetings in that capacity.

Getting the website updated on a regular and more proactive basis still remains a problem. A fair amount of material is required to go up on the day I send it through, but it often waits as much as a week before going up and by then is frankly out of date. I am under pressure from Hamble to switch all our material to the national website, which is updated on a rolling hour-by-hour basis, however, the national website cannot host all our material as we want it displayed.

I have recently updated the information on our regional pages on the national website. The contacts list has to be updated on a separate system called Navision so at the time of reporting is still not updated. I am delighted to say that members who go to those pages will see we have a link from the regional homepage to our own website. Breakthrough!

We have increased our subscribers list to around 600. Local Press and regional marine Press are encouraged to visit the site and lift stories and pictures. We hope to mount the on-line booking system on the website soon.

GC. RC. 8.12.11