

DBSC Sailing Review Meeting 31st January 2009

DBSC Consultation Process

As I hope most people are aware by now, a consultation process is being held to improve participation at all club events – principally sailing, since we are a sailing club.

This is proceeding well – we have now had 2 meetings and are collating data from a questionnaire that was circulated with membership renewal notices. To date 84 survey returns have been received (see summary below). There is also an ongoing discussion on the internet at:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/DalgetyBaySC/> - please register and join-in the discussions (a summary of the latest comments is given below).

The latest step in the consultation process was a meeting held on Saturday 31st January to review the findings of the surveys, and help guide the planning for the 2009 season.

This was attended by 25 people from a wide cross-section of sailing members, and the Summary of Survey returns was used to guide the debate.

Discussions were interesting and wide-ranging, and the general theme was:

- Develop more Training, focussed to the needs of the members
- Increase social activities linked with sailing to provide a more enjoyable overall experience
- Introduce 'special events' and link these to socialising
- Develop a generally more 'clubby' atmosphere
- Try sailing all-day with separate morning and afternoon series

The issues from the Survey Returns were divided into 2 categories:

A. Basic Proposals – new proposed ideas, which were all favoured to various degrees

B. More Contentious Issues – changes to the existing set-up, which were more hotly contested

These were reviewed in order of preference from the Survey Returns, as follows:

A. Basic Proposals

Training

The survey showed training to be the most important issue to increase participation at the club. However, training covers a wide range of topics and needs further investigation. The meeting discussed the following aspects:

- The current Tuesday evening training is one of the most successful aspects of the club, and it is oversubscribed. In the coming season this training is being developed further to feed the participants more directly towards the main club activity of racing.
- Some keelboat sailors have specific training preferences, such as Yacht Master/ Day Skipper
- For many current club members training means improving their existing sailing skills (in whatever type of sailing they do) – for which the club does not offer a lot. This could be done with 'proper' training events, and informally between sailors. It was suggested that class captains could be used to assist people in classes to develop their skills, and that would also help develop class racing in favour of handicap racing – which would have many other benefits.
- Training is also a great way to attract new members – which would directly increase levels of participation (and membership income). People around the Bay regularly express interest in sailing, but there is not an easy route into sailing at DB (the training is over-subscribed and has a one-off entry time). We could promote sailing in the DB area to attract new members, but we would not have the capacity to train everyone. It was suggested that we could encourage new

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members to get their training at Port Edgar by arranging a discount scheme with PE for our members.

- Leading on from the above it was proposed that we should run an Open Day to attract potential new members to have a go at sailing. Perhaps this could be attended by people from PE sailing school (providing extra boats?), to encourage training at PE by potential new members for DBSC.
- Finally, for people who have learnt the basics of sailing it can be difficult to make the next step into becoming an active sailor. It was suggested that we could actively promote a 'dating service' for crews & helms – this could be available on the internet &/or on a blackboard at the club on race days.

Combining Sailing & Social events

It was generally agreed that the sailing experience is enhanced by having a good social scene after sailing. There were few specific new suggestions, but it was noted that if the sailors were expected to stick around for a while after sailing then better food would be required – otherwise people will quickly go home for a meal and the opportunity will be lost. The bar-meal facilities are limited, but they have recently been improved (give it a try!).

One popular suggestion was to use the club video camera during club racing and show the film after sailing in the bar – this could combine a social and training opportunity.

Since changing to a Saturday was not a particularly popular suggestion, perhaps the most workable suggestion is to have regular 'special' events (say once a month), which span the Saturday & Sunday and have a social event such as a BBQ after sailing on the Saturday (BBQ would provide additional cooking capacity, and DIY BBQ would minimise the resources required).

Special Events

Various 'special events' were proposed for the Survey and all were popular, some more than others. Basically the feeling seemed to be that we should try some and see how they go – which 'special events' are selected may depend more on what can be implemented and who is prepared to organise events, rather than which got the most votes. So if you want something done – volunteer to help with it ☺

Personal Handicap System

The personal handicap system was proposed (again) through the Yahoo Discussion Group (see comments). It was agreed that it may be interesting to have a personal handicap system going on in the background, but that it should not be the primary scoring system, and it must either be really easy to operate or (preferably) someone must step forward to implement and manage the system. However, it is important to note that a personal handicap system is not a high priority issue and should not divert attention from the more important issues to be addressed.

Club Atmosphere

It was generally agreed that participation would improve if more of a 'clubby' atmosphere were developed, by things such as:

- Better communication & an ongoing consultation process
- Breaking down barriers to participation (eg make it less onerous to do club duties; make club boats easier to access; make key people in the club more accessible & recognisable – photos/badges, etc)
- Create work parties to tackle key tasks and encourage participation
- The discussion forum on web site should be more open and readily accessible to members (good examples are ELYC; Laser4000; & PEYC?)

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B. More Contentious Issues

The only proposal for change that was really popular from the survey was to make weekend sailing all day with separate am & pm series. We will therefore try to give it a go – although perhaps not initially for the whole season. This could be tied-in with improving social interaction by providing time between the am & pm series to allow 'bar-time' for lunch. This trial would best be carried-out in the Summer when the weather is good, otherwise am sailors may be too cold by the pm race to bother sailing.

Sailing on Saturday was clearly popular with some people, but equally it was also unpopular with others, and largely one balanced the other. This confirms experiences of at least one other club. Perhaps we could have some Saturday events this year and review progress again at the end of the 2009 season.

Thursday evening was preferred over Wednesday, but not by enough to make it worth changing. Again this should be reviewed at the end of the season.

Conclusion

We will now work on a sailing programme for 2009 that will incorporate as much of the above as we reasonably can – and review the response as the season progresses.

Please contact me – or another committee member – with any further comments or suggestions.

I look forward to a great sailing season at DBSC – and I hope to see you all there frequently – it will be FUN ☺.

Ian Renilson,
Rear Commodore (sail),
1 February 2009

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DBSC SURVEY - Interim Summary

84 Respondents

Ian Renilson - Rear Commodore, Sail

31 January 2009

		strongly agree	agree	no effect	disagree	strongly disagree		
Points:		2	1	0	-1	-2		
I / we would participate more at DBSC if.....							Score	Sum of Votes
A. Basic Proposals:								
1	Training days/ weekends	23	25	10	2	1	67	45
2	Combined sailing & social activities	13	42	14	0	2	64	53
3	Closed Club Regatta days/ weekends (linked with socials)	15	32	14	2	1	58	44
4	Dinghy racing had a separate start & shorter courses for novices & juniors	20	18	18	1	2	53	35
5	Long-distance events	16	20	25	3	4	41	29
6	Opportunities to crew in a yacht or dinghy	12	19	28	1	1	40	29
7	Team Racing (3-boat teams)	6	31	21	2	1	39	34
8	Dinghies & keelboats sailed at the same time more (not in the same race), to improve social interactivity	9	30	24	9	1	37	29
9	Match Racing (boat-on-boat)	5	32	19	1	2	37	34
10	Events suitable for spectators (eg special events)	12	17	22	4	2	33	23
11	Club boats were more readily available for club events	9	19	27	2	2	31	24
12	8-hour race (in teams)	11	19	23	5	3	30	22
13	Mid-week series of evening races (Wed-Fri of one week)	10	20	21	8	1	30	21
14	Additional weekend series for keelboats (avoiding events)	5	18	28	0	1	26	22
15	There were more special events through the season	8	8	2	0	1	22	15
B. More contentions issues:								
1	Weekend sailing was all day with separate am & pm series	6	26	21	10	3	22	19
2	Regular dinghy racing started later at the weekend (~3 pm), and be immediately followed by a social activity at the club	1	27	20	11	5	8	12
3	Mid-week dinghy racing was on Thursday rather than Wednesday so that there was a gap after Tuesday training	5	15	26	10	4	7	6
4	Dinghy racing was on Saturday rather than Sunday	5	13	32	6	8	1	4
5	Evening keelboat racing was on a night other than Friday	2	4	34	4	5	-6	-3

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Dalgety Bay Yahoo Forum feedback December '08 and January '09

Overall feedback; 17 contributors with 27 posts

1 - Saturday sailing;

This change of weekend day proposal seems quite popular overall with the minority still opting for Sunday.

2 races format still seems popular but there was a suggestion to make the 2 races different series as there are a lot of folk who tend to only race one due to other commitments. This idea seemed to gain support from others.

2 - Wednesday night sailing;

We had a proposal to start a little later in mid summer due to difficulty of everyone being able to make it in time for work for 19.30. Overall this did not gain much support.

Another suggestion was 2 races but to make them separate series so the late arrivals could actually try and put a series together.

Another suggestion was to move the sailing to Thursday evening and this had some support but the majority preferred Wednesday mid week racing.

3 - Race course and marks;

Committee boat starts popular with everyone but its agreed its difficult to arrange depending on ood and rescue cover on the day.

Races courses and mark positioning needs reviewed again and it was noted that a good course has to be available for the predominant SW wind direction.

One word of caution is make sure the marks are in deep enough water for the keel boats!

4 - Personal Handicaps;

This was a subject that attracted a full range of comments.

Several 'purists' promoting one design first past the post racing however it was clear that this is really only viable in the 2 more popular classes of the laser or a RS200 at the moment.

However several others keen on trying the idea if it could be a way of getting more boats on the water – if it works for Golf why not sailing?

However there was a lot of concern about the level of administration involved.

I received a lot of feedback from the Y and Y forum post and one of the most active clubs using this format for one series only is Eastbourne sailing club.

Eastbourne only run it for their lasers and dart 16's on a Wednesday night. However it has proved very popular.

Burghfield and Fensham pond have all class series using personal handicaps to good effect. In both clubs cases they seem to work in promoting new folk out onto the race course.

It appears personal handicaps are quite a popular concept in Australia.

5 - Other suggestions from the post;

There was one proposal for class captains to be created to try and stimulate activity within the classes and possibly promote less active sailors out on the water more.

Keith Cuthbert, 30th January 2009