

SUMMARY

MBSA GENERAL MEETING

Jan 10, 2017

In attendance: Russ C, Doug R, Rama (Jeff S), Lance R, Maura P, Jim W, Pat D, John D, Mike M, Sue H, Carl D, Steve K, Karl Z, Ken B Mark, Kevin O, Eliot S, Tom A, Melissa V

After a brief welcome and thanks, Doug got us down to business:

I. SCHEDULE

Lance circulated the most recent rendition of the schedule and outlined changes made since our last meeting.

- Constitution June Moon moved to July giving up its date, June 29, to the EYC Lambert race. Lambert might be run as an overnight.
- Constitution YC Spring regatta moved to June 16
- BHIR is on Sept 8th, same as the Jubilee Regatta
- Boston Light will be Sept 29
- The Flip Flop will be solely 'owned' by Courageous. Run by and proceeds go to Courageous.
- The Rumble schedule is not yet decided but will be shortly.

****** Lance asked that all organizing authorities get their book pages into him by late February. *******

II. ORR–EZ System

The floor was opened to questions concerning ORR-EZ and a lively, thoughtful, and productive meeting ensued.

Clarify MBSA position:

The choice of rating system to be used in any race is up to the Organizing Authority (OA). In response to growing concern about the current rating system and diminishing participation rates, MBSA has researched several rating options to see what might suit our fleets best. Our goal is to supply local Fleets, OA's, delegates, RC's, and sailors with information so fleets can decide for themselves what rating system to use. Some will opt for EZ; and others, for PHRF. As far as MBSA organization is concerned, if you run a qualifier race, we'll score it. We just need the place results to award points for series regardless of whether EZ or PHRF is used. MBSA will score the series points according to what the OA says are the results.

Decision Making Process:

We realize this is a lot of information to take in and transition can sometimes be difficult. How individual fleets come to a decision will vary. It's not just a matter of reviewing the pros and cons of ORR-EZ, but a process to make a decision and how that decision will be made. Fleets, OA's and delegates need to think about what that process will include. Will it be the decision of the local Fleet/OA board? The governor? Constituent vote? Consider traveling boats, past participants, input from skippers. MBSA board is happy to support your process in any way you deem helpful, such as participating in discussions or presentations with anyone interested. Our recommendation is to get as much input as possible to make a good decision for your fleet.

MBSA will support any rating system used by local OA's in scoring for the championship series.

Question: Should we as a Fleet/OA reach out to our sailors or decide as a board? MBSA recommends you reach out to give information and to get feedback. MBSA is happy to send a knowledgeable board member to your meetings to help sort through all EZ has to offer.

Several Fleets/OA's have already decided

In the fall, Hingham Bay, Boston (Cottage Park) and Constitution YC opted to transition to ORR-EZ for their events and to issue ORR-EZ certificates to their fleets. There was discussion among Fleet/OA board members, individual sailors, between OA's, etc. Calls were made to most of the regular travel boats from other areas for their input. While there were many concerns, most were cautiously optimistic. That optimism grew.

In concert with this transition, Regattaman (RMS) has been hard at work. Hull's Great Chase Race intends use EZ in this pursuit race. RMS is currently running trials and adjusting its system to apply the EZ system to pursuit races too. RMS has made a great progress developing the scoring programming (everything from soup to nuts) to adapt to EZ and make a smooth application for OA's to use.

Back Story

While the PHRF system enjoyed wide-spread use over the years, it hasn't kept pace with the ever changing advances in boat design. The increasing differences in designs along with declining participation have spurred on other options. These options don't assign just two numbers (spin or JAM). In a two number system, the differences in designs are exaggerated in varying conditions. The new systems, although more complex, offer a means to level the playing field and consider conditions and course type as well as general design. As boat design technology has advanced, PHRF simply hasn't kept pace.

Three systems came to similar conclusions and now consider wind ranges and course configurations in addition to whether or not you fly a spinnaker: IRC (non VPP based in Europe), ORC (a VPP system from Europe), and ORR (VPP system under ORA organization US based). US Sailing created ORR to advance sail racing but later abandoned the system. The technology guru's behind it formed ORA to continue its development and promote it. The three organizations are in many ways interchangeable. They share data of measurements and hull files which lowers the cost and makes the systems more readily available. We can now apply VPP to every possible scenario. [A velocity prediction program (VPP) is a program which solves for the performance of a sailing yacht in various wind conditions by balancing hull and sail forces.]

MBSA is suggesting a transition to ORR-EZ

Trading Simplicity for Fairness

A step away from our familiar, simple system is a trade for improving fairness. It means adopting a more complex system, but it will help address the numerous issues raised over the years and, hopefully, improve participation levels.

We're not shooting for perfection (in rating systems), just better.

The transition underway is to ORR-EZ (just like the 1040EZ version of taxes). It has many of the benefits of the fully measured ORR certificate but with less work and expense for sailors. EZ has much to offer. An MBSA team

has combed through the ORA rules to decide what aspects of EZ are best suited for our area in this first year of change. **MBSA ORR-EZ BYLAWS** document is under development and will be posted online and in the yearbook once finalized. The proposed bylaws were discussed (see below) and feedback and changes welcomed.

ABOUT EZ:

Two numbers traded for 12:

Instead of a 2 number system (with or without spinnaker), now we can have a system that comes with 12 rating numbers per boat in order to consider three wind ranges (light, medium, heavy), two course configurations (windward/leeward and point-to-point) and also spinnaker or non-spinnaker.

The rating is given in both seconds/hr of racing in Time-on-Time scoring; the rating is seconds/mile for Time-on-Distance scoring.

More info about ORR-EZ can be found <https://offshoreracingassociation.org/orr-ez>

Cost:

As might be expected, the cost of the more complex/fair EZ certificate is higher. The issue has come up often in debating whether to go with EZ. PHRF certificates cost \$25 (plus whatever the Fleet charges for membership). The initial cost of an EZ certificate is \$100 (plus Fleet membership). However, MBSA is subsidizing the first 200 skippers who apply for a new first time EZ certificate with \$25 for initial certificate this year—making the first year's cost \$75. This is available whether or not the skipper is an MBSA member. The cost is \$75 for renewal in subsequent years. The differential in PHRF to EZ costs is \$50.

When talking to skippers about the difference in cost, it doesn't seem to be a big factor once they understand the benefits. With EZ, the skipper clearly knows what he/she is getting.

Measuring Sails:

You do not have to measure sails in order to get an EZ certificate. The default setting considers mast height, J, etc, and 95% of the head stay for the jib. If you bother to measure your sails, you get a better rating. The more a skipper puts into his certificate application, the more precise the rating numbers will be.

For Jib and Main, PHRF assumes a 155 jib and there's no credit for anything smaller. If you do have only smaller sails, you get no credit. In Buzzard's Bay, cruisers complained that the 155 is needed to race but is too much work for cruising. In EZ, you declare your biggest sail and the rating is adjusted. So a cruiser with less than a 155 won't feel punished for not having the bigger (and more expensive) 155.

Most sails purchased in recent years come with measurements. Some boats have already measured their sails and found it easy.

Crew Weight:

In EZ, if you don't declare crew weight, the default for full crew for your boat design is assumed. However, you can now declare the number of crew you plan to regularly sail with. (one crew declaration per season. You can't yet declare the crew weight/number for each race).

Recreational Handicap:

ORRez takes into account all the variables that were deemed to be required to obtain a Recreational Credit for a boat. All boats now will get the maximum benefit of the factors that resulted in this single number for all. There is no specific credit called "recreational"; however if your boat has all the elements needed to get this credit, they all will be factored into your rating calculations.

Rescoring last year races

A suggestion to rescore last year's races using information from RMS was suggested in an early meeting with the ORA reps, some OA members and some MBSA board members. The thought was this might shed light on what differences EZ would bring.

MBSA decided there was no real benefit in rescoring our own races. Some boats would do better; some would do worse. This would set up a bias depending on how it affected your individual boat. Do we want a better system? Or do we want individuals to do better? It was decided that we didn't want to see a rescoring of our own fleet with boats we know. We did, however, rescore races from other areas using boats we don't know for a more objective view.

The results were that there was some inversion of places, but the boats that regularly came in first, still usually came in first. However, EZ tightened the fleet! It closed the gap between first and last, putting first place within reach for others. EZ shrunk the deltas.

With ratings correlating to different wind conditions, the strength of any one boat in any one weather condition is reduced. How often do we go out in light air or in heavy and know who is advantaged by the conditions? As seasoned sailors, we know our competition and can almost predict how the boats will do. Light boats have the advantage in light air. Heavy boats cut through the chop and can take the big breeze that might force a light boat to reduce sail. A one rating number system emphasizes these advantages; now with EZ, ratings are adjusted to lessen the difference.

With a tighter fleet -- shortened deltas in performance, there would be a perception that it's fairer. The **perception of fairness** is what will encourage boats that don't race as much, or at all anymore, to come out and give it another go. Even the mere appearance of being fairer will, hopefully, increase participation.

MBSA SPLITS

For the first year, MBSA will keep the splits as they have been and place the same boats in the same class regardless of how EZ affects their ratings. If an EZ rating puts a boat in a different class from its current one, we can manually override the system to put the boat in the same class. For example, a Farr30 now in B fleet might be bumped to A fleet with its new EZ rating. We will manually put it back in B fleet. The Farr will compete against the same boats it competed against last year with its new A rating. We can revisit the splits after a year of learning to see the EZ effects.

EZ is a highly fluid scientific system that adjusts annually to consider changes in time, issues, feedback from fleets and RSA's around the country. Whether an A-sym, sprit, or traditional symmetrical design, nothing is local. Changes are done at a national level. The variance in local conditions is handled with the 12 rating system.

Hybrid Systems/ Dual Scoring

Several Questions arose about the complexities of having two systems in one area.

For MBSA Championship series and Pursuit series, it won't matter. The scoring is based on place finishes, not individual boat ratings. If one event is accommodating both certificates, classes will be made of all the same rating system (ie: A, B, C might be EZ and D, G might be PHRF). The place finishes will be sent to MBSA. A mix of rating systems won't matter.

For OA: Hybrid systems are available. OAs can opt to have one system (either PHRF or EZ or anything else) or they can use a hybrid system with dual scoring. Any one event can host some classes as PHRF and others as EZ (like the many big regattas have been doing for years). The OA would set up the event as two races on RMS and let the IT guys do the work for you. RMS, Yacht Scoring, and just about all other systems are designed to handle any rating system.

For Skippers: Skippers sign up for races as they usually do. For events that want to offer both there will be two separate events listed at RMS. Simply choose the event for PHRF or the event for EZ and register as normal.

Ted Hood

How might the Ted Hood unfold? It's totally up to them. None of us have heard anything about their plans.

The THR and the ONE (previously) have had class splits different from the MBSA splits to best accommodate the competitors. It's the same problem as every year, and MBSA will score those events in the series the same way it has in the past.

Q and A concerning INDIVIDUAL BOATS:

Will there be a **panic with 12 numbers** to consider on the race course? How will that affect decisions on course?

Some are reluctant about EZ because they fear they won't know who's winning on the race course—whether it's because they don't know the rating declaration of the day (conditions) or can't easily compute with 12 numbers. Panic! Have no fear. There are some very good ways to use your smart phone to help figure this out. In practice, we all know who's winning in a given race. We generally know our competitors and how we're doing relative to one and other.

How big are the changes for a given boat in the various wind conditions?

It depends on the boat. For example, on Ariel (a big displacement boat) I expect to go about 4 kts in light air, 5 ½ kts in medium air, and 6 or 7 kts in heavy air. In the examples on EZ for a comparable boat, that's what happened. Lance also got what he expected his boat to do under those conditions.

Skippers Signing Up for Certificates

Skippers will be able to go through RMS to create their profile (or use last year's) and are provided an option to apply for an EZ certificate. PHRF certificates can be applied for and will be issued just as they have been

previously. It's no more complicated than before except if you want both certificates, you'll have to and apply twice: once for each certificate. You can still pay for both through RMS.

RMS can't roll EZ and PHRF certificates into one event. To obtain certificates, skippers still use RMS to go through their local Fleet to issue the certificate. Every Fleet has different ways of charging for and packaging certificates. For example, passes might include a certificate and so many races. A given Fleet might issue only EZ or only PHRF. For example, Hingham Bay is issuing EZ certificates. If a Hingham Bay racer also wants a PHRF certificate, he/she will have to get that directly from PHRF.

Measuring:

You don't *have* to measure your sails or boat. A default rating will be assigned if you prefer not to measure. In calculating your rating, EZ makes assumptions based on original boat design for anything you don't measure yourself. These default measurements, for example, will assume you're using a 155 jib; similar to PHRF ratings. If you're not, send in measurements of what you are using. **Generally, if you want a better, more accurate rating, go measure.**

Most sails bought in recent years come with measurements from the sailmaker. Even big shoulders are taken into account.

ORA builds a **picture (model) of your boat** in the process of rating it. You can go look at your boat's picture with your sails to see if it looks correct.

Appealing a rating?

You may appeal ratings. Ratings are based on formulae, so if you have an appeal, say carbon to aluminum mast), the response to your concern will be to send in your new mast's weight. The general response to appeals is to go measure it.

Under EZ, there's a "10% fudge factor" ORA uses to adjust ratings. Why or when? In EZ, sheeting angles are not used in the normal measuring process. Your boat might have a wide jib track placement with a sheeting angle of 10% instead of 6%. The ORA sees the difference and can tweak the ratings to adjust for this. Changes/tweaking is partly based on past performance and part on poor boat design.

The adjustments are not local and **do not involve local politics**. If the change applies to one boat, it applies to all boats of the same make/model for that change across the country.

Additional Benefits:

For a nominal fee, ORA will provide **polars** for your boat *specifically* (including any changes you have made).

If you want to **optimize your vessel**, ORA can run trials to see how your proposed changes will affect your rating. A fee applies.

Q and A concerning RACE COMMITTEES:

Calling the wind: A big concern is how to run a race. How will RC get it together to decide conditions?

The three wind ranges are designed so that the majority of races will use the medium range. It is typically pretty easy to know when the wind is very light or very heavy. This shouldn't be a very tough decision.

At some point in the future RMS will be able to make the choice automatically. One day in the future, technology will allow RMS to link into NOAA or other services to know the wind strength and it will be automatic.

When do you call the wind? The Start? Middle? End?

We highly recommend that you announce the wind strength at the start of the race when making announcements. We recommend that you don't change it mid race, but you may if the conditions have changed dramatically, before the finish of the race.

Condition changes?

If it starts off breezy and drops to nothing, the medium default range is no worse than the PHRF one number system. It is the discretion of the RC to pick the wind strength.

Time-on-Time also forgives some of the problems with a dying wind.

A discussion was had on whether a boat can protest the RC about its poor choice in wind conditions. Some thought no. Others added a redress, not protest, would be in order. The discussion continues.

How does the RC call the wind?

MBSA will provide guidelines in the bylaws. We picked wind ranges as follows:

Light: 5-7kts (under 8 kts); Medium is 8-15.9 kts which covers a fair amount of ground and is the widest range. Here we approach the simplicity of the one number system. And a heavy air race is if it's blowing 16 kts or above. The idea is that if a boat is favored in one condition, this adjustment will account for it.

Announcing conditions:

The wind conditions should be posted/announced before the race starts – as RC is making its other announcements. You can announce on VHF—all sailors should have one and know the frequency. The announcement or lack thereof doesn't affect skipper's choice in how he/she sails around the course. There was discussion about this and a reminder was made that the MBSA GSI's already require this.

Q and A concerning ORGANIZING AUTHORITIES's:

How much time/effort is required for the OA to invest to change to EZ?

At this point, it's easy for the OA to run the races they've run in the past. They've got a formula for getting it done. RMS is working on apps to make the transition as easy as possible: from issuing certificates, to automating ratings used once conditions are decided, to scoring hybrid or singular rating events.

RMS has already been running PRHF races in three different wind conditions for some other areas. They've developed a 'modified PHRF'. The users found the app easy to use.

Accepting Certificates:

It's up to the local OA to decide what certificates it accepts. You can be creative in order to meet the needs of your fleet.

You may use last year's certificates (provided no changes have been made) to minimize certs required for racers. This way, an EZ boat doesn't need a new PHRF certificate. Hingham Bay and Constitution will accept last year's PHRF certificates (provided there are no changes to the boat).

An OA may also opt to differentiate between weekend and week day races: requiring PHRF for Wed nights and EZ for Weekend races or vice-versa.

OA's can opt to accommodate according to the situation. Constitution (already decided to go EZ) will accommodate PHRF ratings if enough boats sign up for an EZ race. Lance says they'd love to see all EZ certs, but first priority is to provide good racing for whoever is interested.

Temporary Ratings:

In past years, OA's have been able to use the list of PHRF ratings to assign a new or visiting boat a temporary certificate. Under the new system, ORR will probably not give the OA a temporary rating to use (rating assignments is their business). HOWEVER, through RMS we will have an app to assign a rating in such a situation. RMS is working on a conversion multiplier between PHRF and EZ that will suffice as a general rating and make it possible for a boat to race. It will be a "good enough" rating, similar to PHRF, but not a great (accurate) rating.

Until we know more about the conversion factor, leave your ES's as is concerning this. The NOR is not due for another 60 days. We'll know a lot more on how this will work soon.

EZ and PURSUIT:

YES- EZ will be applicable to pursuit races. RMS is already working on an easy app using EZ for pursuit races for either **time-on-distance or time-on-time!** The Hull YC RC's goal is for the Great Chase Race to be Time-on-time using EZ. RMS has already made great headway in making this happen.

RECAP:

The goal here is to hopefully increase participation and make things **more fair**.

Are there other concerns or impediments? Have we addressed the concerns you have so far?

MBSA: our obligation isn't to sell EZ, just to give information to sailors and organizations so they can decide for themselves. We need to be as democratic as possible. Our recommendation is to get as much input as possible for and from your local sailors and organizations in order to make a good decision for your fleet.

It's not enough to keep getting information; you also have to decide how to make the decision: whether by Fleet/OA, vote of sailors... anonymous vote or open?

If any **Fleet/OA wants assistance**, knowledgeable board members are happy to visit with you to help answer questions and address concerns.

PHRF has a place and won't die. Here in New England it simply hasn't evolved to address advances in boat technology and design. PRHF here has problems consistent those of other PHRF areas across the country. VPP brings all differences and some meaningful changes to ratings.

What MBSA is attempting is unique. EZ has been marketed regatta by regatta. Here, the transition is by region/areas rather than by events. This is the first time an area will change. We figured if we're going EZ for one event, then why not use it region-wide? Or at least have an option to. This is an opportunity for our area to take advantage of the benefits of technology that will only improve with time and let us move into the future.