

Different types of races at FOSSC

See the FOSSC website <https://www.fossc.org.uk/wp/series-description/> for details of which type of race takes place in which series.

Series which are good for newer racers are highlighted below like this!

Handicap Races:

- The start and finish lines are in the same place.
- All boats start at the same time.
- Each boat will complete a whole number of laps, but not necessarily the same number of laps, e.g. the winning boat might do 7 laps and another boat might only do 5 laps. As long as you complete one lap you will get a result 😊
- You will know you have finished because when you go through the start / finish line there will be a 'hoot' and probably a 'well done!' from the Officer of the Day, (OOD). (And if you look closely, the Committee boat will probably be flying a white flag with a blue square in the middle – officially the 'shortened course' flag.)
- Each boat's "elapsed time" (the time between the race start and your finish) is then altered to a "corrected time" according to the boat class's handicap and the number of laps completed.
- There is one set of results for everyone who took part in the race.
- If you want to know how the results are calculated, read on; otherwise skip to the next section.
- *Example handicap calculation:*
 - A laser completes 7 laps in 54 minutes and 33 seconds.
 - A topper completes 6 laps in 56 minutes and 26 seconds.

Who has won?? We all know lasers are faster than toppers so we'd expect them to do more laps, or the same number of laps in a shorter time, but it is not obvious who has had the better race.

- *Laser class handicap is 1100*; Topper class handicap is 1365*. (You don't need to know the handicap for your boat class – the results program, Sailwave, is programmed with it.)*
- *In this example, the Laser's average lap time is $((54 \times 60) + 33) / 7 = 468$ seconds per lap*
- *The Topper's average lap time is $((56 \times 60) + 26) / 6 = 564$ seconds per lap*
- *The Laser's corrected lap time is $468 \times 1000/1100 = 425$ seconds per lap*
- *The Topper's corrected lap time is $564 \times 1000/1365 = 413$ seconds per lap*
- *So the Topper won because on average, and after boat handicaps are taken into consideration, it was 12 seconds faster per lap! (phew, that was a close race 😊)*

(The handicap numbers are published annually by the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) and are known as 'Portsmouth Yardstick' number. At FOSSC, we refer to them as 'Club numbers' because we adjust some of them to be more appropriate for our small, inland water area. They are issued annually at the end of March.)*

Variation on a Handicap Race:

- The 'Gold / Silver' series is good to target for newer racers. It is scheduled on Wednesday evenings in August / September and is run as a 'Handicap' race, but there are two starts.
- More experienced racers will be allocated to the 'Gold Fleet' and they will start first. Other racers will be allocated to the 'Silver Fleet' and they will start 2 minutes after the Gold Fleet. The reasons for doing this are to make the start line less congested for the potentially less confident racers, and to give those who are not usually at the top of a fleet the chance to race for their own prizes!
- The Sailing Secretary will allocate people to either the Gold or Silver series, and the OOD will have a list which will be displayed prior to each race. You will stay in the same fleet (Gold or Silver) for the whole series.
- There will be 2 sets of results (and 2 different prizes), one for the Gold Fleet and one for the Silver Fleet.
- Everything else is the same as a Handicap race.

Class Race:

- At FOSSC, we currently run 3 'classes' – Laser, Solo and a 'Handicap' class for everyone else.
- The start and finish lines are in the same place.
- In a 'Class Race' each class starts at a different time and sail their own race, but with everyone on the same course. The 'Handicap' class starts first; the Lasers start 2 minutes after that; the Solos start another 2 minutes later.
- You will know you have finished because when you go through the start / finish line there will be a 'hoot' and probably a 'well done!' from the Officer of the Day, (OOD).
- You do not have to have done the same number of laps as the lead boat in your fleet, e.g. if the leading laser completes 5 laps but you only complete 3 laps in your laser, you still get a result. As long as you complete one lap, you will get a result 😊.
- There is a set of results for each class, i.e. if you are in a Solo or a Topper it does not matter how many Lasers are faster than you as you will get a result in the Solo or Handicap class.
- The results for the 'Handicap' class are worked out as per the 'Handicap' races detailed above.

Variation on a Class Race:

- The ProAm series on Sundays in August is sailed only in the club's Gull fleet. Newer racers "Am's" are paired with more experienced racers "Pro's" and it is a great way for newer racers to learn about race tactics. The Pro will helm the first race on each day and the Am will helm the second race on each day.
- The start and finish lines are in the same place, and the OOD will set short, simple laps.
- All boats start at the same time.
- The finish is very unusual in that when the first boat crosses the finish line (after approximately 25-30 minutes), results are decided by where each boat is at that point in time; all boats do not have to finish a complete number of laps. This is done to keep the race time short so that 2 of these races can be completed in just over an hour.

Pursuit Race:

- In these races, the slower classes of boat start first and the faster classes try to catch them.
- There is a start line as per the other race types, but no finish line.....read on for how the race finishes!
- Each boat starts at its allocated class start time, known at FOSSC as a 'Start Number.' These are displayed in the wet bar / in the window of the wet bar near the back door to the club house. They may change at the start of each racing season (end March), but will stay the same for the next 12 months.
- You need to know your start number before you go on the water!
- The Pursuit Board (big black box on the Committee Boat / Jetty) will display the Start Number which will reduce by 1 every 30 seconds. Your race starts when your number disappears from the board.
- For example, if you sail a Byte, your Pursuit number is 114. (It is the 'Club Number' of 1135 divided by 10 and rounded up.) The Pursuit Board will display 114 for 30 seconds and when it changes to 113, that is when you aim to cross the start line.
- The race is for a predefined length of time, dependent on the slowest class of boat competing. If a topper is sailing, its Start Number will be 137 (1365 divided by 10 and rounded up) so the total race length will be $137/2 = 68.5$ minutes, but if you sail a Byte you will only sail for $114/2 = 57$ minutes. If the slowest boat is a Byte, the total race length will be 57 minutes.
- When the race finishes, each boat's result is determined by its position in the race at that time. You will know that the race has finished by one of 3 different ways: a long sound signal and flashing orange lights from the Pursuit Box; seeing the number on the Pursuit Box changing from '0' to 'End'; hearing everyone else who is sailing, or on a rescue boat shouting and telling you that the race has finished! As long as you are still racing when the race finishes, you will get a result.
- The OOD has the difficult job of noting down who is where when the race finishes, so if possible, take a note of who is directly in front and/or behind you and keep sailing until it is obvious that the positions are known.

Variation on a Pursuit Race:

- The 'Personal Pursuit' series runs on Sundays in August is another good series for newer racers.
- It is run in the same manner as a Pursuit Race described above, but each helm's Start Number is adjusted according to their personal ability.
- The Sailing Secretary allocates the personal adjustment and informs the OOD who will ensure they are on display before each race starts. They will adjust from week to week depending on how well you have been doing.
- For example, if you sail a Byte, the class Start Number is 114. If you are new to racing, you might be allocated a personal adjustment of '+8' which would mean you actually start when 122 disappears from the Pursuit Box display. An expert Byte racer might be given a personal adjustment of '-12' which means they would start when 102 disappears, i.e. you have a 10 minute head start on them 😊 😊!