



Frampton on Severn
Sailing Club

NEWSLETTER

March 14th, 2021



Sailing will commence very soon.

Welcome to the March newsletter.

Please send any articles for the February edition to support@foss.org.uk by 17th April.

Sailing will commence very soon.	1
Commodore’s comment	3
Sailing Matters!	6
New to Racing at FOSSC	7
Starting a race, including what the flags and hoots mean!	8
Handicap Races:	8
Class Race:	9
Pursuit Races:	11
“Up, up, up” rule	13
Sailing with Disabilities	14
A Wednesday Summer Evening Drifter	15

Commodore's comment

Dare I say it? Things are looking positive for a return to sailing down at FOSSC very soon. At the end of February, the Covid sub-committee held a Zoom meeting and based on a combination of government and RYA guidance, put together a plan on how we saw the club being able to fully re-open on a phased basis. Since this was done, we have been able to slightly modify and improve it. You will find a copy of the updated version included as part of this monthly newsletter.



Earlier in the year, I mentioned that Rob Cyphus and I had been working alongside Natural England to try and find a better way of controlling the vegetation growth in the lake. Part of the agreement reached is that the area we can cut each year has been increased by 50% and we can cut it twice, once in early Spring and once in the summer.

The first cut was scheduled to be on 8/9th March but with all of the cold weather, little growth had occurred so the first cut has been postponed until the 12/13th April. The four corner buoys (Yellow, Red, White, Green) are currently marking the "area to be cut" and it is important when members start using the lake again that these are **NOT moved** until after the 13th April.

We normally make the Barley Straw sausages in March and place them around the lake, Last year we managed to both make them and get them into the lake the week before lockdown started. This year we cannot carry out this exercise in March as we cannot open the club before the 29th. I therefore want to hold a socially distanced sausage making work party on Saturday 3rd April (yes, it is Easter Saturday, but I don't think that we can go very far !)

This work party will be held outside within the dingy rigging area, and if there is a risk of rain, we will erect one of the large Gazebos' that the club has. There will be three sausage making machines available with four large bales of straw (the same amount as last year). The objective will be to make as many double wrapped sausages as possible and get them out onto the lake. This is ideal work for all members, including couples and families as we can limit contact between groups and the work is suitable for youngsters. If you are able to spare the club a couple of hours (or more) on Saturday 3rd April (starting at 10:00) please can I ask you to let me know via email if you can make morning or afternoon (coates_david@hotmail.com). The only

reason I need to know is to ensure that we do not have too many members on-site at a particular time.

Both Rob and I have been asked why we continue to do straw sausages, as the straw helps to clear the water and therefore aids weed growth. This is true, but there is a more important reason as to why we need to make the sausages and get them into the lake as early in the spring as possible.

Townfield lake is fed water via run off from the surrounding agricultural fields. The water is frequently sampled and analysed and currently contains a very high level of nitrates. Whilst this will not harm us if we fall out of our sailing dinghies it creates an ideal environment for algae. Work is being undertaken by Frampton Estate to control the levels of nitrates entering the lake but it is essential that we continue to put Barley Straw in to the lake each year to help regulate the nitrate levels already in the lake and limit the possibility of an algae bloom later in the season. – So please, come and help us !

The first four of the club's new sail training dinghies (Picos) have arrived on site with the final two are scheduled to be delivered by the end of March. As soon as the Thursday work party can re-start its activities at the end of March, a permanent storage location will be created within the boat park and changes will be made within the sail locker room to accommodate the extra rudders, centreboards and masts.

We are also looking to replace the Dory rescue boat at the end of this season. The Dory has seen many years of excellent service but is now beginning to show its age. A small group, led by Patricia Bennett is looking at what is currently available on the market which would satisfy our requirements.

Around this time last year, the decision was made not to start the refurbishment planning for the Wet Bar area for concern that work could potentially be disrupted through Covid related restrictions. Whilst restrictions in some form or other are likely to be around for the foreseeable future, I would like to throw the following challenge out to the membership:

“What would you like to see happen to the current Wet Bar area when it is refurbished?”

To-date I have received three serious suggestions but would appreciate some more thoughts from members. Your thoughts can extend to the open area between the wet bar and the lake (where the picnic benches are located)

The committee will be picking this topic up later this year with a possibility of bringing some ideas forward at the club's next AGM in the Autumn. At this point in time we are open to any ideas so long as they are affordable for the club. This does not necessarily mean that the Wet Bar will be on the work party agenda for next Winter but the clubhouse is there for the benefit of the members and therefore you all need to have a say in what changes are made.

I personally do not find the Wet Bar area a very usable space and feel that with some radical thinking/planning it could significantly enhance the facilities the club has to offer its membership.

Please, can I ask you to put your “thinking caps on” and email me (coates_david@hotmail.com) your thoughts. If I can get a good reaction from the membership, I will consolidate all of the input received (anonymously) and present it back in a future monthly newsletter.

Stay safe, please send me your thoughts for the Wet Bar of the future, and I look forwards to seeing you down at the club very soon!

David Coates.

Commodore.

Sailing Matters!

We're going sailing again! The first scheduled race will be Wednesday afternoon 31 March, followed by Wednesday evening racing starting on 7 April and Sunday afternoon racing starting on 11 April. It will be so good to get back on the water, although with the wind today I'm not sure how dry I would stay if I were out in my laser!

A revised sailing programme is being developed and will be on the website shortly so please do check the website to make sure you are up to date. Initially, we'll only firm up on details to 17 May. From 17 May we hope to be able to offer sail training courses and due to the lack of training last year, we do want to ensure we can schedule them appropriately, even though they will be at a different time of year to normal. This means that other sailing activities might be adjusted a bit from normal. The timing, variety and number of training courses will of course depend on instructor availability.

Dave Greenfield has been consulting the Sailability members and helpers with the result that Sailability sessions are probably going to start after 21 June. I'm sure he will keep those involved informed if that should change.

Social sailing on a Friday evening will start after 17 May. What an excellent way to unwind at the end of the week 😊.

For those going racing, we will employ some of the strategies we used last year, e.g. for the first few races, the OOD will be shore based and the rescue boat will not be manned for the whole race, but will be on the jetty and available should it be required. Please bear this in mind when deciding whether or not to race. From 12 April to 17 May, the OOD may elect to use the committee boat or manage the races from the jetty. I will contact OODs and rescue crew to ensure they have full details of the expectations at the time they are on duty. See information from the commodore for finer details.

For all duties, I fully appreciate that some people will be more risk averse than others with respect to covid and social distancing and may not want to sit in a committee boat or rescue boat with someone else just yet. Similarly to last year, I'm going to try to roster the first few rescue duties with people from the same family. If you would be willing to do this, please let me know. I'll also send out specific email requests. From 12 April we will have fully rostered duties, with an option for the OOD to stand down the AOD if they would prefer to operate alone. As per normal, if there is any reason why you cannot do your allocated duty, or do not want to do it due to covid, please arrange for a swap via Dutyman.

See you on the water soon!!

Rhonwen James, Sailing Secretary

New to Racing at FOSSC

Due to a mis-communication between myself and Chris last month, this page was included in the February newsletter, but the subsequent 4 pages were missed out. So, this page is the same as last month, but please do read on to the next few pages if you have ever wondered how we start races at FOSSC.

Everyone is welcome to join in any race, and one of the lovely things about sailing races is that as long as you are still racing when the race finishes, and for handicap and class races you complete at least one lap, you will get points. Even if you start and then retire, you will still get points. Then you can aim to improve your points.....

For the second in the series of articles for those who are new to racing at FOSSC, we'll look at how the start works for races – how do you know when to start? What do the flags and hoot mean?

The article on the next few pages will hopefully help you to decipher what is going on at the start of races. For future reference, you can find all these 'New to Racing at FOSSC' articles on our website at <https://www.fossc.org.uk/wp/new-to-racing/>.

How can we help you?

If you have any suggestions on how we can help you to join in racing, please drop me an email. Maybe you want to join in and would like the name of someone who will be there on your first day to help you understand what is going on. We have several ideas for later in the season which I'll cover in future months.

Cheers
Rhonwen James
Sailing Secretary
rhonwenbryce@yahoo.co.uk

Starting a race, including what the flags and hoots mean!

You can learn about perfect starts from any number of books on racing. The notes below are for those who are just starting racing at FOSSC and want to know how to start, and how to get a 'reasonable' start, rather than a 'fabulous' start.

It is all about trying to be on the start line and sailing as fast as possible when the race starts. Theory is easy: reality is more difficult!

The Officer of the Day (OOD) helps you by giving sound signals and raising / lowering flags. However, you need to know what the flags and accompanying sound signals mean.

The "start sequence" (flags and hoots) for racing at FOSSC depends on what type of race is going on – class, handicap or pursuit. Class and Handicap races have similar start sequences so we'll describe them first.

(Refer to 'Different Types of Races'

<https://www.fossc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/New-to-Racing-Different-types-of-races.pdf> for info on how the different races work at FOSSC.)

Handicap Races:

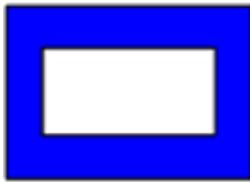
In a Handicap Race, all the boats start the race at the same time. The start sequence at FOSSC can be described as "4-2-Go!" Translated, this means there will be a flag raised and hoot at 4 minutes before the race starts; another flag raised and another hoot at 2 minutes before the race starts; and finally a hoot and lowering of both flags at the exact moment the race starts.

So in simple terms, if no flags are flying the start sequence has either not started, or the race has started – hopefully you can work out which! If one flag is flying then the next flag and hoot will indicate 2 minutes before the race starts; and if two flags are flying, the next hoot and lowering of the flags indicate the start of the race.

Surely you want to know what the flags look like!



This is known as the 'Handicap Fleet Flag' and will be raised **4** minutes before a handicap race.



This is known as the 'Preparatory Flag' and will be raised **2** minutes before a handicap race. Both flags will be flying.

Both flags will be lowered when the race starts.

Class Race:

In a 'Class Race' at FOSSC each fleet starts separately, at 2 minute intervals. The start sequence is similar to a Handicap Race but there are different starts for 'Handicap', 'Laser' and 'Solo' fleets. If you are sailing something other than a Laser or Solo, you are in the Handicap fleet.

The Handicap boats starts first, followed by the Lasers after 2 minutes, and the Solos a further 2 minutes later. Each class has its own flag which is raised 4 minutes before the class starts the race, and is lowered when that class's race starts. This means there are flags going up and down for 8 minutes at 2 minute intervals!

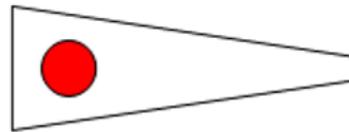
The class flags are:



Handicap



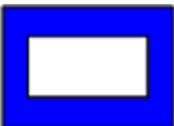
Laser



Solo

So the start sequence looks like this:

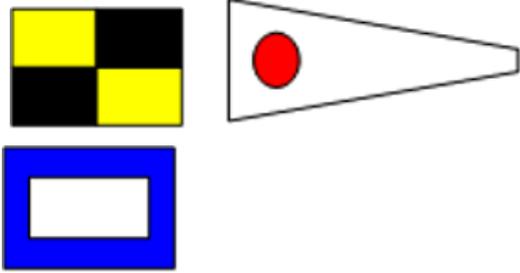
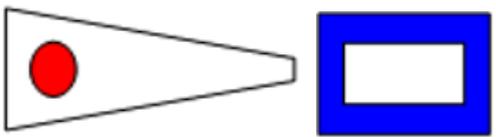
Minutes relative to Handicap Start	Flags Raised	Flags Lowered	Sound Signal	Fleet Starting
- 4			One hoot	

- 2	 		One hoot	
0			One hoot	Handicap
+ 2			One hoot	Laser
+ 4		 	One hoot	Solo

Note that this time the Preparatory flag (blue with white square) goes up 2 minutes before the first start and is lowered as the last fleet starts.

If that all seems confusing to you, another way of looking at it is shown over:

Minutes relative to Handicap Start	Flags Flying	Race Status
Before - 4	None	Nothing
- 4 to - 2		Race not yet started, but racing rules are valid

- 2 to 0		Race not yet started, but racing rules are valid. Handicap fleet is about to start so others please keep away from the start line.*
0 to +2		Handicap fleet has started. Laser fleet is about to start so Solos please keep away from the start line.*
+ 2 to +4		Laser fleet has started. Solo fleet is preparing to start
After + 4	None	Solo fleet has started – all boats are racing!

* When we say ‘keep away from the start line’ this is to give those who are about to start the chance to get themselves in the best position they can relative to other starters; boats in classes which are not starting can unintentionally disrupt this, giving advantage to one boat over another. However, it does not mean other boats need to be at the other side of the lake! If you stay about 15m away from either side and either end of the start line then you should be ok.

Pursuit Races:

In Pursuit races, each class of boat starts at an allocated time (when its ‘start number’ disappears). The OOD will check which class of boat will start first and will use flags and hoots in a similar vein to a Handicap race start. The Handicap flag is used regardless of which class of boats are sailing. To be honest, pay attention to the numbers more than the flags, but if you want to know the flag sequence:

If Toppers are racing, their start number is 137 (which means 67.5 minutes of racing, as each number on the pursuit box equates to 30 seconds). The start sequence begins 4 minutes prior to the race start, so when the Pursuit Box number 145 (137 + (2 x 4)) disappears, the handicap flag will be raised. When 141 disappears, the Preparatory flag will be raised (2 flags flying).

When the Toppers start (when number 137 disappears), the Handicap flag will be lowered.
When the last class starts, the Preparatory flag will be lowered.

There will be a sound signal every 30 seconds from when the Handicap flag is raised, to when the last boats start (the sound signal may be switched off if there is a long gap between starts).

So that gives you the flags and hoots, but what else should you know about starting a race?
Here are a few hints, tips and pointers to get you going:

- The start line is between the striped pole on the start boat and the buoy with the striped pole at the other end of the line, usually about 20 metres away. The buoy beside the committee boat (if it is there) has nothing to do with the start line – its sole purpose is to protect the committee boat, i.e. you cannot sail between the inner buoy and the committee boat.
- The start line will usually be at 90 degrees to the wind with you sailing into the wind, i.e. on a tack.
- Start on a Starboard tack – then you will be in the right over boats on port (you can learn about port hand starts when you have more confidence)
- So, if the wind is coming from the north, the start line will be east – west (with the committee boat usually at the east end), and you will usually cross it pointing in a north-westerly direction.
- Often, the more experienced sailors will try to start close to the committee boat so aim to start mid-way down the line if you want to keep out of their way and get clean air.
- Alternatively, if you are nervous and want to stay away from other boats, aim to start 1-2 boat lengths behind the better sailors, but not 10 boat lengths behind (if you are too far behind, then you will get in the way of subsequent fleets)
- You need to know what ‘Up, up, up’ means – see the end of these notes
- Top tip - Find a ‘good’ sailor, and follow them from 2 minutes before the start.
- Have a watch counting down time (a waterproof watch with countdown functionality can be bought from somewhere like Argos for around £20). Pay attention to 2 minutes, 1 minute, 30 seconds, 20 seconds, 10 seconds, 9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1,go! If you are in a two-man boat, the crew should watch the countdown and keep telling the helm how long to go before the start. You should be on or very close to the start line at ‘go,’ not 20 metres away!
- If you are getting to the line too quickly, let your sails out to slow down, or if there is room, bear away (but note the ‘up, up, up’ rule)
- If any part of your boat is over the start line when the race starts, you have to make sure that all of your boat returns to the correct side of the line before you can start the race – and you must do this while not getting in the way of any other boat. The OOD will probably tell you if you are over the start line early, but the responsibility is yours. More on early starts in another article.

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- If another class start before your class, stay around 15m away from the start line while they are starting – that’s just courteous.
 - There tend to be fewer boats on the start line during pursuit races so use these races to really try to be on the line and sailing as fast as you can when the start signal goes.

“Up, up, up” rule

This is a variation on the ‘windward boat’ rule and is only applicable at the start.

We all know that a boat on starboard has rights over a boat on port. But what if there are two boats on starboard on the start line and one is close hauled while the other is sailing down the start line on more of a beam reach?

The boat which is close hauled has rights over the boat on the beam reach and the helm who is close hauled will shout ‘up, up, up’ at the helm who is on the beam reach. The boat on beam reach must turn ‘up’ into the wind, and in doing this may inadvertently go over the start line before the start signal. This is known as ‘being pushed over the line’ (and is a source of great satisfaction for the helm who is close hauled!).

This rule is the reason why you should **not** just sail down the start line waiting for the start signal – someone will push you over the line (or worse, your bow will put a hole in the side of someone else’s dinghy ☹).

Sailing with Disabilities

For the last 20 years the Sailing Club has been at the forefront in helping people with disabilities to have a distraction from their everyday problems by going out on the water, either under sail or in a power boat.

Unfortunately, we haven't been able to do this due the precautions that have been taken to try and eliminate the effects of the Covid Virus. Hopefully if everything goes to plan this should change in June when virtually all our sailors and helpers will have had their vaccinations, the general public will have carried on obeying the rules to bring the levels down and we will have reached a stable reduction in transmission enabling us to enjoy our sport again.

One of the problems that we will have, will be getting adequate numbers of volunteers to help us to give the full benefit we would like. This is where you could come in. We need volunteers, they don't have to be sailors, they can be any age (we have had several young people who have used it to achieve their Duke of Edinburgh Awards) at the other end of the age scale our 90 year old helper has now retired. The commitment is on a Saturday Morning, normally we would run from April to October, but due to the Pandemic this year it will hopefully be from 26th June until 9th October when we have our end of year BBQ. Were not asking for people to commit to every week, we realise what complicated busy lives people now live. We will be sailing for 15 weeks this year, could you come to some of them??

We will train you in what to do, it can be anything from making tea, helping on or off the water, to driving a power boat every little bit helps.

If you can help at all contact me (David Greenfield 01452 740126)

A Wednesday Summer Evening

Drifter

So there I was – in my Laser, completely stationary, rudder and dagger board raised, stuck on a patch of weed. As I watched boats in front edge away from me and round the first mark and boats behind me slowly catching up I leaned over and considered tugging at the weed in desperation. It was a typical Wednesday evening except for the weed.

Just then, a breath of wind on the beam dislodged me and I began to move at an increasingly acceptable pace until as I rounded the first mark with my rudder and dagger board half down, control was becoming very difficult. Accelerating away from the mark and trying to turn upwind I was unable to do so sufficiently to avoid John Boothman in his Laser who had missed the mark, was reaching at speed and, like me, was not fully in control of the situation. We clashed, but Lasers are strong and we both continued on our way, he towards the big bank of weed at the far end of the lake, me trying to head towards the second mark. At this point the wind must have been force 5 or 6 and I was being propelled at speed not in the direction I wanted but towards the banks of weed in the South East corner. My attempt to turn up into wind and tack with my rudder and dagger board still halfway down was not successful and as I put my centre board down I hit the weed. The weed slowed my speed somewhat but made it impossible to tack. I needed rudder and board fully down to perform the tack, but then up to gain enough speed to do so. It began to look as though I was destined to end up on the bank in the far corner of the lake when the weed cutting operations that had taken place south of the hut came to my rescue and as I hit clearer patches of water I was, at last, able to tack round so that I faced the Club House.

Hove to and with a clear view of the lake I was able to witness the carnage that this sudden squall had caused. I realised that I was fortunate to be one of the few boats still upright and, discretion being the better part of valour, decided to abandon the race. (Our OOD, Rhonwen, had already officially done so by this time, see her previous newsletter article in September 2020). The very broad reach on the return towards the club house might have been quite hairy in ordinary times, but the drag of the patches of weed slowed me down until by the time I was in clear water I could release my main sheet, let the boom go free to rotate in front of the mast and head towards the landing slip where I was helped by Richard Stephens, who had sailed in the earlier race but not in this, to get the boat out of the water. With me and the boat safe I saw Mike Crowley come ashore and go off to help with the rescue operations while I was able to reassure Rhonwen that I was safe.

In retrospect I cannot say that even the possibility of the squall should have been obvious. If I remember correctly the sky was overcast with no looming dark clouds to warn of such a sudden change. It was warm and there may have been thundery activity about but I did not hear or see it. I take it as a lesson to always be prepared, wear sensible kit and to practise sufficiently to have confidence in one's ability to handle windy conditions and recover from a capsize. What was learnt from this evening and other occasions is how much the power boats are hampered by the weed in providing a quick response to assist crew and dinghies in difficulty. Even so, everyone was recovered safely and without injury, with only minor damage to boats. I do not regret in any way going out to race that evening. Indeed, that it stands out so vividly in my memory that I enjoy recalling it, is evidence that it is an experience I would not be without. Thank you to Rhonwen and her team on the night.

Jon Barrance