



*Final Fling 2020*

# LESC Sailing 2021

Colin Tait

LESC Sailing Secretary

I hope this newsletter finds you all well and looking forward to another season at Loch Earn when current restrictions allow. Obviously we don't know exactly when we will get going, however, I intend to have all the preparation work from a racing perspective done well in advance to allow a quick start to the racing season when allowed to do so.

It was interesting last year how inventive people could be when forced to do things a bit differently. The ongoing COVID 19 situation threw up many challenges, but when restrictions were eased we had a fantastic short season at Loch Earn delivered safely whilst abiding at all times within the guidelines set out by Scottish Government & the RYA. From the feedback we received it was enjoyed by all. I see things being much the same this coming season.

I have a few changes that I would like to adopt to the racing fixture list for 2021. We have discussed it as a committee and are all on board with the suggestions. However we would like to share with the wider membership and in particular the members who race or who have an interest in racing in the future to gain your feedback. All views are welcome: positive or negative. I would appreciate it if you could feedback to [colintait59@btinternet.com](mailto:colintait59@btinternet.com) by the 28th of February to allow me to get my prep work done.

### **Proposed LESC 2021 Open Events**

#### **First Fling:**

This will be a club member only regatta. If restrictions delay our normal April opening, this event would kick off our season when restrictions allow but will remain club members only.

#### **Brown Cup:**

The Brown Cup will unfortunately not take place again this year. There is a lot of preparation for this event & 150+ people in the grounds means it is clearly a non starter for this season.

#### **RYA Club Championships:**

As per the Brown Cup we don't see this as a viable event this year.

#### **Final Fling:**

Restrictions allowing we would run this event. It would include The Flying Fifteens for their Scottish Championships & the Enterprises for

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their traveller series along with a club dinghy fleet & club keelboat fleet. I will be the OOD with Mandy as assistant OOD.

## **Proposed LESC 2021 Club Fixture List**

### **Monthly Series:**

As per recent years I envisage a short Spring series, an early series & a late series. In each case there would be separate starts for keelboats & dinghies plus a separate Saturday & Sunday event consisting of 2 races per day. This format has been popular as not every one can make both days.

### **Monthly Cups:**

We intend to keep the current format of the dinghies on one day & the keelboats on the other day as we have had lots of positive feedback from all those taking part.

I am proposing that we drop the current Allcomer Cups & instead the old traditional cups (St Fillans Cup, Sturrock Cup, Loch Earn Enterprise Cup & McEowan Trophy) will be awarded as the monthly cups eg there will be two winners a dinghy winner & a keelboat winner. When allowed to do prize givings again they can be awarded at the end of season work party and change hands at the opening work party. Or my preferred option would be for the club to engrave these cups award them at the prize givings but retained by LESC.

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### **Junior & Novice racing:**

By dropping the Allcomer events with dinghies & keelboats, it frees up a number of Sunday mornings. My intention is to get the Junior racing going again for the John McDonald trophy, the Spooky Magic trophy & the Robertson Cup on the Sunday mornings that we free up. We could also run novice adult racing at the same time if there was sufficient interest.

### **Lochearnhead Race:**

As per above we would award the Lochearnhead Bucket & the Lagos Bowl crews race back to a dinghy winner & a keelboat winner.

I also intend to introduce a trophy for the race back open to all. A big thanks to Martin Wilkie for spotting the obvious, the single hander fleet sail all the way up to Lochearnhead & then have no race on the way back with the current format.

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### **Two Friday Races for Keelboats:**

The Shoreline Challenge kindly donated and sponsored by Tom Taylor will take place again this year. The race is great fun and the course takes us round every race mark on the loch.

Dave & Wendy Bain have kindly offered to sponsor another Friday race this year. The race starts at the club house to Lochearnhead, back down to St Fillans and finishes at the club or vice versa depending on wind direction on the day.

## **NHC The need for change**

I am proposing that we adopt the RYA NHC scheme for cruisers this year. The old PY list for cruisers is no longer supported by the RYA and was last updated in 2012. Even back in 2012 the PY returns from clubs for keelboats was poor to say the least. The PY number confidence level was declared as very low for all but a few boat types.

We have resisted this for many years. My reluctance was based on feedback from members who had sailed at Port Edgar in the past. I mistakenly thought that Port Edgar were using the RYA NHC scheme. However, looking into this, I discovered that they have been using their own in house handicap system. So with this in mind I took a closer look at the RYA NHC scheme and I am convinced this is the way forward & will result in fairer racing across the broad spectrum of keelboats that sail at the club. My hope is that it will also encourage boats who felt they were not competitive in the PY system to come back and race.

## **NHC the basics of how it works**

NHC uses known concepts used internationally in many other countries to analyse and adjust handicap numbers. NHC handicaps individual boats as no two keelboats are the same through elements such as sail size & configuration, number of crew, weight off the boat, equipment on board, engine type, fin keel, bilge keel, drop keel etc etc. The handicaps are time correction

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factors and are multiplied by the boats elapsed time to give its corrected time.

I have a club laptop loaded up with the HAI's software which is approved by the RYA and has the RYA formulas built in.

On the first race of the season everyone starts on their NHC base number. Any boat that does not have a number can get one. I just contact the RYA technical department with the boat details and they have a software package that gives the boat in question the base number. As well as the NHC numbers the HAI's software will do the PY dinghy results, all results are outputted in Excel which removes all the long hours of making spreadsheets which I currently do.

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For those interested in the maths and how it works, along with this newsletter I have attached the RYA National Handicap for keelboat (NHC) results software calculation document.

Please note the document mentions Club Series & Regatta Series, the RYA no longer recommend using the Regatta series as it changes results too aggressively over a short series of races. The recommended formula is the Club Series which is the one we would adopt. The Club Series is a much more gradual correction which makes it impossible for people to "sandbag" their results in the hope of then winning. So all we need to do is use the software.

On the odd occasion when I am not at the club the last adjusted NHC numbers will be available in the race hut. This will enable a quick set of PROVISIONAL results to be displayed which I can then update in the software and produce a VALIDATED set of results. In time I will train some willing volunteers on the software.

To ensure this is a gradual and sensible handicap adjustment for LESG I would suggest that we don't adjust handicaps' in the following conditions:

1. Wind direction due North.
2. Wind direction due South.
3. Wind light / patchy drifting conditions.
4. Races that have less than 5 starters.

Now you can say that this brings in an element of personal handicap & yes it will. However so does the current Dinghy PY scheme, as an example take the Laser class, returns come in from Clubs all over the country from every level of Laser sailor, the RYA Squad sailors, Academy sailors, club sailors and beginners so there already is an element of personal ability built in to the resulting numbers. The beauty with the NHC is that it will also in time find a suitable number for that particular boat on Loch Earn and it doesn't matter whether you carry a spinnaker or not for example as the numbers will adjust to suit the boat set up. Ultimately I hope this will encourage more people to take part as they will feel they have a fairer handicap.

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I hope that helps give people a flavour of what the NHC scheme is.

### Race Hut Starts

In a normal season we need 216 names to cover 4 people doing duty over the length of the season, this already proves extremely challenging for me and results in numerous people doing 4 or more duties per season.

During the restrictions last year it became obvious if we were to get racing we were going to need to do so with less volunteers.

So we focussed on rescue, 2 people from the same household / bubble with an RYA approved level 2 powerboat qualification or deemed competent to that level by our training principal. The rescue team set the course, set the automatic timer and went afloat.

This relied on using sound signals with no flags & people being honest with their starting and recording their own elapsed times. This worked extremely well and allowed us to get some racing in, the feedback from all was extremely positive & I know of many clubs who didn't manage to get official club racing going. There were numerous times where someone was around to take finish times at the hut but it was never a given. There could be a similar situation this coming season.

I would like to extend a big thank you to Frank who has adjusted our starter timer to accommodate multiple starts automatically. He has also introduced a traffic light system which

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will be mounted on the East side of the race hut and will be clearly visible from the water giving us an audible alert and visual.

So our new proposed start sequence will be:

6 minute gun & red light on

- 6 minutes to the keelboat start.

3 minute gun & amber light on

- 3 minutes to the keelboat start, 6 minutes to the dinghy start.

0 minute gun and green light on for 5 seconds, red & amber lights off.

- Keelboat start & 3 minutes to the dinghy start.

+ 3 minute gun and green light on for 5 seconds

- Dinghy start.

You will note we are proposing setting the keelboats off first as a trial this year. The keelboat fleet generally prefer longer courses, they are heavier and slower to tack etc than a dinghy. With a congested start line with the shore at one end it is felt safer to set them off first.

### **Growing the dinghy fleet**

I had numerous conversations last year with Andy McKeowan & Martin Wilkie on how we could get more dinghies on the start line. I have already mentioned the proposal for a race back from Lochearnhead for all, not just the crews taking part in the Lagos Bowl. This will be implemented for this season.

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Andy made what I believe to be a great observation and a potential for growing the dinghy fleet. What Andy has witnessed is that he knows lots of ex students who would love to sail but money is tight meaning they can't own their own boats. As a Club we have 5 x Wayfarers, 2 x 420s, 2 x RS Fevas & 2 x Solos. That is a potential for 11 club boats out racing equating to potentially 20 new individual members. Andy has agreed to help Susan implement a plan of how this would work in practice. More to follow.

Martin has also agreed to pick up the role of dinghy fleet captain. If there is any ideas or questions from the dinghy fleet owners you can get in touch with Martin & Andy via the following email address:

[dinghies@lochearnsc.com](mailto:dinghies@lochearnsc.com)

Please take the time to review and send me any feedback or questions that you may have by the 28th of February. [colintait59@btinternet.com](mailto:colintait59@btinternet.com)

Also if anyone has not seen their boat on the dinghy or keelboat register and has any update on sail numbers, boat names or crew names please get in touch with me with the details.

Looking forward to seeing you all at the club soon.

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