

August 2017

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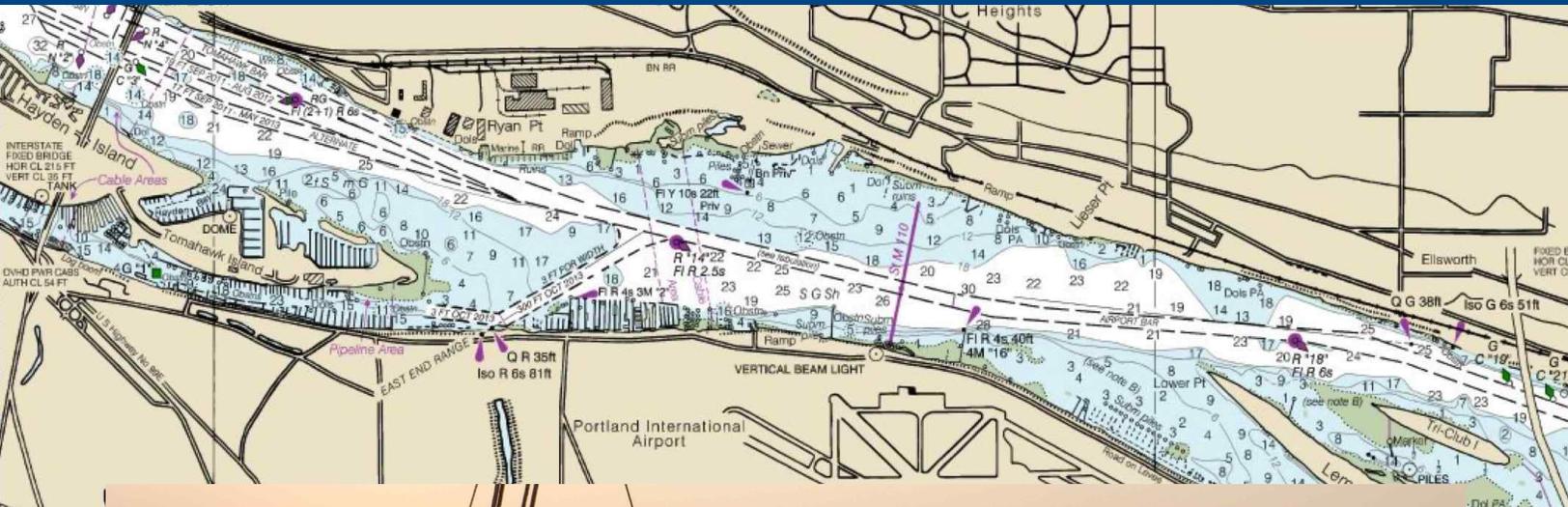
Race Report

August 2017

SYSCO Board Minutes



Small Yacht Sailing Club of Oregon STARTING LINE



A spectacular wild fire smoke-enhanced sunset during the last spinnaker run on Tuesday, August 8. Photo courtesy of Hoang Tran.

From the Front

Bruce Newton, Commodore

SYSCO's newest event – the SYSCO Short-handed Soaker – was a blast, as described later in this issue. However, we got a little feedback that some people were not aware of the event and would have entered if they were. This prompted a discussion about how we communicate with the racing community. As you should know, the racing calendar is published in January and is accessible on sailpdx.org and in the Facebook. In addition, we try to send out reminders via email. We send messages to our members and OCSA sends out messages to the OCSA members. The folks that are missing from these emails are crew members and other interested non-members. We discussed setting up another self-subscribing email venue such as a googlegroup. But we already have a Facebook account and the idea of maintaining another outlet was not appealing. So we plan to use Facebook more to send out event reminders. Please encourage your crew and others to “like” our SYSCO on Facebook page (at <https://www.facebook.com/syscosailing/>) and we will try to keep that current with upcoming events.

The highlight of the sailing season is coming up – the SYSCO St. Helens Race and Cruise! Join your sailing comrades for a fun race from the confluence of the Willamette to the city dock in St. Helens. The day usually starts out with a leisurely (read drifting) start, a relaxing sail along Sauvie Island, and an exciting finish as the wind builds through the afternoon. Last year we had a few boats attempt to drift backwards across the starting line, then the race committee proceeded to harass the racers with water cannon, finally winds in the low 20's forced a few boats to retire and caused one dismasting. So you never know what to expect. After the race, the teams meet at the gazebo for dinner, announcement of the results, and a party. Each boat that enters will get a commemorative beer glass and more glasses will be available for purchase. The next day is a casual cruise back to Portland with lots of swimming along the way. The race is on Saturday, August 26, with the return on Sunday. Please join us for one of the few events where we get the whole SYSCO community together. Read the Notice of Race [here](#) and be sure to register at sailpdx.org.

See you on the water.



Cal 20s under spinnaker on July 28. Photo courtesy of Mark McCuddy.

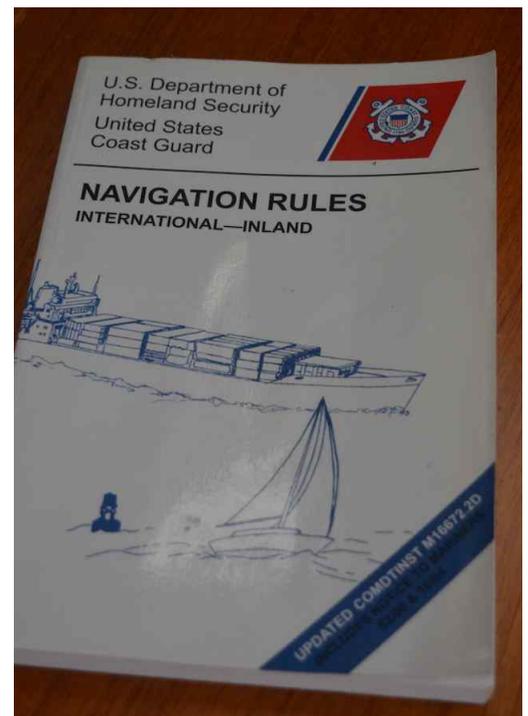
From the Rear: Rules of the Road

Nat Powning, Rear Commodore

In 2015 the Portland Spirit encountered an unusually large crowd of anchored and rafted up boats impeding the channel on the Willamette River. These small boats were spectators of the Red Bull Flugtag event taking place just south of the Hawthorne Bridge. I wasn't there at the time but have watched a number of videos of the incident on YouTube and am amazed how many boats refused the Coast Guard and Sheriff's demands to hoist anchor and move out of the channel. What was even more amazing, though, is when the Spirit kept on pushing through rafts of these boats causing multiple collisions.

This week, by decision of a USCG judge, the captain who was running the Portland Spirit that day had his merchant mariner credentials suspended for one month. His ruling does make sense as it seems the collisions certainly could have been avoided. In the videos that I've seen it appeared the captain could have backed out, or even simply stopped and waited as it was a calm day. The judge's opinion was that the captain should have been aware of the crowd's presence and either waited to cast lines until a path could be cleared or, perhaps, take the cruise on a different course that day. He may have violated rule 8 but it seems to me the real problem was dozens of boaters violating several provisions of rule 9 blocking a narrow channel. Boaters who didn't appear to receive even a slap on the wrist! It's my opinion that more citations should be handed out for blatant violations of the navigation rules. If not citations, at least warnings would help educate amateur boaters and get them to take the rules seriously.

It can be boring stuff but every skipper should read each line in the USCG Navigation Rules and Regulations Handbook. It's freely available in PDF form online and some of us are actually required by law to keep a copy onboard. At minimum, consider going through the inland version of rules 4 through 18. Even if you think you know it all you seriously might learn a few things, especially with regard to the conduct between power vessels which we all are at some point. For example, did you know that power vessels going with the current in a narrow channel (east to west in our local playground) are stand-on over power vessels travelling up-stream? Keep a copy on your coffee table and let me know what surprising bits you find buried in this interesting set of legalese.



Upcoming Notices and Dates to Remember

SYSCO Summer Twilight Series July 18 – Aug 31
(Tues & Thurs)

ISC Beer Can Race

Aug 25

**SYSCO St. Helens
Race and Cruise**

Aug 26 – 27

RCYC Long Distance Race

Sept 9 – 10

OWSA Set Sail for a Cause

Sept 16

PYC Fall Regatta

Sept 23 – 24

PYC Robert A Smith Regatta

Oct 7 – 8

Free Bowl of Soup (was Aug 19)
Charity Beer Can Race CANCELLED



Above: The J/105 fleet starting line at Whidbey Island Race Week. This year there were thirteen J/105s competing. Portland's Troublemaker took first in the J/105 fleet for the week! Photo courtesy of Free Bowl of Soup.

Right: Merlin does a text book spinnaker douse racing in Whidbey Island Race Week. Merlin brought the Melges 24 fleet third place trophy home from WIRW this year. Photo courtesy of Mark McCuddy,



Soaker Madness

Tod Bassham

“Wet and wild” is an apt description of the first annual SYSCO Short-Handed Soaker (SSS) regatta, held July 11 and 13, 2017. The SSS features single, double, or triple-handed racing (depending on the boat size), but allows extra crew on board, who may not hand, reef or steer, but are allowed to wield water cannon at enemy boats. Some 35 boats joined the fray, including several pirate boats who neglected to register, but came out anyway, no doubt hoping to swoop down on crippled vessels and board them in a volley of H₂O.

Conditions featured brilliant sunshine and gusty, shifty N, NW, and W winds. The race committee was not entirely sure how to set up the course, given the competing objectives of (1) providing short-handed racers with a challenge, but not too much of a challenge, and (2) keeping boats in close proximity to each other for maximum soaking. The race committee chose a wide start line, thinking that would reduce the likelihood of collisions between short-handed boats. The race committee also set up a favorable pin end, to keep short-handed boats from crashing into the race committee boat. But this just clustered everyone down at the pin end, negating the benefit of a wide start line, and the wide start line meant that boats at the pin had a hard time seeing the pennant and start flags. Lesson Learned #1: The RC should use a short, square start line, and just put lots of fenders on the race committee boat.

As to courses, the smaller boats were given a course with an offset mark and lots of roundings (e.g. S-1-2-5-1-2-5-1-F), with the intent of keeping the boats together to maximize soaking opportunities. This seemed to work reasonably well, although making the offset mark in the shifting winds made the spinnaker/no spinnaker decision a tough one. Most boats on this course opted to fly under plain sail, given the gusty conditions, reachy course, and shorthanded crews. But the boats that bravely put up the kite saw impressive gains over their white-sailed brethren, interspersed with even more impressive wipe-outs. Larger boats were given a long course with fewer roundings (e.g. S-2-14-2-F), which unfortunately presented fewer options for close-order battle.

Both courses had downwind finishes, again in the hope that boats would cluster as they approached the finish line and massively soak each other while the race committee sat back and enjoyed the spectacle. This backfired bigly. One by one boats eased alongside the committee boat, released a full broadside into our faces (soaking all the paperwork), and then sailed off chortling. Lesson Learned #2: Next year the event notice should specify that soaking the RC boat is an automatic DSQ; either that, or SYSCO should outfit the RC boat with some serious firepower. We're talking fire hoses here.

Nonetheless, the RC did enjoy watching the many battles that spontaneously erupted whenever two boats got within range of each other. Several tactical lessons stand out. First, the critical thing is possession of the weather gauge (a concept familiar to anyone who has read the Hornblower or Aubrey/Maturin books about naval warfare in the Napoleonic age). Boats attacking or defending from windward had a huge advantage in range and effective firepower.

Second, size matters: notwithstanding that the event notice limited soaking to other class boats, some of the bigger boats used their large crew size, height advantages, and gravity to deliver devastating deluges into the cockpits of smaller boats. Whether this was consistent with fair sailing and Corinthian spirit is a point to ponder. On the other hand, this was a soaker ferchristssake. What does fair sailing have to do with it? And what dripping whiner would protest for infraction of the event notice?

Third, praise the Lord and pass the ammunition: reloading by dragging your soaker in the river never works; the boats capable of a sustained rate of fire kept one or more buckets in the cockpit or lashed to the mast for replenishing supply. Bonus tip: the buckets can be used in extremis as one-shot, large-bore carronades to support a close-order assault or last-ditch defense.

Fourth, certain mass weapons of water delivery are banned by the Geneva convention and the racing rules. No plastic water balloons, please.

From the RC perspective, it looked like most boats had a good time. Several boats continued the battle long after the race was over. What did you think of the event? Should SYSCO add this event to its permanent repertoire? Maybe combine the Tuesday and Thursday races into a single Shorthanded Soaker regatta, held on Wednesday evening? What changes or improvements would you recommend? Send your thoughts and suggestions to race_captain@syscosailing.org, or sysco-racecaptain@sailocsa.org.



Left: Strange Brew headed up wind. Right: Bite Me headed down wind. A good night for J/24 sailing on July 28. Photos courtesy of Mark McCuddy.

Racing Report

Michael Morrissey, Vice Commodore/Race Captain

Hard to believe that summer is $\frac{3}{4}$ over and only a few races left for the Summer Twilight series. Overall, it's been a very good racing summer with better than average winds coming up the Columbia, even races with winds over 25 mph that tested gear and crews. This year we have 45 boats racing on Tuesday night and 59 on Thursday which makes for nice viewing from the river or shoreside. Sunsets have been spectacular thanks to wildfires out of British Columbia and the warm evenings have lent themselves to rehashing the races on the dock drinking a few beers. Race Committees have done a great job in setting courses and getting racing off on time. Thanks to all the volunteers, Fleet Captains, PROs and Coordinators, Dennis Damore and Randy Poff for helping RC find platform boats, answer questions and be a great help to the SYSCO organization. The man behind the scenes for recording the race results on Sail.pdx is Gary Whitney. He has faithfully done this job for several years and has made the job easier for the Race Captain and the SYSCO team. While there have been a few glitches RC should remember that the scoring system in place works best when RC

1. Use the Finish Sheets for recording all boats in the order they finish
2. Mark down real time of finish (e.g. 19:50:45 for a finish time of 7 pm 50 min 45 seconds)

The results get enter into a black box somewhere in the Regatta Network Cloud and it spits out the Class finish order including PHRF calculations for elapsed times. They are then posted on sailpdx.com usually within a few days of the race. If there is an error in the finish order then an email from the Fleet Captain to the Race Captain should happen and it will be corrected. Although there is a lot of effort behind the scenes, it all works amazingly well and SYSCO members have a lot to be proud of. This year we ran the first SYSCO Short-Handed Soaker which was a success with about 20 boats racing on Tuesday and another 20 on Thursday. The race was held during the open July period when several boats are off to Whidbey Island Race Week. Nat Prowning and Tod Bassham volunteered themselves and their boats for RC duties running the risk of being soak by errant water canons, so a big thanks to them. The fun SYSCO Race and Cruise to St. Helen's will be coming up August 26 & 27 so if you are looking for some more sailing with friends and crew be sure to sign up.



Merits sailing on Tautoine. Photo taken by Sara Morrissey on OBI.



A parade of Martin 24s! Photo courtesy of Nat Powning.

August 2017 SYSCO Board Minutes

Don Woodhouse, Secretary

August 7

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm by Commodore Bruce Newton.

In attendance were Randy Poff, Michael Morrissey, Bruce Newton, Don Woodhouse, Mike Daly, Warren Dalby, Gary Bruner, Rock Kent, Scott Stevenson, Nat Powning, and Bill Sanborn.

Finance

The Treasurer reported that we have roughly \$6,500 in our checking and \$3,600 in the Pancho/Reserve fund. We are still projecting either a deficit or a budget year in which we cannot contribute to the Pancho/emergency reserve. Historically, we typically contribute around \$1,000 each year to the reserve fund. Scott was asked to prepare a budget analysis for the September meeting so that the Board can determine if a dues increase is necessary. If a dues increase is needed, it would need to be approved at the November General Meeting.

Membership Report

Two new memberships were voted in:

- Vladimir & Mariya Gruntovskiy, owners of a MacGregor 25 named Rocinante
- Kent & Patty Picknell, owners of a Melges 24 named Apex

Welcome. Total membership stands at 134 with 120 full and 14 associate members.

Social

Preparations are underway for the SYSCO St. Helens race/cruise.

Newsletter, Social Media, Webpage

There was discussion about adding a Google group to the other forms of communication. The primary advantage being that people who are not SYSCO members but who participate in events (e.g., crew) could receive regular notices through an email subscription. The conclusion was that we should use Facebook more for the broader audience and continue using direct email for members.

Racing Report

Michael Morrissey reported we have 45 boats on Tuesdays and 59 boats on Thursdays participating in the Summer Twilight Series. After 8/17 there will be no second races due to shortened daylight hours. The Short-handed Soaker was a success with lots of feedback about how much fun everyone had.

Planning for Next Year

For the Dual Bridge Duel it was decided that a second perpetual trophy will be created for the winner of the short course. For the SYSCO Beer Can we decided not to continue the Prostate Cancer Foundation fundraising aspect. A proposal was made to hold a single-handed race in combination with the Beer Can race. It could be a scored event

that would have separate starts on a regularly scheduled Friday Night Beer Can. Regarding the Short-handed Soaker race, after considering shifting to a one-day event on a Wednesday or Friday, the Board decided to keep the same format (Tuesday and Thursday). There was some preliminary discussion about the calendar in general with a proposal to push the calendar later into the year to have more sailing in

August and September and less in the early spring. Further discussion on the calendar is planned for the September meeting. We need to have the 2018 calendar decided by mid-October.

Bruce adjourned the meeting at 8:10.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Woodhouse, Co-Secretary



Ranger 20s racing under spinnaker on July 28. Photo courtesy of Mark McCuddy.