

JUNE 2022

FROM THE FRONT
TREES

FROM THE REAR
LIGHTNING

RACE REPORT
TACKING TAKES TIME
THE OCSA FOUR
MINUTE RULE

MEMBERSHIP
CHAIR REPORT



SMALL YACHT SAILING CLUB OF OREGON STARTING LINE



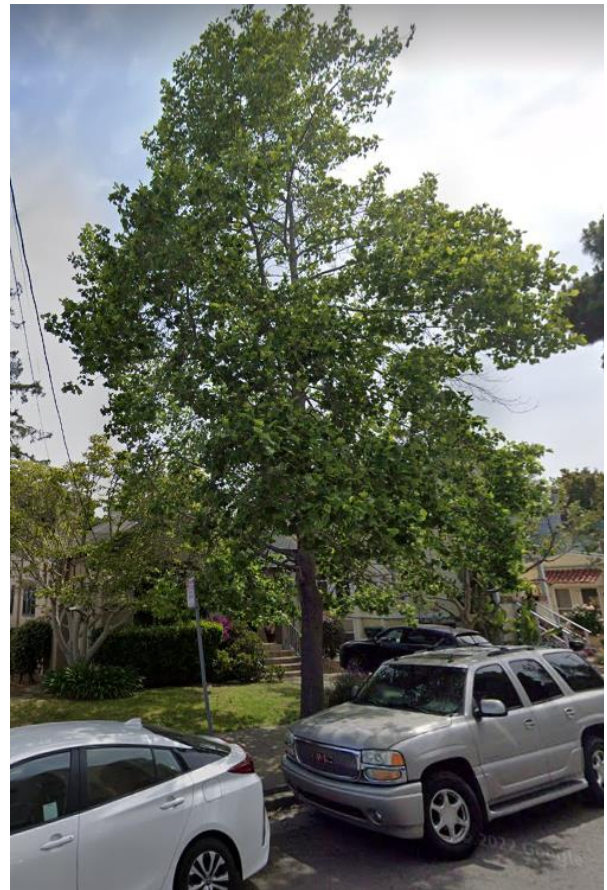
À Demain! June 23 Race

Trees

Trees. I like trees. The variegated lush greens of Doug Firs, spruce, yew, and pine trees have a lot to do with what drew me here in the first place and why I stay. I feel comfortably at home in the verdant PNW. I especially like the yellow green tips of growth on my evergreens in the spring. Just lately, I planted a native dogwood that will likely out live me.



Gregg's new dogwood tree



One he planted in Oakland long ago

This crazy late spring freshet, this forest of whole trees ripping down the river this June, gave me pause to think. Fires, drought, floods, and landslides. Erosion. These disasters send their remnants downstream and affect us as all. Maybe we are observing nature healing itself in real time. Large woody debris. New sandbars and eddies. Oxbows. Wetlands. Habitats broken- habitats restored.

There are things we can and cannot control. Trees coming through the racecourse is Mother Nature just doing its thing.

FROM THE FRONT

GREGG BRYDEN – COMMODORE

However, we as rational beings can agree to stem the tide of self-inflicted harm.

This is the spirit of sailboat racing. We have collectively crafted a gentleperson's agreement to keep each other safe, abide by agreed upon rules, and self-regulate our behavior. Our lives are priceless. Our toys are really expensive!

One certainty is that we will have to accept change. Let's strive to manage what we can. One easy way to do this is being patient and kind to each other. Respect and consideration go a long way to avoiding conflict before it ever starts. These are the ideals of the Corinthian Spirit, a goal we should all strive to live up to on the racecourse--and in life.

The SYSCO End of Summer Series BBQs are on! Come join us Tuesday 5 July and/or Thursday July 7 on the Columbia Crossings lawn after the races for burgers and camaraderie. Help us celebrate 2021 Trophy Winners at long last!

Fair Winds and Clean Starts!

Gregg Bryden



Tree at the starting line, May 31 - photo by Gregg Bryden



Nice day, finally! - photo by Gregg Bryden

Lightning

It was mid-July and a racer told me a story that made the hair stand up on the back of my neck. During a Regatta a thunderstorm came through, and skipper and crew were debating whether they should go in - but the storm was so beautiful and exciting to see, they couldn't resist being in the thick of it.

Plus, the Race Committee wasn't abandoning the race, so they just kept sailing. Once the race was finished and said racers were retreating back to their moorage, they witnessed a lightning strike hit the water between PYC and the Committee Boat.



Thunder Pig sports a lightning bolt on their kite. Looks stormy behind them, too. - Photo by Anna Campagna

Thus ensued a discussion between members of the SYSCO board and the Commodore of OCSA on what racers should do in case a thunderstorm comes up. We do not have a lightning policy for SYSCO.

Do we need a policy? How do we begin to create a lightning policy, since it would be impossible to determine how close is TOO close when lightning is happening near the racecourse?

In addition, if SYSCO makes a policy and it is not followed, then SYSCO may be liable. We agreed that our general policy is that it is up to the individual skippers to decide when it's unsafe to be out on the water. Race Committee also should use their own discretion to

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ANNA CAMPAGNA – REAR COMMODORE

determine if a race should be abandoned. We should make sure that Race Committee knows that they have the authority to cancel a race in the event of lightning.

This got me thinking that I needed to do a write-up, and I went down the rabbit-hole of online reading about lightning. Actually, since I was a kid I have been fascinated by lightning, and I have a deep respect for how devastating lightning strikes can be. NOAA has a great page on lightning basics on its [website](#). NOAA's safety advice for lightning: "When thunder roars, go indoors." If you can hear it, you're close enough for a strike. For more, head over to the [lightning safety module](#) from NOAA's National Weather Service. : <https://www.weather.gov/safety/lightning>

Lightning is a giant discharge of electricity accompanied by a brilliant flash of light and a loud crack of thunder. The spark can reach over five miles in length, raise the temperature of the air by as much as 50,000 degrees Fahrenheit, and contain a hundred million electrical volts. Lightning can travel more than 15 miles before it hits the ground. On average, 54 people are killed by lightning a year.

Here's a fun fact I found - 80% of people who die from lightning strikes are male! How far away is that storm? After you see a flash of lightning, count the number of seconds until you hear the thunder. For every 5 seconds the storm is one mile away. Divide the number of seconds you count by 5 to get the number of miles.

Most people do not realize that they can be struck by lightning even when the center of a thunderstorm is 10 miles away and there are blue skies overhead.

[National Geographic](#) has some flash facts about lightning:



Beautiful shot of the storm toward which we are slowly trolling. My salmon rod is in the foreground. The airport is in the background. We just heard thunder. We are in our 14' Klamath fishing boat. Hmmmmmm... getting nervous.

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- Did you know that rubber shoes do nothing to protect you from lightning?
- That talking on the telephone is the leading cause of lightning injuries inside the home?
- That you should not take a shower or bath while there is lightning going on around your house?
- That standing under a tall tree is one of the most dangerous places to take shelter?

When I lived in the high desert of New Mexico, I was heavily involved in Search & Rescue, and I taught lightning safety trainings. We knew to be off the peaks of the mountains (i.e. below tree line) by noon during the summer monsoon season. But a lot of hikers didn't.

I would say we carried a body off the mountain every-other year due to a lightning strike. I knew that if you were caught in the mountains during a thunderstorm, you should seek shelter in the trees, but not under the only tall tree around (because that's attractive to lightning).

Well, the same goes for being on a sailboat. Imagine you're out by Buoy 14. Your mast is the tallest thing around. But if you've motored into your marina, there are lots of other tall sticks for the lightning to be attracted to.

And what does it mean if your hair starts to stand on end during a thunderstorm?

Once I was leading a bicycle tour in Italy and got caught in a big storm. We continued riding through a soaking shower. We heard thunder, but continued to ride because we were in the countryside, and I didn't see a likely cafe in which to take shelter.

Then I smelled ozone. What does ozone smell like?

Metallic. Like a burning wire. A "clean" smell, like chlorine. Sweet and pungent. It smells like an electrical spark. If you smell ozone, or notice your hair standing on end, the negative base



Lightning was a common sight in my fifteen years of living in Santa Fe, New Mexico. This is a shot from the bridge overlooking the Rio Grande in Taos. - Photo by Austin Cannon.

FROM THE REAR

ANNA CAMPAGNA — REAR COMMODORE



A memorable stormy night in June, 2019. If we heard thunder we probably ignored it, because it was simply too beautiful to consider leaving the racecourse.

of the lightning clouds is making you and your surroundings, now positively charged, to become attracted to the clouds. You are in imminent danger of being struck by lightning.

If you are caught in this situation, besides high-tailing it outta there (or getting off the bikes and seeking shelter in a winemaker's cantina - how convenient - an impromptu wine tasting!), there are a few things you can do to minimize the risk of getting hurt.

If you're on your boat, get everyone below decks (if it has an enclosed cabin) and close the hatch. But certainly, before it gets to the point where your hair is standing on end, take the sails down, start your motor, and get back to your moorage and off the water as soon as you possibly can.

If you are on Race Committee, please consider abandoning the race when you hear thunder so that the racers don't have to think too hard about making the safe decision to quit sailing and head for home.

Anna Campagna

Rear Commodore



It's up to the discretion of the Race Committee to abandon the races for lightning danger, and we also encourage racers to decide for themselves how to stay safe in a storm.

Tacking Takes Time

Do you perhaps live with a person, or are friends with someone, who somehow thinks that driving from place to place is equivalent to using the Star Trek transporter so that getting to a friend's dinner is instantaneous when you walk out the door? You know the situation. You're supposed to be at someone's house to eat a marvelously prepared meal at, say, 6:30. The lovingly prepared food will come out to the table later at around 7 or so. Continuing the hypothetical, let's say you live in, oh, I don't know, Vancouver. And let's say the dinner is in, how about, Lake Oswego. On a good day, the drive takes 30 minutes. To be on time, you should leave at best by 6:00. But the person going with you somehow assumes that leaving the house at 6:30 will be just perfect because they assume you will both be transported instantaneously to your host's house. Moreover, dinner isn't really until 7 anyway, right? Rude, perhaps? More to the point of this column, I contend their concept of time and distance is hopelessly flawed, maybe completely broken. They live in the transporter world, the rest of us live in the driving somewhere takes time world – not that it gets under my skin or anything.



June 27 Race - Photo by Anna Campagna

Anyway, without digging into the issues of dinner guest courtesies, the key issue here is that driving a sailboat on the race course from one tactical decision point to another and all of the racing tasks, including tacking, takes time. As sailboat racers we all believe we understand that simple time/distance fact, but we often act as if we have that Star Trek transporter capability. We erroneously assume that our tacks or douses or whatever are instantaneous. We subconsciously believe that the time it takes to perform racing tasks is irrelevant, or at least is a minor factor relative to our tactical decisions. In fact, the opposite is true. In sailboat racing time is just about everything. It's how we are scored, and our management of time, and its race companion, distance, is what wins races. Understanding time and distance at a visceral,

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DENNY DAMORE— RACE CAPTAIN

internal clock level is a skill that is essential to almost every aspect of getting around the course quickly and beating our competition.



High water June 9 - Photo by Anna Campagna

As an example, starting at the start, so to speak, most of you readers would say time and distance management during starting sequences is obvious – manage your pre-start time and don't be over early. While that is very true, it is also too simplistic an understanding of how time, distance, and position play into the start. The complexity of the situation is demonstrated when you are asked to show whether you can predict,

with precision, where you will find and exploit your line position when the gun goes off. Are you a student of that process? When you arrive at the course, do you routinely sail both up and back on the start line once the green buoy is out to know how long it takes you to run the line?

Why is that important you ask? Well, by knowing how long it takes you to run the line from each direction, you will gain time check points to know when to turn and make your final run to the line or drop into a hole that will give you breathing room to foot off and build speed. If you are early on your final approach, you'll know where you'll be as you run down the line so as not to be OCS or, conversely, where you might find a hole if you are running up the line toward the starboard end. Some days that run might be 1 minute, others a minute and a half. That 30 second difference can be the difference between OCS or being in the first row, or the second, or even translate to missing a shift of the first beat. Next race, run the line, time

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yourself, and see how it gets your time/distance clock calibrated so that you make a better start. This is just one example. There are so many more.

So, do you know about the time/distance metrics for your own boat? Do you know how long it takes you to tack in different conditions? Do you know what distance you lose by being in the down speed aspect of your tack? How long does it take you to come back up to speed after a tack? For Iris or Fury, big racer/cruisers, it's a lot longer than on a J-70 or Merit. How does that affect your tactics? How long for your sets and douses? How far do you travel downstream and upstream when you are doing them?

I could go on. The point is to know your boat, your crew, and your competition as you are making tactical decisions with a high level factoring in of the time certain choices are going to take so that you don't get caught behind the proverbial time/distance curve and suffer a disappointing outcome.

A real world example: We were sailing on the Melges with the course being cross current north and south. We had locked into a solid second place of the five boat fleet as we went round the course twice with our closest competition significantly behind us. The breeze lightened, and as we were taking the long cross-Columbia starboard tack (actually diagonally upriver to the current) to Washington to the finish it was clear we would have to make at least one tack on port to actually cross the line. As we worked our way across moving slowly and being patient for the puffs and puffettes to get us to where we thought we could tack and not get swept by the current into the RC (the west end of the line), we glanced back once or twice at the competition. They were significantly downriver on the same board as we were, and were moving slowly. They were not a factor in our tacking decision given how far back they were. In the very light air, we finally tacked to starboard, got swept hard, and couldn't lay the RC end of the line. We tacked back upriver to regain enough distance so we could tack a second time back to the finish. Only then did we notice that the competition was now above



Anika Olsen and George Pandzik finishing Elixir on a wet night for Race Committee duty on a J/24. – Photo by Anna Campagna

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us upriver and had tacked to make their final run to the finish line. They were coming toward us with speed on a significant puff. We were on the wrong tack to defend. Hopelessly, we did another down-speed tack to try to beat them to the finish, but their momentum carried them past us to finish about a quarter boat length ahead. Crap. We had them in the bag, but gave it up with those two additional tacks.

What happened? Our three tacks to their one in the light air took time. With each down-speed tack and the consequential time it took to come back up to speed to gain ground against the current lost us ground to the competition. During those tacking intervals, the competition was staying their course going upriver until all they had to do was a single tack to the finish. Adding insult to injury, by not monitoring them continuously while we focused on our trim and anticipating the tack to the finish, we made the compounding mistake of trying to put a little “in the bank” so that we would be assured of making the line. That decision forced us to tack a smidge too late to defend when they tacked to the finish, and we weren’t able to stay between our competition and the finish line. They took advantage and sailed slightly below us with speed to beat us to the line.



May 31 - Photo by Dena Kent

A couple of simple take-aways from our mistake: In light air, tacks take longer to do and to get up to speed afterwards. Duh. Seems obvious, but how many times in light to medium air have you subconsciously assumed you would instantaneously get beamed back to your pre-tack speed and then been miffed that it takes so much longer, which then puts you in the wrong spot at the wrong time. So the lesson is to minimize the number of tacks you make in light air, which is generally always good advice any time. But even more importantly is to know how long your tack will take to complete and how long it will take to get back up to speed.

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And second, in a non-time related lesson, in the heat of the battle do not get tunnel focus and lose track of your competition. In football they call the defensive person who follows the movement of a run/pass/option quarterback the “spy.” Someone on the boat should always be the spy monitoring the closest competition and then talking about it so that the crew can make smart tactical decisions in advance rather than attempting to be reactive, which is often too late.

What is the net-net here? There is a saying relative to life and career performance that goes something like this: “If you can’t take the time to do something right the first time, how are you going to find the time to do it over?” The same kind of message applies here. If you can’t take the time to learn your own lessons about time and distance for your boat, how will you find the time and a technique to make up time on the course that you’ve given up because you made poor time related choices in the first place? The simple answer is that you won’t. You’ll find yourself continually behind the time/distance curve with time as your enemy. Make it your friend instead. Get better at managing your time and distance sensitivities than your competition. Then, when it counts, you’ll be on time rather than stuck in mid-fleet traffic and late to the dinner, I mean the finish - not that it should get under your skin or anything.

See you on the river,

Denny Damore

Race Captain

The OCSA 4-minute rule

Michael Morrissey and Bruce Newton

Merit 25 Fleet Co-Captains

The Oregon weather pattern this spring has been unusually rainy and cool and has created some interesting racing on the river. It was a strange Tuesday night in early June when the skippers and crew found themselves with a very strong current, very light winds and boats motoring upriver in deadly fear of being swept over the line before the start. This brings us to the 4 minute rule which covers the use of the motor before the start. This can be considered a modification of the Racing Rules of Sailing and is particular to the Columbia River and its unique conditions. In the OCSA Racebook (pg. 69) in the General Sailing Instructions 11.6 states:

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A boat that has not started, whether or not racing, may use propulsion without penalty as long as the boat does not start for at least 4 minutes after discontinuing propulsion.

For some light wind starts this often means you motor upriver to a spot where you feel comfortable and shut you motor off sometime at 4+ minutes before your fleet's start. This rule also applies to boats that are late for the start because of traffic, equipment malfunction or other reasons.

If you are "over early" at the start and you can't make it back to the line quickly to start because of current and light winds, you can also motor back to a starting position but need to wait 4 minutes after you turn off your motor before you cross the line to start the race.

On race night, if you are caught upwind of the line (with 5 minutes to go) and realize you cannot get back above the line by sailing, you could theoretically motor for a few minutes (let's say 2 minutes) to get back to a position below the line and shut your motor off. You would still have to wait 4 minutes from the time you shut your motor to begin your race which by my math would be 1 minute after the official start of your fleet.

It's all part of racing on the Columbia River. It's not only important that you are a smart sailor, but good at math as well.

Some quick definitions: If you are over early, you have not started regardless of your pennant going down; you are "on the course side or OCS." Boats are "racing" when the prep flag goes up; which is why Rule 11.6 includes "whether or not racing."



Tuesday night boats motoring upriver before the start to counter effects of light winds and a very strong current. - Photo by Sara Morrissey.

SYSCO BOARD MEETING MINUTES

JUNE 6, 2022

How to find out what you volunteered for!

Your SYSCO Membership: Everyone is part of our club success!

SYSCO runs by volunteers, which keeps our prices down for races, social events, and administering the club business. When you renew your membership, you sign up for two volunteer tasks. Do you remember what they were? Ha! Here is how you find out:

1. Find the renewal email that Scott Stevenson sent you when you re-upped. Use Scott's name in your search, and the term "The SYSCO 2022 Directory," and "Thank you for your new or renewed SYSCO membership for 2022."
2. Click on the link he provides for the Online Directory. **Do not share this link! It is a member benefit!**
3. Look over to the lower right hand side of the page, and you will see the Member Interests. The Legend tells what the various posts are, and the List will show you what you signed up to do!
4. Contact the best person, ask me, or ask the commodore how to plug in and help!

Questions? Write me, Carisa: membership at sign syscosailing dot org

Carisa Bohus

Membership Chair

Support the 2022 Ranger 20 Nationals! Buy Merch and Volunteer

The 2022 Ranger 20 Nationals are being held 28-31 July HERE IN PORTLAND! You can help support this SYSCO sponsored event by buying cool R20 Nationals [MERCHANDISE HERE](#).

Then sport your cool new duds by volunteering for Race Committees, Race Central, and the Sunday BBQ. You can sign up to [VOLUNTEER HERE](#).

SYSCO BOARD MEETING MINUTES

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Attendees: Gregg Bryden, Rick Samuels, Denny Damore, Bruce Newton, Michael Morrissey, Michelle Bennett, and Sloan Kimball

Absent: Don Schultz, Katie Braun Scott Stevenson, Anna Campagna , Melissa Cearlock, Jan Burkhart, Cheryl Watson, Phillip Martindale, Mark Salholm, Dennis Burkhart,

Call to Order: This meeting was called to order electronically via Zoom at 17:40.

1. Commodore's Opening Remarks

- a. **Summer Series** - is up and going
- b. **Protest issue** – there was some unfriendly discord on the racecourse, but that seems to have been resolved peacefully. We will monitor the situation and determine if further action is necessary.
- c. **Sailwave and Regatta Network** – looking at different solutions for scoring. Determined that it is more important that we have a PERSON doing scoring, what software they are using is less important.
- d. **Sponsor Offer from West Marine** – Nothing yet – following up.
- e. **SYSCO Emails** – Ironed out member list so we believe email blasts work and is reaching all it should be.
- f. **Trophies** – seem to be good to go
- g. **Summer BBQ** – needs volunteers – reach out to Anna

2. Membership Report

- a. **Membership** – Carisa submitted an email report on new members.
- b. **New Members** – Unanimous Approval
 - Ryan Barnes, S/V Desperado NY 36, Regular Member
 - Racy Olson, Associate Member
 - Adam Zimmerman, Merit 25, Ruth, Reg member
 - Erin Nielson, Associate Member
 - Douglas Agnew, Junkyard Dog, Chote 27' – Reg Member
 - Leonard Bottleman, Merit 22, Whisper (from Prineville!) – Reg Member
- c. **Picnic** - Leadership recruiting is happening Anna is taking the lead.

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3. Treasurer's Report

- a. **Balances** No report from Scott this month.
- b. **Anna's Reimbursement** – cleared up – can close books on last year.

4. Race Captain's report:

- a. Email from Eric Rimkus – Gorge needing volunteers for series of races. We will send out a call out for volunteers.
- b. This series is looking good for volunteers
- c. Discussed Race Platform boats, the process should be a little more 'formal'.

5. Fleet Reports

- Fleet 1 – J-105, Melges 24 – Doug Schenk
 - No Report
- Fleet 2 – PHRF A & B – Open
 - No Report
- Fleet 3 – PHRF C, D and Level – Tom MacMenemy.
 - No Report
- Fleet 4 – Martin 24 – David Paul
 - No Report
- Fleet 5 – Merit 25 – Michael Morrissey and Bruce Newton
 - A few new boats – fleet is looking great
- Fleet 6 – J24 – Anna Campagna
 - No Report
- Fleet 7 – Cal 20 – Cheryl Watson
 - No Report
- Fleet 8 – Ranger 20 – Jacky Pitter and Gregg Bryden
 - Nationals coming up
 - Would like to move up in the start sequence sometimes
- Fleet 9 – Catalina 22, Venture 21 – Katie Braun
 - No Report
- Fleet 10 – Cruising Smaller Boats – Mark Salholm
 - No Report

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6. Other Business –

- a. Newsletter always needs pictures and article writers. Please reach out.
- b. Board recruiting is happening for next year. Fleets that haven't had a lot of board representation over the years – you may be getting call 😊.
- c. Next meeting will be moved from 4th of July to the previous week – June 27th.

Adjourned at 18:30

Respectfully submitted –

Sloan Kimball

SYSCO Secretary



OWSA "Tropical Dreams" Beer Can - Photo by Darren Knittle