

Sponsors of the 24-Hour Endurance Yacht Race in 2019



We are fortunate to have this wonderful group of sponsors on board with us for the 24-Hour Endurance Yacht Race 2019. Gibson Sheat Lawyers have agreed to 'sign up' with us as Gold Sponsor for at least the next three years and the winner's trophy will be named the Gibson Sheat Cup for the duration of their Gold Sponsor status. It is wonderful to have their and other sponsors' confidence in the future of this great event.

The recent Rum Regatta brought home some truths for many competitors, particularly those, including Freedom, not paying enough attention to the Sailing Instructions. It was mentioned in the SI's that competing yachts shall not traverse the start/finish line during the race (other than starting and finishing, of course. Many took no notice.

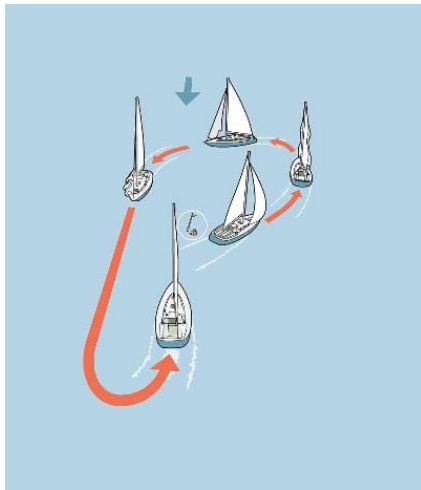
It is not my intention to argue the validity of that rule – the fact that it was in the SI's should be enough reason to take it seriously.

Sailing in darkness adds a different and challenging dimension to the 24-Hour Endurance Yacht Race. While many of us are experienced night sailors, others may not be, and it could be tempting to 'load up' the sailing instructions with many different safety rules. But does that make the race any safer? I doubt it. I don't think we should try and cover any potential risk with another rule; if it doesn't kill the race, we will certainly see a whole lot more protests, potentially taking away the pleasure of yacht racing and possibly ruining some friendships along the way. Having said that, if it's in the SI's we need to abide by it. No question. I understand the RO's frustrations in this regard.

If a plethora of new and additional rules is not going to make the race any safer, what is? I believe the answer is for us to become better skippers and better crew. (With apologies to those excellent and experienced skippers among us). A heightened awareness of potential risks and dangers in any race, not just a night race will go a long way to improve overall safety in yacht racing. It's all about seamanship. Here are a few tips:

- Pick up the Yachting New Zealand Safety Regulations. Try to understand them, discuss them with your crew.

- Perhaps the Sailing Committee could devote a couple of Technical Evenings on the subject of 'safety on the water'.
- Make sure your boat is up to scratch. Is everything in working order? Is your engine operating properly? Do you have enough fuel? Do you have the necessary safety equipment on board; life jackets, inflatable harnesses, jack stays, tethers, working torches (replace the batteries), functioning navigation lights, VHF radios (hand-held for in the cockpit AND one in the cabin), flares, safety rings, dan buoy, wet weather gear.
- Do you know how to recover from a man-overboard (MOB) situation? Check out these articles: <https://www.marineinsight.com/marine-safety/man-overboard-situation-on-ship-and-ways-to-tackle-it/> and <https://www.rya.org.uk/knowledge-advice/cruising-tips/boat-handling-sail/Pages/man-overboard.aspx> Better still, practice the manoeuvre with your crew. The weather and water are getting warmer, so one of your crew may volunteer as a Guinea pig. Make sure to wear a life jacket, though. If nobody is game to dive in, throw a fender overboard.



- Set up a crew briefing before every race; talk through the respective roles of crew members, DISCUSS THE SAILING INSTRUCTIONS, identify rules that have not been seen before in other SI's, alert crew of swinging booms in tacking and gybing manoeuvres, discuss aspects of the race in question that are different from other races and highlight potential risks.
- Participate in the upcoming trial night races on Saturday the 2nd and 23rd of February 2019. Great experience. Identify the navigation lights on the harbour. Give yourself the chance to familiarise yourself with the harbour in darkness – it's quite different from the daytime. Lights everywhere.

Sailing is serious business. It's much more than knowing how to steer a boat through the water. It's about seamanship. More rules in the Sailing Instructions is not going to make you a better yachtsman or woman. Learning how to behave on the water under different circumstances, does.



Theo Muller

Race Director 24-Hour Endurance Yacht Race 2019