

Australian Sailing and Cruising Club

SAILING SEASON 2009–2010

BRIEFING NOTES FOR COMPETITORS

The attention of skippers is drawn to the following important matters:

Safety

Yachts will not be allowed to compete without a current equipment audit form signed by an accredited equipment auditor, which must be lodged with the Club before the yacht's entry will be accepted. Owners are responsible to ensure that all equipment is kept up to date and in good condition throughout the season. Please note that there have been changes to the Special Regulations for this season.

Sailing Instructions

All yachts must have a copy of the 2009–2010 ASCC General Sailing Instructions on board during races. All skippers should read the instructions carefully, which are binding on all competitors.

Safety Certification

All ASCC races require a current equipment audit to at least Category 7 (YA Special Regulations Part 1 Section 2) unless otherwise specified. ASCC also requires the following:

All yachts which do not have navigation lights permanently fitted are required to comply with YA Special Regulations 3.23.4 and 3.23.5 and carry portable navigation lights capable of being attached to the boat.

Recent accidents on the harbour have underlined the needs for all vessels to have adequate navigation lights when on the harbour in poor visibility or after dark and skippers are now liable for a fine of \$5,500 for failure to do so. The Club is concerned that yachts caught out after a race in a falling breeze and after sunset should have proper navigation lights available for the safety of the skippers and their crew. Owners should ensure that their yacht has working navigation lights throughout the season.

Safe Sailing on Sydney Harbour

As we all know, Sydney Harbour can be very busy on summer weekends and evenings during the week. Our continued enjoyment of the harbour for racing depends on all competitors being aware of the needs of other harbour users at all times. Competitors must at all times comply with the requirements of the Marine Safety (General) Regulation 2009. Give way when you are obliged to do so in good time and with clear intent. The harbour looks much smaller from the bridge of a Manly ferry or commercial ship and their manoeuvring room is limited. Do not put yourselves or others in danger by 'cutting it fine'. Plan ahead and give room for other users of the harbour to go about their business in safety.

It is a requirement of NSW Maritime that all yachts competing in ASCC events MUST keep 200 metres from the bow and at least 30 metres from the sides or stern of any ship or ferry underway.

The plan at all times should be to have good situational awareness. There is no need to be caught by surprise by an incoming ship in the Western Channel. If you have a VHF radio on board, monitor Channel 13. Harbour Control regularly provides information on shipping movements as well as weather forecasts and other relevant information. Commercial shipping reports progress to Harbour Control on a regular basis and all this information can help skippers plan the next leg of the race to be safe.

Please be particularly aware of reduced visibility — yachts are not always easily seen and navigation lights can be obscured against the background. Don't hesitate to shine a light on your sails to draw attention to your presence. Also, ferries have a need to meet schedules for commuters so give them a clear path. Also note that whilst in most situations power should

give way to sail, this is not the case when a sailing vessel is overtaking a power vessel. There have been reports that commercial vessels are deliberately slowing to under 4 knots around yachts, so as to gain right of way. We must also be aware of choke points on the harbour. We all know how dense the traffic at Bradleys Head can become. On Saturday afternoons in particular, the large number of boats rounding Bradleys Head close in can be a significant problem for commercial shipping rounding the headland inbound. Skippers **must** be aware of this problem and should endeavour to keep the Safe Water Mark south east of Bradleys Head to port when approaching Bradleys Head from the west or heading north up the harbour.

Incidents when Sailing

Competitors must be aware that the Marine Safety (General) Regulation 2009 prevails when a racing yacht encounters a non-racing vessel during an event, not the racing rules. A yacht that is racing does NOT have any more rights than yachts that are not racing. For example, it is not acceptable to call "Racing" when on port to a yacht on starboard, which is not racing, or in fact to any yacht. The Club will view very seriously any reports of such infringements, and the Race Committee may protest any ASCC yacht involved in such an incident.

Incidents between yachts racing, which result in a protest, will be dealt with by the Club in accordance with the RRS. However, incidents may occur when no protest results or between yachts which are racing and boats which are not. The Club is required to report all incidents which involve a fatality, serious injury and/or significant damage to the nearest NSW Water Police or NSW Police Station immediately, and to report the incident to NSW Maritime in writing within 48 hours. The Club must also report the results of findings of an inquiry in writing to NSW Maritime within 28 days of the incident. Notwithstanding the Club's inquiry, NSW Maritime reserves the right to investigate any incident at any time.

To help with the above requirement, the club will now hold a protest hearing whenever there is a collision causing significant damage, regardless of whether a yacht involves takes responsibility and retires or takes a penalty. ASCC further requires that yachts report ALL incidents to the club, regardless of severity, as it is a condition of our Aquatic licence that we keep on file reports on all incidents involving competing yachts.

What is 'significant damage'? The significance of the cost of repairing damage resulting from a collision will vary with the value of the boat. As a general guide, if it is worth submitting an insurance claim then the damage is significant. The figure of \$5,000 is mentioned in NSW Maritime Regulations.

Yachting NSW and NSW Maritime have produced a simplified form for the use of competitors to report incidents between yachts racing which are not subject to a protest. A more detailed form is required to be used if one of the vessels involved is not racing.

All forms will be available on the ASCC web site www.ascc.org.au.

Happy sailing
Costa Rozakis
Vice Commodore.