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Newsletter of the Grafham Flying Fifteen Fleet

Issue 6 - July, 2018

Racing

Current Series

High pressure has continued to dominate our weather and Sundays appear to have suffered more than most from the absence of the key ingredient for decent racing. Yes, the sequence of light airs continues with little sign of respite. I assume this is the main reason for the very low entries in Sunday racing. In the morning races sailed since the beginning of May, a mere 12 boats have managed to sail even once and the average race entry has been less than four boats. Full marks to Bob (11 races) and Allen (9), who look to be the only qualifiers.

Afternoon racing has been, perhaps predictably, even less well supported: 6 boats have sailed at least one race; the average entry has been 3 and just Nick, Allen and Bob have managed to pack in more than the one race.

I appreciate that we've lost some key activists in the fleet and that several crews are affected by injuries and illness. But it would be nice to see the occasional Sunday where numbers are once again nudging double figures.

Meanwhile, Wednesdays continue as popular as ever - though even here, numbers appear to suffer from the lack of wind. The 13 races offered to date have attracted an average 'Fifteen' entry of 5.5 boats and six of the fifteen boats actively racing have finished more than 50% of the races sailed.

Ron Howard Trophy Race

As announced earlier, we'll be racing for the 'Ron Howard' trophy **THIS COMING SUNDAY**. The trophy will be awarded to the winner of the afternoon race, and it would be great if you could make a special effort to take part and demonstrate that FF racing on Sunday afternoons is not yet moribund!

Racing Committee - Review of Sunday (am) SIs?

If you've been attending, you will recollect that, two Sundays ago, Racing Committee reviewed arrangements for the organisation of Sunday racing in the series that is scheduled to begin in August. It was agreed that a period of stability is much-needed, and change will be kept to a bare minimum. So, we'll continue to sail two morning races, starting at 11:00 and two afternoon races, starting at 14:00. The starting format for the **Winter** series (starting in November) will revert to three races sailed back to back with no formal racing in the afternoon. It is proposed that breakfast in the Café be promoted to ensure the use of the catering and to provide some social activity.

In the **Autumn Series**, the only change of any substance is that, in the morning, the 'Slow Handicap' start will be moved to the top of the order and will lead off **WHEN NUMERAL 3 IS DISPLAYED**. Subsequent starts will all move back by two minutes from their current position. **So D-Zeros become Start 2 (Numeral 5) and we follow them on Numeral 7**. The objective of the change in starting sequence is to provide a longer race for the slow handicap fleet. If, in future, entries don't justify the change, the fleet starts will be re-visited.

Note that the suggestion that we move towards exclusively handicap racing was rejected by Racing Committee and the proposal was withdrawn. Please note also that you may find yourselves catching up with the slower boats a little earlier in the race than you're accustomed to do. This should not be problematic - numbers are relatively small and the Racing Rules of Sailing provide the means of avoiding conflict. But please remember a) that some sailors competing in the slow handicap fleet may be new to racing, and b) that polite guidance, rather than abuse, is the best way of helping them to stay clear. While we're talking 'etiquette', you should also be aware that concerns have been expressed about keeping the finish lines clear between races. If you've done a Committee Boat duty, you'll know how frustrating it is to find boats socialising in the vicinity of the line. And don't forget that the Asymmetrics may still be finishing on the other side of the Committee Boat. So please keep well clear of both sides until the 'S' flag comes down and we go into sequence for the next race.

FF Nationals



Two weeks ago, Tim O'Brien and Sam Neal made the long journey to Strangford Lough in Northern Ireland, joining 48 other boats to contest the 2018 FF Nationals. Even the Emerald Isle was basking in hot sunshine with hardly a breath of air so, as many of you will already have [read elsewhere](#), racing was restricted to just the one day. The event was won by Steve Goacher and Tim Harper, returning two firsts and a second in the three races sailed. Full results [here](#).

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