

FYCA Yacht Handicap Policy

The FYCA Handicap policy is designed to encourage fair and equitable yacht racing on the Forth. It is realised that other handicap schemes could be used but there is often considerable effort and cost to obtain and keep valid such handicap. To maximise the participation on the Forth the FYCA Progressive Handicap scheme is managed by the FYCA Handicap Committee using data supplied by the clubs.

The policy agreed by FYCA member clubs is that all FYCA open yacht racing results shall be calculated with handicaps from the FYCA Progressive Handicap system. This was presented to the FYCA membership in autumn 2015 and adopted at the spring delegates meeting in 2016.

The FYCA Handicap Committee shall maintain a list of yachts racing on the Forth with appropriate handicap values and corresponding status for use in open events.

The list of active yacht handicaps and their status shall be published on the FYCA web site.

The process for applying for a new handicap or appealing an existing one shall be published on the FYCA web site.

The FYCA Handicap Committee shall explain the rationale for any new or changed base handicap, giving a brief description against each change or addition, and highlighting these on the FYCA handicap list.

The FYCA Handicap list shall only be altered with the sanction of the FYCA Handicap Committee.

The FYCA Handicap Committee shall maintain a database of yachts, their configuration, assigned handicap, race results and achieved performance.

2016 FYCA Handicap Committee

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Members -

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Port Edgar Yacht Club

Cathy Sedgeworth

Royal Forth Yacht Club

FYCA Progressive Handicap System

The FYCA Progressive Handicap system (FPH) aims to handicap the yacht and not the performance of the crew.

The FPH system is based on the now defunct RYA Portsmouth Yardstick (PY) scheme for keelboats¹.

The FPH system inherits the handicap number representation and performance calculation method used in the PY scheme. It extends that scheme by using an algorithmic method to update the handicaps based on the performance of the yachts.

Overview

The FPH scheme operates as follows:

- 1) When a new yacht arrives on the Forth and wishes to race, it shall apply for an FYCA handicap. The handicap committee shall consider the application. An initial base handicap shall be set by the committee. The committee shall consider this yacht's performance against similar yachts already in the database, its performance in any race results on the Forth, its performance in other handicap schemes and any other relevant data available. Depending on the level of information available the yacht may be issued with Trial Number (TN) or Club Number (CN) status.
- 2) The results from club and open yacht races on the Forth shall be collected by the committee and added to the performance database. The performance of each yacht shall be calculated.
- 3) At the beginning of the sailing season and before the major Forth based regattas (i.e. twice per year) the handicap committee shall run the progressive update algorithm to generate new handicaps based on the latest yacht performances.
- 4) The committee shall review yachts issued with Trial Numbers. When sufficient results have been collected this shall be raised to a Club Number with an adjustment to the base handicap if required.

Progressive Update Algorithm

The returned results shall be used to calculate the yacht's performance. The algorithm first discards excessively slow or fast results. The average of the assessable results and the current performance trend are used to calculate the achieved performance.

The difference between the achieved performance and the base handicap is partly due to the yacht design and partly down to the crew. The algorithm uses part of the performance difference to add to or subtracts from the base handicap to calculate the new FYCA Progressive Handicap.

¹ The RYA stopped supporting the Portsmouth Yardstick (PY) Scheme for yachts in 2013 and replaced it with the National Handicap for Cruisers (NHC). The relative merits of the PY and NHC schemes were reviewed at the time by the handicap committee. There were significant disadvantages in adopting the NHC scheme and it was decided to continue to manage the FYCA handicaps using the principles of the PY system.

Handicap Status

Historically some handicaps will have been issued with the old RYA designated Primary Yardstick (PY), Secondary Yardstick (SY) and Recorded Number (RN) status. These statuses, along with the Club Number (CN), shall all classify handicaps based on proven data. Proven data handicaps only shall be used in the calculation of the Standard Corrected Time² for race performance measurement.

Trial Number (TN) handicaps are issued when there is little or no data to confirm this handicap. After a minimum number of assessable results (currently 6) have been received the committee will review the handicap, adjust if necessary and raise it to a CN status.

Furling Headsails

The FYCA handicap numbers reflect that where a yacht has a furling headsail that can be changed for a No3 type headsail, then the base handicap makes no allowance for the furling headsail.

If however the yacht sails with a roller furling headsail that cannot be changed to a smaller headsail and has to use this sail in a furled manner then an allowance may be made by the Handicap Committee. (This combination will however allow the yacht to carry a storm jib without penalty).

One Design Yachts

There are several racing yacht designs racing on the Forth that can be described as “one designs”. These include Sonatas, 707s and SB3s. One Design yachts that sail to their class One Design rules will be given a set base handicap for the class. The FYCA Handicap Committee however reserves the right to set different base handicaps should they sail out with their class rules.

Similar Yachts

There are also yachts that can be described as similar, rather than One Design, such as X-332, GK24, Corby 29 and Projection 762s. Similar boats shall be given different base handicaps to account for the difference between these yachts.

Club and Hired Yachts

Club owned and hired yachts that are sailed by multiple crews (often of different abilities) will not be subject to progressive handicaps. Such yachts will remain on the base handicap set by the committee.

² The Standard Corrected Time is calculated from the corrected times of the yachts and represents a target time for the race. This is calculated as defined by the RYA Portsmouth Yardstick scheme.

Removal of Standard Equipment

The FYCA Handicap numbers assume that yachts are raced in the trim and with the standard equipment that was on-board when the handicap was originally allocated.

If the owner of a boat wishes to remove such standard equipment to save wear and tear when racing, then an equivalent weight replacement must be carried. This weight replacement must be carried in a position to represent the missing equipment and should not be placed in an advantageous position ie lower in the boat or removed from the ends.

Allowances for configuration of keels, engines and propellers

The tables below show the allowances that should be applied to calculate the base handicap of a yacht that changes from one configuration to another. Yachts with a CN or higher status will retain at least CN status after a configuration change.

Propellers (%)

	OB	IBF	IB2	IB3
OB	0	+1	+2.5	+5
IBF	-1	0	+1.5	+5
IB2	-2.5	-1.5	0	+2.5
IB3	-5	-5	-2.5	0

Keel Configuration (%)

	F	D	2K	3K
F	0	-1	+5	+6
D	+1	0	+6	+7
2K	-5	-6	0	+1
3K	-6	-7	-1	0

Outboards

Yachts having an outboard for auxiliary power are expected to remove the propeller and skeg from the water while racing. Yachts incapable of raising the outboard should state this in the handicap application. As a general rule yachts racing with an outboard in a lowered position will be given the base handicap of the same yacht with the same propeller configuration and an inboard engine.

Spinnakers

All FYCA handicaps are published as a 'with spinnaker' handicap. Yachts racing without a spinnaker and in a mixed spinnaker/no spinnaker class may claim the 4% allowance if the sailing instructions allow.

Note that in a restricted sail class (where no yachts are permitted spinnakers) the published (with spinnaker) handicap should be used. It makes no difference to the final result but makes it easier to check that the correct handicap is being used.

Club Racing Allowances

Numbers published in the FYCA list are intended for use at regattas or open events, and it is always assumed that yachts will have full racing rigs, including spinnakers. For club racing it is acceptable that yachts may be given allowances if they want to race with reduced rig or

reduced crew. It must be accepted that yachts will not be given these handicaps at open events unless it is permitted in the sailing instructions.

For guidance the recommended allowances for different sail configurations are as follows:

Yachts with all headsails smaller than base rig	+ 4%
Yachts with no spinnaker	+ 4%
Yachts with mainsail other than Bermudan	+ 2%
Yachts with cruising chute and no spinnaker	+ 2%

N.B. It must be emphasized that these allowances should be made on a trial basis, and adjusted if analysis of results shows them to be unsatisfactory.

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