

Setting the gold standard for racing etiquette

In July our club, the British Classic Yacht Club, has the pleasure of hosting what promises to be the largest, most competitive and enjoyable regatta in our 13 year history, the British Classic Yacht Club Panerai Regatta. Being at the helm of such a prestigious event comes with responsibility. As regattas worldwide become increasingly competitive, we are aware of retaining the enthusiasm of our sailors, whilst ensuring the safety of the fleet. Foremost among the BCYC's core values has been the preservation and enjoyment of classic yachts, as well as the provision of an environment for their custodians to share common values and experiences, make new friends and race fairly under the IRC handicap system. However, with growing levels of competition we run the risk of yachts pushing the boundaries of safe sailing when in close proximity to each other. In a recent magazine article, Brian Willis (chair of the ISAF disciplinary commission) stated there are different rule cultures across various racing fleets; some are very strict and others resolve their issues at the bar. To this end, the BCYC has always raced under the expectation that our fleet will expound the principals of a Corinthian and display a gentlemanly approach to the rules (whilst still enjoying a 'healthy' discussion at the bar afterwards). By the nature of classic yachts, we are occasionally at risk from our own fleet. The larger, heavier boats, which are less manoeuvrable than modern yachts, require greater anticipation and rule observance in order to maintain the same level of safety as a modern fleet. This year we are also lucky enough to have many visiting yachts from the Mediterranean, not familiar with our rules and expectations. It is all the more important to clearly articulate the values we expect on our race circuits this summer.

All BCYC yachts and those racing in our fleet are expected to have a full knowledge of the racing rules. Of particular note is a yacht's obligation to give way to fellow competitors, to follow the rules honestly, especially in their acceptance of penalties, and to be sportsman like at all times. Only by this means can the fleet increase its level of rule observance, safety and enjoyment. The BCYC wishes to set itself apart from other competitive fleets by its collective moral expectation of good old British sportsmanship and integrity whilst racing our wonderful classic yachts. We've the chance to set the gold standard of racing conduct, so why not do so? **David Murrin, BCYC**

