

HOBIE CLASS

INTERNATIONAL
NORTH AMERICAN REGION
HOBIE[®]
R A C I N G

HOBIE CLASS ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA

January - February 2005
VOLUME 15, ISSUE 1
nahca.org

NEWS



In This Issue:
HCA One-design Events
Regional Competitor Ranking System

Hobie One-design Regattas

Moving Forward Into 2005 and Beyond

by Ed Muns, HCA Chair

As we enter 2005, the Hobie Class Association (HCA) is reaffirming its founding charter and returning to its roots of Hobie One-design sailing. Returning? Did we ever leave? Well yes—and, no—to both questions. Both the International Hobie Class Association (IHCA) and HCA were clearly founded as Hobie One-design associations for the promotion of Hobie Cat sailing and racing. Our bylaws have not wiggled on this fundamental principle throughout the association's lifetime. There are many one-design organizations in the sailing world. The IHCA and HCA are not unique. Even the concept of several one-design boats under the class umbrella is shared with at least one other class association—the Laser Class. So, “no,” we never left this Hobie One-design charter. However, our practices over the past decade tell a different story.

Back in the early 90's, “it seemed like a good idea at the time” to include an open class in our regattas and welcome non-Hobie sailors into our fleets. The idea was that we could quickly increase participation and make our fleets and regattas more financially viable. We also thought that if the other catamaran sailors saw how great our Hobies were and how much fun one-design sailing was compared to handicap or corrected-time racing, then they would convert over to our Hobie One-design classes. This practice began at a very low level. A decade later we looked around and saw a very different picture. Some regattas and fleets, even divisions, were now dominated by non-Hobies. Some “Hobie” Division regattas had one-design classes of NACRA's and other catamarans! The

Hobie Class Association of North America, in both its fleets and its regattas, was on a path to extinction as a Hobie One-design organization. Surprise! In practice, we had clearly left the Hobie One-design domain, despite our charter that still purported to be so.

In late 2003, the IHCA organized our “return” by directing the HCA to eliminate open classes from our

regattas. Instantly changing an open catamaran environment back to a one-design focus was and continues to be painfully challenging to many fleets and divisions in North America. In over a decade, local sailing communities had evolved with this open catamaran culture. There were strong social bonds as well as mixed class sailing events. Accordingly, 2004 was to be a “transition year” during

which fleets could make changes so that by 2005, all open class activity would be removed from the HCA. Unfortunately, many of these transitions are not well enough along to easily flow into the Hobie One-design environment of 2005.

There is a wide range of situations around the HCA. Many fleets are Hobie One-design and their division's points regattas are cleanly Hobie One-design classes. Other fleets will be much smaller than last year's multi-catamaran version. Some Hobie fleet hosted open regattas will disappear for the moment. Still other whole fleets will evaporate as they reform as a catamaran club or a non-Hobie fleet. Have we shot ourselves in the foot?

Hardly. We've realigned our practices with our charter to focus on strengthening the Hobie One-design sailing that has always been the vision of our class. This focus will bring many benefits to our

Both the International Hobie Class Association (IHCA) and HCA were clearly founded as one-design organizations for the promotion of Hobie Cat sailing and racing.



frequentlyaskedquestions

Q What does the HCA do for me?

A The HCA provides many resources that the average sailor probably overlooks.

For example, the HCA provides:

- The Hobie Class Rules, via the IHCA
- Standardized sailing instructions
- Hobie University booklets
- The *Hobie Class News*—the class magazine
- The class website, www.nahca.org
- E-mail Q&A with an IRO (International Race Officer) about race management questions
- An event manual that describes the requirements for hosting major championships, but is very useful in running any regatta

The HCA recently introduced:

- A region-wide competitor ranking system, that will be also used to pre-qualify for the Hobie 16 North Americans
- A regatta insurance program, available to all unincorporated Hobie fleets hosting a regatta
- A newly appointed Sponsorship Director to secure funds for the class

The HCA also provides monetary support for:

- The Guest Expert Program where top sailors give seminars at local regattas
- A Race Management Seminar program where certified PRO's (Principal Race Officers) give race management seminars for any fleet in the HCA.
- Expert assistance in conducting world-class regional championships
- Women on the Water seminars (W.O.W.) which are designed to get more women sailing

These are all resources and programs designed to make Hobie Cat racing better and more abundant.

Q Why is one-design sailing better than open class sailing?

A One-design racing is widely considered the most level sailboat racing pitting sailor against sailor. By limiting what can be different between boats, keeping the hull and sail designs the same, the skill of the sailors is what determines the outcome of races rather than who can buy the fastest boat and equipment. In comparison to open or handicap racing one-design racing eliminates any skepticism in the accuracy of the handicap rule or formula. The extreme example of this is buying boats with the best handicap or in some instances building boats to beat the handicap rule. An added benefit is that you know exactly where you stand throughout the race.

Hobie sailors. We are bringing back the regional “points system” which is a yearly ladder of racing performance by our members. Sailors can now compete across the region as they watch their standings evolve on the HCA web site throughout the regatta season. Hobie Cat Company has stepped up to show their support for the realigned HCA by once again providing new Hobie 16's in the 2005 North American Championship. We have a class-wide regatta insurance program for fleet one-design events. We have initiated a directed effort to find sponsors for our Hobie One-design championships. HCA continues to lead the way in youth sailing by providing the 2005 North American Hobie 16 Youth Championship event at a competitor cost of less than 25% of any of the past US Sailing Youth Multi-Hull Championships. Less than a year after the precedent-setting Hobie 16 Worlds in Mexico, the HCA is hosting the Hobie Tiger Worlds in Santa Barbara, CA. A record-breaking attendance of over 90 teams is expected.

This is just the beginning of our renewed concentration on Hobie One-design sailing. Thanks to our now focused energy and resources, more support and programs will emerge to enhance the Hobie sailing we are all addicted to. Yes, the short-term transition pains are unpleasant, but the tremendous potential in our future is more certain.

In the weeks following the Hobie 16 North American event in Syracuse, NY, the new HCA officers, with lots of help from past class officers and others class members, developed a “white paper” and a set of anticipated “frequently asked questions” (FAQ's) that deal with many of the issues that may arise in the administration of Divisions and Fleets as a result of the realignment of the HCA to its original principles. The White Paper and FAQ's were distributed to the HCA Division Chairs in early November to make sure that everybody was on the same page and to assist in developing Division programs for 2005. The full text of the White Paper and the FAQ's follow.

frequentlyaskedquestions

Q Why are the International Hobie Class Association (IHCA) and Hobie Class Association of North America (HCA) changing the requirements to host a Division (“points”) regatta?

A Actually, the expectation that only Hobie Cats participate in Hobie Division points regattas has always been the case. This is the fundamental principle that the IHCA and HCA were founded on. However, over the past 10 years, the HCA has allowed non-Hobies to compete in Hobie points regattas. Initially, this low level of participation was of little consequence. In recent years, we now find entire Hobie Fleets and the majority of some Hobie Divisions to be comprised of non-Hobie sailors! There were many arguments why it was good thing to allow non-Hobie boats at Hobie One-design Regattas, such as, “It will show people who sail other brands of boats how great Hobie Cat One-design racing is. They will buy Hobies and join us.” This has not happened to any significant extent. Allowing non-Hobies to race in Hobie regattas has contributed significantly to the decrease in numbers of Hobie One-design classes. This unfortunate evolution is so far beyond the class charter and purpose that the IHCA directed the HCA to quickly move our practices back in line within the intent of our bylaws.

Q Why does the HCA say that having an open fleet does not promote one-design racing when we provide a regatta with starts for each Hobie class with enough boats for a class?

A Over the past ten years this practice has hurt the Hobie Class. Non-Hobie classes have used the HCA regatta structure to increase their numbers at the expense of the Hobie Class. The HCA needs to look at North America as a whole, and this policy does not work on a region-wide basis. To see the damage that this policy has caused one needs to look at Divisions 12 (New England), 10 (Upper Midwest), 8 (Florida), and 6 (Southern Texas) where there are more non-Hobies at regattas than Hobie Cats.

Q Do we comply with the Hobie One-design policy if we rename our division (or fleet) as a catamaran club, unaffiliated with HCA, and then have the division (or fleet) be a sub-organization within the catamaran club?

A No. Becoming a sub-organization of an open multi-hull organization would hinder a Hobie Division’s primary goal of promoting Hobie One-

Continues next page >>

thewhit

Commitment to One-design Policy

As the end of this year approaches, the transition period for the Hobie One-design policy announced at the beginning of 2004 is coming to a close. Starting on January 1, 2005 all Hobie Class Sanctioned Regattas must be limited to Hobie One-design classes. In January 2004, the Chairman of the HCA stated in his letter to the class the following:

“The Hobie class will continue to sanction regattas throughout the North American region through the division and fleet structure. To be a sanctioned regatta the host will have to comply with IHCA class rules and constitution. Specifically, non-Hobie Cat boats will not be able to participate in Hobie Class Sanctioned Regattas. Organizations that run events, which include non-Hobie Cat boats, simply will not be running a Hobie Class Sanctioned event. Additionally these organizations will no longer be able to utilize the Hobie Cat name, the HCA name or Hobie Cat trademark in their Notice of Race or event advertising. In short, these events will no longer be considered ‘Hobie Cat’ regattas. Organizations that elect to organize an open invitation regatta rather than a ‘Hobie Cat’ regatta are no longer required to follow the Hobie class standardized racing program and all we can say is that we wish you well.”

As the newly elected HCA officers, we are committed to the implementation of this policy. We feel it is a positive return to the class charter of Hobie One-design sailing that will be beneficial in the long term, and look forward to working with everyone to reach this goal.



Event Sanctioning— Classes and Format

The Hobie Class Association sanctions Hobie One-design Points Regattas, Area Championships, National and North American Championships. A Hobie One-design Points Regatta shall be open to all Hobie classes. Bravo, Wave, 14, 16, Getaway, 17, 18, Tiger, 20, Fox, FX One, and 21 classes are all welcome. For now, one entrant will constitute a class. This simplifies race management by not requiring a handicapped Hobie fleet. HCA One-design Points Regattas will no longer have starts or classes for boats manufactured by companies other than Hobie Cat; there are no exceptions. HCA One-design Points regattas are two or three day events, run on IHCA courses and using standard HCA sailing instructions. The requirements for hosting North American Championships are explained in the HCA Event Manual, which is a valuable resource for running Points Regattas and Area Championships as well.

The International Hobie 16



frequentlyaskedquestions

design racing. HCA Divisions and Hobie Fleets must be independent of other organizations. However, an individual can be a member of both organizations. The Hobie Fleet may be **affiliated** with another organization, such as a yacht club, as long as the governing body of the Hobie Fleet remains independent.

Q What is a Hobie Class Sanctioned Regatta?

A The Hobie Class Association sanctions Hobie One-design Division (“points”) Regattas, Area Championships, National, and North American Championships. A Hobie One-design Division Regatta is open to all Hobie classes. Bravo, Wave, 14, 16, Getaway, 17, 18, Tiger, Fox, FX One, 20, and 21 classes are all welcome. For now, one entrant will constitute a class. This simplifies race management by not requiring a handicapped Hobie fleet. For clarity, HCA Sanctioned Regattas will no longer have starts or classes for boats manufactured by companies other than Hobie Cat; there are no exceptions. Otherwise, they are 2-3 day regattas, consisting of IHCA courses, and standard HCA sailing instructions, like they have been held for the past few years, just without an open class. The requirements for hosting North American Championships are explained in the event manual, which is a valuable resource for running Division Regattas and Area Championships as well.

Q We are creating our 2005 Division Booklet that shows our regatta schedule, NOR’s for all regattas, other Division and HCA information plus advertising. The local MHRA organization (Multi-Hull Racing Association) has asked if we would include their regatta schedule. Is this OK?

A No. Due to the HCA’s deviation from the primary focus of promoting Hobie One-design racing over the past 10 years, the HCA needs to take some radical steps to realign ourselves with that primary focus. Therefore, the policy does not permit the use of Hobie Class publications for the promotion of non-class events.

Q Can a fleet use the Hobie name in describing them as host of an open regatta? For example, “XYZ Catamaran regatta hosted by Hobie Fleet 000.”

A No. The HCA policy does not allow a Hobie fleet to use the Hobie trademark in advertising a regatta other than a Hobie One-design regatta, and this includes the Hobie Fleet name.

frequentlyaskedquestions

Q Can fleets that run regattas with open boats still use Hobie Division marks, flags, etc.?

A Yes. The HCA and Hobie Divisions have always shared regatta equipment with other sailing organizations.

Q What is the ideal Hobie Division?

A The ideal division would have six or more Hobie Fleets dispersed within a geographic region and would have 6 to 10 Hobie One-design regattas each season including at least one women's and one youth event.

Q Do Hobie Fleet members have to be HCA members?

A No, but we strongly encourage HCA Fleet members to be HCA members, which includes IHCA membership as well. HCA memberships help Hobie Class provide more benefits to members, fleets and divisions. HCA members will also have more communication with the class, and therefore, have a stronger voice in the HCA.

Q Do HCA fleet members have to own a Hobie?

A No, but at least five fleet members must be Hobie owners. This requirement was initially set up by the IHCA to encourage viable fleets. Fleet members who are not Hobie owners are typically crewing on a Hobie or are helping the fleet put on regattas or other events.

Q Can a sailor of a non-Hobie catamaran be a HCA member and/or a Hobie Fleet member?

A Yes. If such a sailor has a genuine interest in Hobie One-design racing he would be more than welcome to join. For example, such a person may donate time as a Race Officer, jury member or support boat operator in Division regattas.

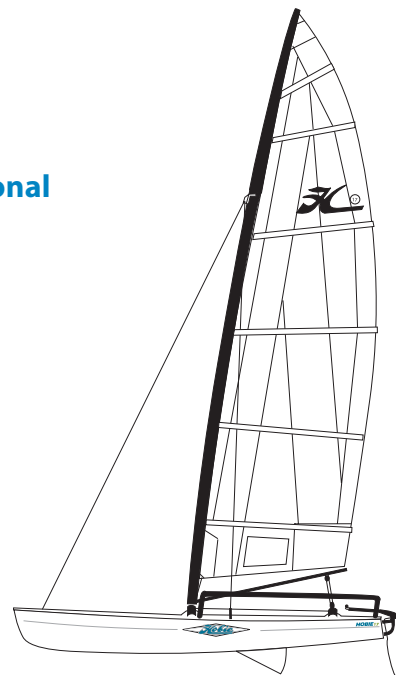
Continues next page >>

thewhit

Sanctioned Points Regattas—Benefits

The HCA wants all Hobie fleets to host an HCA Sanctioned event. A key purpose of Hobie fleets is to host one or more Points Regattas, but it is not a requirement. It is the sole discretion of each individual Hobie fleet whether they want to run a Points Regatta or not. If a fleet chooses to run a Points Regatta it will have all the HCA's programs at its disposal. Only Points Regatta scores will be used in tallying points for regional ranking and North American Championship qualifying. This new region wide points system should make a big difference because sailors will be able to compare themselves with others from all over the North American region. The factory supplied-boats at the 16 North American Championships adds even more importance to the new points system. The renewed emphasis on points should help drive sailors to Points Regattas. The HCA has a regatta insurance policy available to all unincorporated US fleets running a Points regatta. This should provide fleets with a significant savings in their regatta budget. They will also be offered Guest Expert Programs and Race Management Seminars. All Points Regattas will be listed in the HCA magazine and on the HCA website.

The International Hobie 17



JANUARY — FEBRUARY 2005

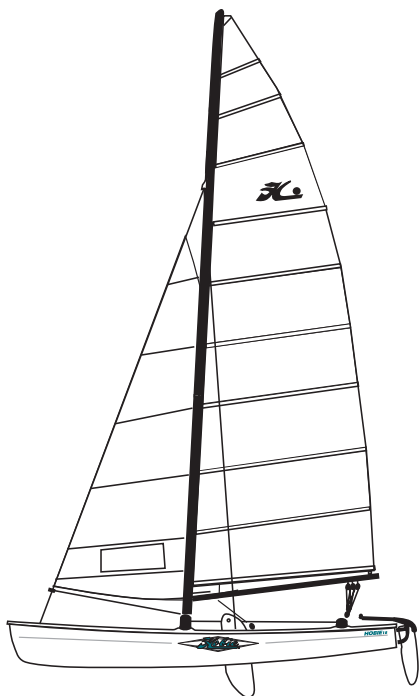
epaper

Non-Sanctioned Regattas

We also realize that not every fleet will want to or be able to run a HCA Sanctioned Points Regatta immediately. If a fleet chooses not to run a Points Regatta that is fine, we understand the difficult decision some fleets face. However, it is the goal of the HCA to have all Hobie fleets running a Points Regatta. Hobie fleets that organize a regatta and allow non-Hobie class boats to compete risks losing their IHCA fleet status. If a fleet chooses to run a regatta that is not a Points Regatta, then they will forfeit the privilege of using the Hobie name in any of the fleet's advertising for that event, including the name of the fleet, for example Hobie Fleet 000. The fleet will also lose the use of class programs, resources, support and voting privileges. The HCA will work with these fleets to eventually run a Points Regatta again, and at that time all privileges will be reinstated. If it is determined that a fleet never wants or intends to evolve their open regattas into a Points Regatta, then it will be clear to both the fleet and the class that the fleet is no longer interested in promoting Hobie One-design racing as its primary focus.

Once this is determined, then the fleet will be deactivated. The fleet number will be retained for any Hobie sailors that want to start up again in that geographic region.

The International Hobie 18



frequentlyaskedquestions

Q Our fleet has evolved into a group of friends who own different brands of catamarans. Do the non-Hobie owners and supporters have to leave?

A The HCA has not yet issued a policy on fleet membership because only Hobies are permitted to participate in regattas hosted by Hobie fleets. Members in Hobie fleets will naturally evolve to promote Hobie sailing and racing in some way: as a Hobie owner, a Hobie skipper, a Hobie crew, a Hobie PRO or support boat, Hobie regatta organizer, etc. Members not interested in Hobie sailing and racing will likely migrate to other organizations more suited to their interests. While it is not yet required that every member of a Hobie fleet also be a member of HCA, the same expectation exists—fleet members and HCA members alike should have an interest in promoting Hobie One-design sailing and racing.

Q Do participants at Hobie One-design regattas have to be HCA members?

A Only one person on a boat has to be an HCA member. That is typically the skipper, but that is not a requirement. Both skipper and crew are encouraged to be an HCA member that also includes IHCA membership. This not only helps support both the North American class and the International class but also prepares the team to sail in North American and World Championships where all crew members must be HCA members. The HCA has different membership options to accommodate various skipper/crew situations. There is a regular membership at \$30/year and a web membership at \$20/year that only includes an electronic version of the class magazine (which is available from the HCA website.) Also, there are family member memberships available at \$10/year, so it is easy to find the right membership to fit each personal situation and still support the HCA and IHCA.

Q Why is the regional points system used for pre-qualifying only in the Hobie 16 North American Championships (NACs)?

A Because the Hobie 16 NACs will be using factory-supplied boats, a method was needed to select the teams who would sail the limited number of boats. It is expected that more teams will want to attend this event with factory-supplied boats compared to recent Hobie 16 NACs in the BYOB format. The other classes have not had enough attendees to warrant pre-qualification. For example, in the 2004 H20/Tiger/H17 NACs, there were only 20 teams in each class, so there was no need for pre-qualification.