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NEWPORT BERMUDA RACE® 2008

Start Date: Friday, June 20, 2008

May 19, 2008

Dear Captain,

With just a month to go before the start of the 2008 Newport Bermuda Race, your preparations and planning should be well advanced. The May 15 documentation deadline resulted in a flood of electronic and paper data arriving in our office, and we are still in the process of entering that data and updating the online registration system. In particular, if you submitted information by landmail in any form, rather than electronically, we are still manually entering that data into the system.

The online system and status pages will not be fully updated before about Friday, May 22.

In the process of entering information into the system, we have discovered specific issues with the submitted data that are both common and problematic. These are outlined below.

ISAF User ID

A significant percentage of those filling out the crew information pages have failed to enter a valid ISAF User ID to support a claim of ISAF Group 1 (amateur) competitor status. The ISAF User ID is almost always a 5-7 figure alphanumeric identifier beginning with USA for US-based sailors.

If every crewmember on your boat in the St. David's Lighthouse Division and Cruiser Division has not entered a VALID ISAF User ID, neither your crew qualifications nor your crew waivers will be checked off as "OK". As captain, it is YOUR responsibility to make sure that each crewmember has a valid ISAF User ID and classification, and that this information has been entered properly.

Sailors who fail to enter this information in the crew information pages will be considered ISAF Group 3 (professional) competitors. They will be ineligible to drive your boat in the race if you are in either of those divisions. If the number of Group 3 professionals exceeds the number permitted aboard your boat (see Notice of Race paragraph 3.2.6), you will be ineligible to sail in the St. David's or Cruiser divisions, and your boat will be assigned to the Gibbs Hill Lighthouse (professional) Division.

If "crew waivers OK" is not checked off in the online registration for your boat, it either means that you have not submitted all the signed crew waivers, or some crew members have not listed a valid ISAF User ID on their crew information form. We are attempting to notify all boats with this issue, but you can speed things up by checking the crew pages for your boat to see if there is a problem.

If there are crew members on your boat without ISAF User IDs in the system, get them to enter that information on the Crew Information Form, and contact us by email when it is done. They need to enter that information themselves. Please do not send us the User IDs for your crew and ask us to enter them for you. We have limited administrative resources to deal with more than 200 boats and 2000 crew. Our failure to notify you of problems with any crew member does not relieve you of the responsibility to make sure that everything is in order, including signed crew waivers and valid ISAF competitor classifications.

Valid Competitor Classifications

ISAF competitor classifications are only good for two years, at which point they must be re-validated. The process for doing this is outlined on the ISAF website (www.sailing.org), and can in most cases be completed online in a matter of minutes. Your ISAF User ID will not change.

If your competitor classification was issued prior to the 2006 Newport Bermuda Race, and you have not renewed it, there is a good chance it has expired. To continue to be considered a Group 1 (amateur) competitor, you **MUST** renew your competitor classification.

Boat Qualifications

Many of you will find that “boat qualifications OK” has not been checked off for your boat, even though you have submitted most or all of the required boat data. This is the final hurdle for most of you. It does not mean there is anything wrong with your boat. It usually means that we are missing a piece of information—a rating certificate, pre-inspection document, EPIRB registration, or other info—that relates to the boat itself, rather than the crew.

This will in most cases be the last component of the online registration system that is checked as “OK”. It is a reminder to us as administrators that there may be a missing bit of info related to your boat that we have not yet received or not yet reviewed.

Rating Certificates

In every Bermuda Race year, US Sailing experiences slowdowns in certificate processing due to the large number of boats needing rating certificates very late in the game. This situation is compounded by delays in the measurement process, which is largely controlled by the weather and the limited availability of measurers in some areas.

Boats will not be penalized for the late submission of rating certificates provided we are notified that the measurement process is under way. Certificates that are submitted late in order to re-optimize the boat just prior to the race may not be accepted.

For those returning to the race in 2008, if you have not re-validated the ORR certificate that was issued to you for the 2006 race, you need to contact US Sailing and get that done now. If you have a new boat, or a boat that has not had an ORR certificate before, you should by now have contacted US Sailing and made arrangements with a measurer to get your measurement completed. If you haven't done this yet, do it **NOW**.

If your boat has had an IMS certificate in the past, and needs an ORR certificate for the 2008 race, tell US Sailing. In most cases, valid or recently-valid IMS certificates can be converted to ORR certificates without re-measurement.

Cruiser Division

Boats entered in the Cruiser Division must indicate whether or not they will be sailing with a single cruising spinnaker, as this impacts your rating. On the Supplemental Information page of your online entry there is a field for indicating “no spinnaker” or “cruising spinnaker”. Please indicate which of these is appropriate.

If you are sailing with a cruising spinnaker, the data for that spinnaker must be included in your ORR certificate. This includes not only the spinnaker dimensions, but the tack point for the spinnaker if it is tacked on a sprit or at any point forward of the intersection of the forestay with the deck at the bow.

Please be patient with us as we process data and update your boat’s status.

We’ll see you in Newport next month.

Best Regards,
Nick Nicholson
Chairman