Establishing Sensible Starting Handicap for a Regatta or New Season

Introduction

Often, handicap prizes are often part of the Prize List at Regattas. In such cases, starting handicaps that make sense are important. But, how are they established?

TopYacht has a utility for ending such dilemmas. It is acknowledged that there may be different methodologies, this technique has not been challenged yet, and the outcomes accepted.

Method

1. When creating a series, create two groups one to be scored on elapsed time and one to be scored on handicap corrected time.

2. As can be seen above the selected handicap system is PHC1. Make sure that PHC1 definition is set to a sensible set of handicap values as shown below.

   See Appendix 1 for details.

3. Assuming you have imported the competitors from a CSV list, or have manually entered the competitors into the master list, add all the competitors into the series, using step three from TopYacht's main menu. Enter the competitors into the handicap group by giving each an initial handicap of 1.0.

4. Run the first three (or four) races but suppress the publication of handicap results.

5. Follow the menu sequence: **Admin | View | Handicap Data | Summary Data**.

This shows the handicap allocated to each race. These are the headings AHC1, AHC2 etc. The measured performance of each race is the "Back Calculated Handicap", these are in the columns BCH1, BCH2 etc. If we take the average of these measured performances (BCHs) for the first three (or four) races, is should be a reasonable point estimate of the performance of each competitor.

If we were to copy that back to race one as an initial (starting) handicap, then reprocess each races in succession, rolling the newly-computed CHC forward, experience shows this yield a very effective handicap series-score.

This is achieved as follows..

Click the BCH radio button.

This removes all columns except the BCH columns and also provides three buttons that were not there before.

Press the ![Copy average HC to first race.] button

Close this page and return to the main menu.

6. Select the Last Race

7. From main menu Select TopYacht Step 10 "Process Race.

Click the button indicated to reprocess all races. This automatically rolls forward the computed handicaps from the previous race. Be careful in selecting your answers to the questions that the button press invokes.

8. If you really want to finesse this process, repeat steps five and six, but in step five, press the display CBCH button. This uses the clamped, back calculated handicap values from each race and discards any extreme values from an exceptionally good or poor race for the competitor.

9. Run the rest of the races as per normal but you now can publish both the elapsed time and handicap results.

Appendix 1

Menu sequence to access handicap set up page is:

Admin mode | Maintain | Master List | Define Edit Handicaps.

For children or other tipsy boats e.g. skiffs, it may be appropriate to adjust parameter one to a figure closer to 50% e.g. 48% to 48%. Similarly for these two groups, it may be sensible to broaden the clamps in step seven, to say plus and minus 6% or even 7%. For definitions of these terms please refer to the help file.

Parameter five as shown above is a Exponential Placed Biased Calculation method[1]. For a long regatta this has been shown to provide very good handicapping.

Alternately you may prefer the exponential average system, where, on a race by race basis, the handicap for the next race will go up if they perform well and go down if they perform poorly. While this is easier for competitors to understand it also leaves the system more open to sandbagging and has been shown to provide slightly less quality handicapping than a weighted running average.

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[1] See: How the Next Handicap is Calculated.. A TopYacht Technical Article