



# What Do You Want Your Handicap System to do?

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“How come after 10 years of competent sailing I have still not won a single race? What is wrong with our handicap system??”

Heard that before???

If all keel boats were the same then each race would be won by the best skipper/crew. But there are many types of keel boats so in an endeavour to allow meaningful racing between different types of boats handicapping is used. Handicapping attempts to make all boats “even” OR does it?? OR can it? OR do we really want it to do that anyway???

## But How Does The Handicap Get Used In Calculating The Results Anyway??

Click [here](#) for a detailed description.

## Two Fundamental Forms of Handicapping.

- ⇒ “Measured Boat” Handicapping; and,
- ⇒ “Measured Performance” Handicapping.

Click [here](#) for more information.

## What Does The Club Want To Achieve With Handicapping??

Before exploring handicapping alternatives, the club’s policy on handicapping / results must first be decided. Options include:

- ⇒ Reward the “best” skippers/crews? So if your club has 5 really good skippers in a Division of 20 boats then those 5 skippers will win virtually all races between them. The rest of the Division can aspire to join the ranks of the “best”.
- ⇒ Make sure that the same person does not do very well race after race after race
- ⇒ Spread the prizes around evenly among all the competitors to maintain enthusiasm.
- ⇒ Spread the prizes around evenly among all the competent competitors.
- ⇒ Make sure the no-hoper cannot not win any thing and hence encourage him/her to improve.
- ⇒ Create a situation where anyone who sails well can realistically win any race.
- ⇒ Create a situation where the winner of the Series Aggregate is any one of a number

of competitors and the Series results are so close that it will be undecided until the last race of the Series.

- ⇒ Make sure that after every race the newly calculated handicap moves in the direction of the competitor's performance in this last race. So if "Betty Loo" performs very well then her handicap will go up for the next race.
- ⇒ Keep handicaps more or less fixed with only slight alterations if a boat has a new set of sails or whatever.
- ⇒ Allow handicaps to automatically adjust as much as necessary to meet the other criteria selected in this paragraph.
- ⇒ Allow no human interference with only automatic handicapping within the computer.
- ⇒ Only allow a human to choose what handicaps should change and by how much.
- ⇒ Allow the boat that is improving to keep being near the top of the fleet on handicap corrected time.

### **Who wins?? And Why??**

- ⇒ To win a race under a standard handicaps system you need to have sailed well above your handicaps. The winner will be the competitor whose performance is the highest percentage above his handicaps. This "winning" percentage is usually in the order of 4 to 5 percent.
- ⇒ To win a Series a competitor must have sailed fairly well in many races [without actually winning a race in many cases] but most importantly have sailed in the vast majority of the races in the Series. Remember the Series results are the total of all races of the Series less discards. If a competitor is carrying a number of DNC scores then he will not be in the running for a top spot in this Series!

### **What Automatically Adjusting Handicap Systems Are There?**

This topic is covered in another document. Click [here](#).

Some Less Desirable Handicapping Methods are described [here](#).