

START RACING WITH SEAVETS

With thanks to the LWA on whose guidelines this document is based.

BEGINNERS VERY WELCOME

We were all beginners once upon a time, so we'd like to give you as much help as possible in getting started. This section tells you in great detail just about everything you will ever need to know about taking part in racing with Seavets. You don't need to know it all by heart, you don't even need to read it before you come to an event - but obviously it will help as there are a few safety rules you must observe and they are explained here. If you feel you'd rather not jump in with both feet, come along to one of our events and just watch what happens, chat to the competitors who are all very friendly and ask as many questions as you like.

A BOARD WITH A DAGGERBOARD - AND THIRD PARTY INSURANCE:

All you need to race is a board with a daggerboard and a sail, preferably with a sail number on it.

3rd PARTY INSURANCE is mandatory - and comes automatically if you are a windsurfing member of the RYA or a member of the UKWA - the UK Windsurfing Association, If you join the UKWA you can then take part in the UKWA National events when you feel ready for it.

BUOYANCY AID

You must ALWAYS bring a buoyancy aid as sometimes venues will insist on this.

The information above is just about sufficient for you to get on the water and start to race – however we strongly suggest that you glance through the following information. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us by email - addresses on our website.

CLASSES RACED AT SEAVETS EVENTS:

Raceboard 7.8: - maximum sail size 7.8. Previous to June 2011 the limit was 7.5.

Seavets Raceboard Class is divided into Divisions by age:

Senior	over 35 on 31st December
Veteran	over 50 and under 60 on 31st December
Supervet	over 60 and under 70 on 31st December
Megavet	over 70 on 31st December
Ladies:	all ages

Open: Any age, men and ladies, any board, long or short (except Div 2), with any sail size. You can change board and/or rig between races. There are seldom entrants in the Open class, but it offers the opportunity to join in the racing on whatever equipment you have.

EQUIPMENT:

Raceboards:

In the Raceboard classes the most commonly used boards are the F2 380 Race, Mistral Equipe and Starboard Phantom. The Fanatic Cat and Mega Cat and Mistral Pan Am are now out of production but still very competitive and make an occasional appearance. They are all around the 380cm mark in length and have a large carbon fibre daggerboard, a sliding mast track and loads of footstraps. Many of these boards are quite old, more than 10 years or so, but they have been lovingly repaired by their owners. They are getting scarce now but they can sometimes be picked up on eBay or at windsurfing car boot sales for a couple of hundred quid! You should be able to get started in the raceboard fleet with reasonable secondhand equipment for change out of £500. Even an old F2 Lightning Race or an original Mistral Equipe

could still be competitive in stronger winds but they lack the back-end volume to compete in lighter wind conditions.

Sails and Rigs:

The most popular sail types are the Demon and the Tushingham XR although other types are used, including Tushingham Lightnings and RS:X sails. The Lightnings can be picked up secondhand in the region of £200, the Demons are more expensive in view of their higher initial cost, but they are very durable. Demon sails do, however, need a longer mast but a shorter boom than the Tushinghams. For higher winds, you would be well advised to have a change-down sail.

You will also need harness lines, preferably ones which are easy to adjust when you are actually sailing, both for length and for position on the boom. Again, many people make up their own.

WHAT TO TAKE WITH YOU ON THE WATER:

Wetsuit & footwear:

Winter or summer wetsuit, or neoprene shorts and top, or just shorts and rash vest depending on conditions. You will almost certainly need neoprene shoes or boots as bare feet can easily be cut at inland venues which are less foot-friendly than sandy shores. !

Harness:

You will need a Seat harness for sailing a raceboard. A waist harness can be used but in lighter winds it is not as easy to apply "mastfoot pressure" with a waist harness as a seat harness and the speed difference is apparent. You will of course need harness lines on your boom, preferably adjustable for length as well as position along the boom.

Buoyancy:

ALL sailors should bring a buoyancy aid to all Seavets event as it is within the power of a Race Officer to require all sailors to wear buoyancy if he considers conditions warrant it, and at some clubs they are mandatory.

Digital Watch:

Most people will wear a waterproof digital watch of some kind which they set when the Five Minute Start Sequence begins so that they know exactly when they can cross the line.

WHAT HAPPENS AT A SEAVETS RACE DAY:

How do I find the venue?

There are venue maps on the Seavets Website.

Do I need to bring my own lunch?

All venues have some form of catering, some better than others, so it's always a good idea to have something to fall back on.

What time should I arrive?

Most people turn up by 9.30 am to give themselves time to rig up and sign on as the Briefing is at 10.30 and first race at 11.00. Entry fees are £15.00 for a one day event. (Two-day Events are charged differently.) You need to sign on and pay your entry fee at the Registration Desk as soon as possible.

When will the racing start?

The first race is scheduled for 11:00am. Weather permitting, we have 4 races, two before lunch and two after. It is quite likely that you will not have time to come ashore between races. Your best three races count towards the day's results and also count towards the series results. The day ends around 5pm.

Briefing.

A briefing will be held at about 10.30am. At the Briefing you will find out how the start flags work. The Seavets use a 'traffic light' system of red, yellow and green flags. There will be an extra "Beginners' Briefing" if requested to answer any further questions you might have. The rest of the fleet will be warned you are a beginner and will be asked to be especially kind and

helpful to you, even to the extent of pointing out where the next mark is or telling what the flags mean.

At the Briefing you will also find out about the course. Races usually last about 30 minutes. We run a "Grand Prix Finish" system, so that even if you complete only one lap you still get a finishing position. This means that if you are near the back of the fleet you don't have to keep slogging round the course when everyone else has finished. As soon as the Finish flag is raised, everyone finishes when they next cross the finish line.

THE START:

The start of Race One will be as close to 11.00 am as possible. Boards will sail backwards and forwards near the line and some may just hang around virtually stationary, especially near the Committee Boat. In the last minute before the start boards will jostle for position, so as a beginner the best thing to do is to hang back a bit and stay out of their way and start with some clear space around you. Within the last minute before the start all boards must be behind the Start Line.

WARNING: Please don't be put off by all the flags and signals; if you are confused, just ask another sailor before the start or even during a race, they'll be glad to help if they know you're a beginner.

Seavets use the ISAF "5-4-1-GO" start sequence with plain coloured flags as follows:

at 5 minutes	Red flag raised, one sound signal
at 4 minutes	Red flag lowered, yellow flag raised, one sound signal
at 3 minutes	Nothing happens
at 2 minutes	Nothing happens
at 1 minute	yellow flag lowered, green flag raised, one sound signal
at start	green flag lowered, one sound signal

INDIVIDUAL RECALL:

If one or more boards are over the line at the start and their numbers have been taken, there will be ONE sound signal and the individual boards must go round the end of the line and start again or be disqualified. The Race officer will call out the sail number(s) of offending boards if possible, but don't rely on hearing him/her.

GENERAL RECALL:

If several boards are over the line at the start and their numbers have NOT been taken, there will be TWO sound signals, a red flag will be raised, and ALL the fleet must restart the race. One minute after this flag is lowered the sequence restarts. General recalls are extremely rare at Seavets events.

FINISH:

When the Committee Boat is flying a blue flag all boards will finish the race as they cross the finish line. Each finisher will receive a sound signal. Because Seavets use a "Grand Prix" finish system, as long as you have completed one whole lap when the race ends you will receive a place in the results for that race. Our system sorts out who has completed how many laps and who is ahead of whom, even if you have been lapped. For this to work properly you **MUST** cross the Finish Line between the Committee Boat and the downwind mark on every lap. You will be reminded of this at the Briefing.

The Race Officer can stop the race any time he wishes. Usually it will be after about 25 minutes and possibly whilst a group of slower boards are just starting the last leg of the course to the Finish Line. This is so that the slower boards do not have to sail another whole lap and tire themselves out! When you cross the line and the blue flag is flying, your race has ended. You will normally also get a hoot.

THE NEXT RACE:

The Flag sequence for Race Two should start within about 15 minutes of the last person finishing Race One. Sometimes sailors will go back to the clubhouse between races but it is a risky thing to do as you could well miss the start of the next race. It is safer to simply go to the nearest shore and wait there, or just float about on your board near the Committee Boat.

LUNCH

After Race Two the entire fleet will go ashore for lunch, and the time for afternoon racing will be announced during the lunch break. It is always a good idea to do all four races if you can manage it, as your best three scores are taken for the final results, with your worst finishing position being discarded.

A COUPLE OF OTHER IMPORTANT RULES

Over the start line

On the start line you must not be over the line within the last minute or you must "sail round the end" of either end of the line and recross the line. If you don't do this you will be disqualified.

Port and Starboard

Whether you are actually racing or not, you need obey the Port/Starboard rule - if you are on starboard tack you have right of way (if your RIGHT hand is nearest the mast) and you should shout "Starboard" loudly at a board on Port Tack who looks as though he is going to collide with you. The board on Port Tack must give way to those on Starboard Tack and take evasive action. This is especially important when approaching the windward mark. If you infringe this rule and hit anybody they will probably shout "360" at you whereupon you must turn your board round through 360 degrees (one complete rotation) at the earliest convenient place, before continuing the race. But keep well clear of other boards when you do your 360.

Upwind/Downwind

You must be aware of the upwind/downwind rule - any board upwind of another MUST give way to a downwind board. This is particularly important when one person is sailing upwind and the other is sailing downwind, as the one sailing downwind can see better and must give way. This does not apply when rounding marks.

Water at the Mark

The only other rule to worry about is "Water at the Mark" - if at the point when you are two board lengths from the mark (not before or after), another board has an overlap on your inside, between yourself and the mark, he will usually shout "Water" and you must give him room to get round the mark inside you.

Any other Rules and Regulations?

Windsurfing Course Racing Events are all run in accordance with the International Racing Rules of Sailing and the Sailing Instructions for this specific Series. As a beginner you will have enough to occupy your mind at this stage without getting to grips with these, and we have selected the important bits and incorporated them into the paragraphs above, but when you get more into the sport one day you should certainly make a point of reading them.

PRIZEGIVING

After all the competitors have come ashore, changed and packed their gear there will be a prizegiving, usually between 4.30pm and 5pm.

This is just about all you need to know, after that it's just practice! Have fun and Good Luck.