

FILE

PERIHELION

Newsletter 18



Comet Class Association

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NEWSLETTER NUMBER 18 SPRING 1991

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

As I sit down to write this article, the snow has just disappeared, the snowdrops are peeking through and a hint of spring is creeping into the air. If, like me, you hate sailing with wet, cold feet, this is the time of year to think about washing last year's weed off the rudder and trying to remember where the key to the boat's padlock went. In other words, the next sailing season is about to begin.

This year, your committee has arranged an even better programme of events for you. Why not put some of the dates in your diary now, so you can keep the relevant days free. You will also find some details of the revised Travellers Trophy, which may help you to decide which races you select.

Also in this issue, the indefatigable Keith Lamdin turns up with another series of articles, this time on the race rules. Read and Learn!

Stuart Lines

TRAVELLER SERIES 1991

This year, the rules relating to the above series have been changed to provide a more varied and hopefully a more enjoyable event.

Each of the twelve meetings has been put into one of three groups. To qualify, a helm has to sail in a minimum of six open meetings, of which one event from each group must have been entered, plus either or both the Association championship and the National championship.

In the event of ties, the highest placed helm at the National championship will take precedence, or if neither sailed at the Nationals, the highest placed helm at the Association championship, or if only one sailed at the National championship then this takes precedence.

Additionally, where qualifiers have sailed in more than the minimum number of races, then discards will be applied in the usual manner, except where a discard is a result required to qualify in the series, then the next best position will be discarded and so on.

A revised sailing programme is included in this edition of Perihelion, showing the allocation of groups, together with extra information on race times, catering arrangements, etc.

If you have followed all this so far, then let us have your support and make it the best traveller series ever.

Steve Kibble

KEITH LAMDIN - AN APPRECIATION

The kind words from Stuart Lines in his Editorial for Perihelion No. 17, advising us of Keith's resignation, made me realise that I should put pen to paper and reflect gratefully on Keith's four crucial years of office.

I bought my first Comet, No. 30, from a Tonbridge sailor in July 1986 and advised Andrew Simmons accordingly. Andrew told me that there was a Class Association and that someone would be in touch.

At my home club, Chipstead, Steve Grenville had bought a Comet just ahead of me and one of two others were showing an interest. It came as some surprise therefore when this Keith Lamdin telephoned me and told me of a great many things we could do. A certain Chris Robertson was a sole Comet owner at Bewl Valley (and incidentally he was also the Association founder treasurer). Keith was trying to encourage Chris to swell the numbers at Chipstead; would I invite him down to look around? Needless to say, I did, and Chris duly joined. Secondly, it would be very nice to have an Open in that part of Kent and could I help put something together? All it needed was to obtain Club approval and the Class Association would do the rest. Needless to say, I also did, and on 27th June 1987, there was a two race fixture at Chipstead, an event shared with normal Saturday afternoon Mirrors, Topper and Handicap races. This attracted fifteen Comets, a large turnout for a then small class.

True to his word, Keith, assisted as he so often is, by his wife Margaret, fixed everything. He even fixed me! Would I try for another Open next year? Why not come to the other Opens at Denham and Aylesbury and next year, the Nationals? Needless to say, I did. You see, this is Keith. An enthusiast with the power of gentle persuasion that gets people moving and things done. Unfortunately, a recurrent injury sustained while pursuing his other hobby, cricket, has kept Keith off the water much more than he would have wished, but it has not kept him away; he has almost always been where the Comet action is.

Not only a doer, Keith has also made a terrific impact on the standard of Comet sailing. Since Perihelion 5, he has provided a series of articles which have helped us all to set our sails, rig properly, sail on inland and tidal waters, and to race. The wealth of Keith's experience has been freely given for the benefit of the whole class.

Keith, we thank you. You have made a major contribution in putting the excellent Comet dinghy on the map. Major contributions have also been made by Andrew and the Hyltons in particular and some owners have done their bit, but yours has been in the sound foundation of the Comet Class Association. Its super start is heavily down to you, Keith; I hope we keep up the momentum. Thanks.

Ralph Rowe

EASIER PROTESTS

However easy-going a sailor you may be, sooner or later someone with whom you are competing will so get your goat that a protest will be inevitable. Then you are stumped. What to use as a protest flag?

I am not sure where the idea came from but it has found much favour at Chipstead to have the Quick Release Protest Flag described below. You will need materials:

1/2 metre of 2.5 mm braided cord
 an empty 35 mm plastic film cassette can
 a piece of red fabric similar to that used for burgees (I bought a nylon chiffon ladies scarf from a street market for £1, enough to make four flags)
 needle and polyester (Terylene) thread

And tools:

a 2.5 mm drill or a piece of 2 mm iron wire and a burner to make it hot.

Drill a hole in the base of the film can about 2-3 mm in from the side and a similar hole in the cap about 4-5 mm in from the edge. You may drill the hole or you may heat up the piece of wire and poke it through the plastic, (fig 1). Do be careful not to burn your fingers!

Flame the ends of the braided cord and tie a stop knot 200 mm from one end. Pass the other end through the hole in the cap, from the top towards the bottom. Tie another stop knot as close to the underside of the cap as you can. About 175 mm lower down, tie a third stop knot and push the free end of the cord through the hole in the can, from the inside towards the outside. Make a fourth knot close up to the outside base of the can. Before doing anything else, check that the cap fits on to the can with the 175 mm of cord coiled up inside.

Cut a piece of the fabric about 125x175 mm and run all four edges through a small flame (candle or gas lighter) to stop the edges fraying in use. Open up the can and starting just below the knot in the underside of the lid, roll 3-4 mm of one of the shorter edges of the fabric round the cord, sewing it into place as you go. Finally, make a loop in the excess cord below the can, (fig 2).

In use, tie the assembly to the boom kicker saddle. Fold up the flag and its supporting cord and stow in the can; replace the cap, (fig 3). To use in the heat of battle, just pull the loop of cord and the flag unfurls.

Ralph A. Rowe

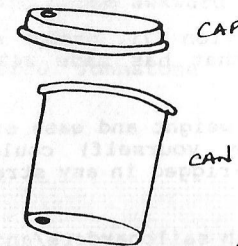


Fig 1.

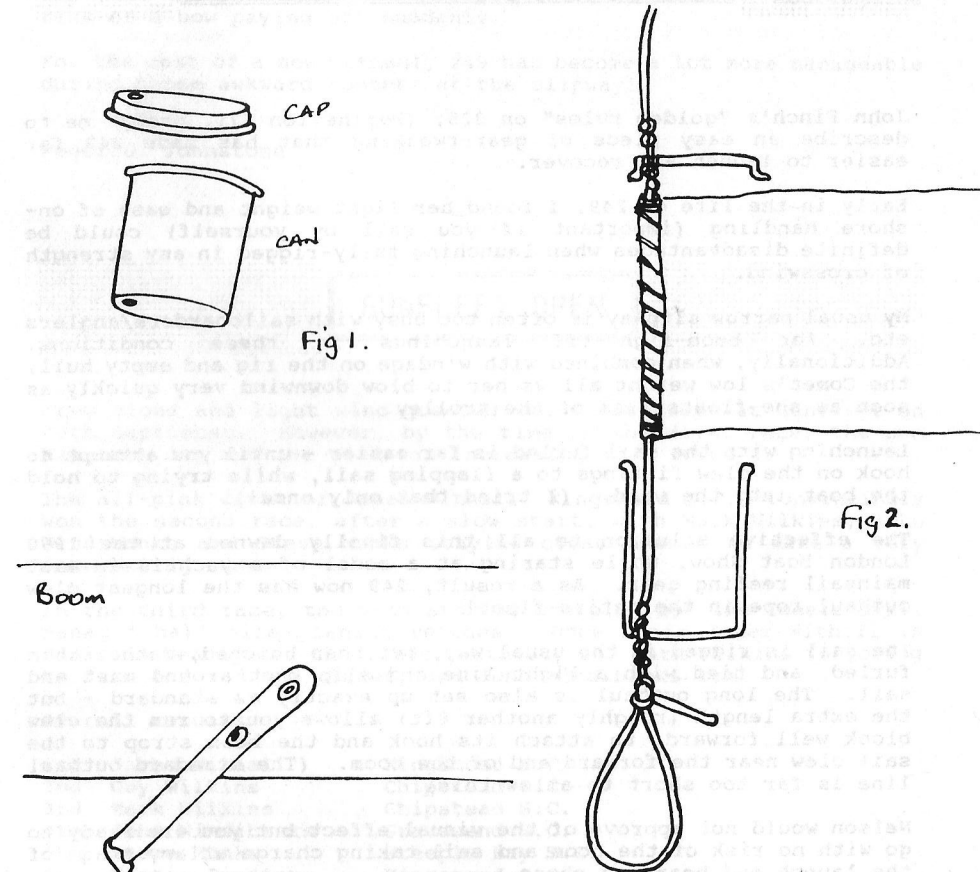


Fig 2.

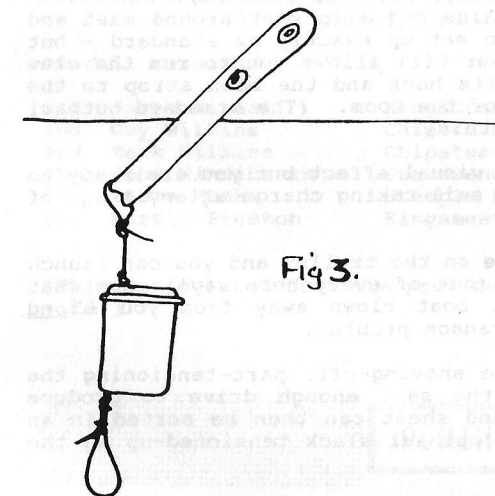


Fig 3.

MORE OUTHAUL - LESS HASSLE

John Finch's "golden rules" on 325, (Perihelion 17), prompt me to describe an easy piece of gear-tweaking that has made 249 far easier to launch and recover.

Early in the life of 249, I found her light weight and ease of on-shore handling (important if you sail by yourself) could be definite disadvantages when launching fully-rigged in any strength of crosswind.

My usual narrow slipway is often too busy with sailboarders/anglers etc. for boom-right-off launchings in these conditions. Additionally, when combined with windage on the rig and empty hull, the Comet's low weight allows her to blow downwind very quickly as soon as she floats free of the trolley.

Launching with the sail furled is far easier - until you attempt to hook on the clew fittings to a flapping sail, while trying to hold the boat into the wind. (I tried that only once!).

The effective solution to all this finally dawned at the 1990 London Boat Show, while staring at a model of a yacht's in-mast mainsail reefing gear. As a result, 249 now has the longest clew outhaul rope in the entire fleet!

The sail is rigged in the usual way, but then bunched, rather than furled, and tied with a light line and slip knot around mast and sail. The long outhaul is also set up exactly as standard - but the extra length (roughly another 8ft) allows you to run the clew block well forward, to attach its hook and the boom strop to the sail clew near the forward end of the boom. (The standard outhaul line is far too short to allow this).

Nelson would not approve of the visual effect but you are ready to go with no risk of the boom and sail taking charge at any stage of the launch and boarding phase.

The boat tends to be more stable on the trolley and you can launch with the boom safely amidships (out of everyone's way!); see what is going on; avoid having the boat blown away from you - and minimise the mainsheet-round-transom problem.

I slip the sail tie just before shoving-off, part-tensioning the outhaul as I board, to give the sail enough drive to produce steerage way. Rudder, board and sheet can then be sorted in an orderly fashion with remaining outhaul slack tensioned-up as the final step in the sequence.

This technique certainly will not produce the fastest get-away tack in a crosswind, but it does give much improved boat control in breezy conditions when in close company with other boats and water users.

On return to the slipway (usually still crowded!), I have found that dumping the outhaul at the last minute makes it easier to hold the boat head-to-wind once you are over the side - reducing the risk of a bow paying off suddenly.

For the cost of a new outhaul, 249 has become a lot more manageable during those awkward moments at the slipway!

Roger D. Johnstone

GUNFLEET OPEN

Grey cloud and light wind greeted the Comet fleet at Gunfleet on 29th September. However, by the time of the first race, the sun had come out and the wind was increasing to a force 3.

The all-pink Comet of James Withall, Kingsmead S.C., convincingly won the second race, after a slow start, with Mark Wilkins, John Windibanks and Steve Monks staying close enough to make a very interesting race.

In the third race, the wind started dropping but the Comets still managed half mile planing reaches. Once again James Withall in Pink and Deadly led the fleet, with Guy and Mark Wilkins following to take 2nd and 3rd places, and John Windibanks 4th.

Overall results

1st	James Withall	Kingsmead S.C.
2nd	Guy Wilkins	Chipstead S.C.
3rd	Mark Wilkins	Chipstead S.C.
4th	John Windibanks	Gravesend S.C.
5th	Steve Monks	Steeple Bay S.C.
6th	Martin Preston	Kingsmead S.C.

[This was omitted from the previous Perihelion due to an oversight - Ed.]

PERIHELION

The Summer edition of Perihelion will be published in June. All contributions to me by the end of May, please.

Stuart Lines

RYA CLASS ASSOCIATION FORUM

On 1st December, the annual RYA Class Association Forum took place in London. This event provides a means by which the RYA can communicate to its member classes. Topics covered included our links with the European boating scene, the development and use of the new national sailing centre to be located in Weymouth and funding the administration of yachting.

The importance of good race management was discussed; a further race management booklet is to be produced by the RYA and all regions will be running race management seminars.

Group discussion were held relating to cruising (central boat registers, construction standards, navigation systems and light dues), racing (youth training, race training) and class management.

There was an update on the work of the National Schools Sailing Association, Sailboat '91 and IYRU activity.

If any class member would like further information on any of the above topics, please contact me.

Steve Kibble

WHERE ARE THEY?

One of our members recently asked if we could publish details of the locations of Comets. The following clubs are known to have at least 5 Comets in their fleets. Of course, there may be other boats which do not belong to the Class Association.

Aylesbury	15
Arden	5
Cam	5
Chipstead	16
Crawley	13
Hampton Pier	5
Kingsmead	25
Sutton Bingham	5

Steve Kibble

HAMPTON PIER

As the result of a minor typing error, the wrong date was given for the National Championships in the past newsletter. They are, of course, on the 12th - 14th July, not June as shown.

Comet Class Association

Affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association

SAILING PROGRAMME 1991

Open Meetings

Date	Club	T	P	E	S	A	C	Contact
April 28	Cam S.C.	A	F	3.50	11.00	Y	Y	0223 290420 Camb.
May 6	ICI (Slough) S.C.	B	F	3.00	11 00		Y	0753 884939 Buck.
May 11	Steeple Bay S.C.	C						0277 821263 Essex
May 12	" " "							
May 18	Grafham Water S.C.	S	F		12.00	Y	Y	0480 810478 Camb.
May 19	" " "				11.00			
May 25	Redditch S.C.	A	F	3.00			Y	0527 25504 Wark.
May 26	Sutton Bingham S.C.	B	F	3.50	11.00	Y	Y	0458 223360 Soms.
June 2	Kennet Valley S.C.	B						0252 622085 Berk.
June 8	Chipstead S.C.	C	F	4.00	10.30		Y	0322 63349 Kent
June 15	Paxton Lakes S.C.	A	F		15.00			0234 870743 Camb.
June 16	" " "				11.00			
July 12	Hampton Pier Y.C.	N	F	15.00	11.00	Y	Y	0227 712246 Kent
July 13	" " "				11.00			
July 14	" " "				11.30			
July 28	Aylesbury S.C.	A	F	3.50	11.30	Y	F	02406 3530 Buck.
Aug 25	Bowl Valley S.C.	C					N	Y 0322 557565 Kent
Aug 26	" " "							
Sept 1	Gunfleet S.C.	C						0255 424476 Essex
Oct 20	Kingsmead S.C.	B	F	3.50			Y	0753 885782 Berk.

Key: T Relevant group, or N=National Champs, S=Association Champs
 P Parking F=Free. E Entry fee. S Start time of first race.
 A Accommodation
 C Catering available Y=Yes, N= No, F=Entry fee includes lunch, tea and all drinks

Training Day

July 27 Aylesbury S.C.

Steve Kibble
 Class Secretary

COMET

INLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS

Grafham Water S.C.

18/19th May 1991

- why not make a weekend of it -

! good sailing - good facilities - good fun !

Saturday 18th: 12:00hrs Practice race
15:00 1st points race

Sunday 19th: 11:00 2nd points race
14:00 3rd points race

- best two points races to count -

ENTRY FEE: £10

- COMET CLASS ASSOCIATION MEMBERS ONLY -
(non-members are welcome to join the Association on the day)

Accommodation/camping: local list available.....
or camper vans and tents welcome on site
(sorry no caravans allowed)

breakfast/lunch/dinner at reasonable prices

more information? -

Henry Jagers, 43 Haymill Rd., Slough, SL1 6NE
(0628) 664237 or 071-736 3344 ext.4197

Grafham Water is easily reached from the A1: just south of
Huntingdon, well signposted from Buckden, near Perry.
phone: (0480) 810478

THE ONE EVENT YOU MUST NOT MISS

the

COMET NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

organised by the

HAMPTON PIER YACHT CLUB

HAMPTON, HERNE BAY, KENT.

The Championship will take on the 12th 13th & 14th July 1991.

Modern Club House with good views and a friendly atmosphere.

Good Sailing Area with Launching and recovery beach parties.

Free Parking. Food all day including breakfast.

Ideal for all the family and friends.

PROGRAMME

Friday 12th July (H.T. 13.43) 09.00 hrs Registration
11.00 hrs Practice Race
14.30 hrs Race 1

The Club house will be open in the evening with a bar and games available.

Saturday 13th July (H.T. 14.34) 11.00 hrs Race 2
14.30 hrs Race 3
19.00 hrs Comet Class AGM
20.00 hrs approx BBQ

Sunday 14th July (H.T. 15.22) 11.00 hrs Race 4
14.30 hrs Race 5
17.30 hrs Prize Giving

(Times subject to change)

Entry Fee £15 Closing Date 30th June 1991.
Late Entry Fee £20 Taken on the day.

The entry forms which are included should be sent to :-
John Windibank.

The class is judged by the success of its Nationals, so enter if you can and encourage your colleagues as well. You may have met the host club members at Crystal Palace and they promise that their club will have their 5 Comets on the water for the nationals, pressganged or not.

SHOES, SHIPS AND SEALING WAX

We are all familiar with the traditional hazards of sailing - capsizing, sinking, leaving the rudder on the garage floor. Now, it seems, another danger awaits us - MICE.

Mervyn Cully notes "You might like to know that one particular part of the Comet makes a very good meal for mice. This is the plastic cover on the end of the pin which holds the boom to the goose neck. Mine was eaten through within a couple of months of buying the boat. It looks as though the end of the cap is the most tasty as that has disappeared completely, whereas the ring which goes round the pin is still largely intact. The shavings from the demolished cap were partly lying beside the jamb cleats by the control lines, while the rest were on top of the transom. Do you think the mouse went for a walk along the boat after his meal and finally decided that trying to digest plastic wasn't worth a candle?"

To prove the point, Mervyn sent me the remains, so I can vouch for his story. Would you like the cap back, Mervyn, or has the Editor discretion to dispose of it?

Stuart Lines

WANTED - RACING COACHES

In order to ensure the RYA has sufficient racing coaches, a course is held annually which is open to any sailors who feel they meet specific criteria and would like to put something back into the sport. This year the course is being held in November at the Grafham Residential Centre.

The requirement for potential racing coaches is that they should have competed with distinction at Regional, National or International regattas and be fully conversant with the technical aspects of racing. Some prior experience in training or teaching is essential.

Once a sailor has attended one of these courses, before he becomes a full Racing Coach, he should assist an RYA National Coach or experienced Racing Coach with class association or youth training for a minimum duration of two weekends and also satisfactorily complete one National Coaching Foundation level 2 coaching module and hold a valid First Aid certificate approved by the RYA. He should also attend at least one of the coaches' seminars, run annually for racing Coaches, every two years.

If any association member is interested then please contact John Derbyshire (National Racing Coach) at the RYA.

KNOW THE RULES - PART 1

In this final series (promise!) I would like to look at the racing rules as they affect us in normal Comet and club racing. In most cases, the rules are quite simple and work in a common-sense manner, although they are often made to seem more complicated than is necessary. I do not intend to work through the rules word by word, nuance by nuance - there are plenty of excellent text books which do just that - rather I will try to explain the reasons for the rules and how to avoid the more difficult situations whilst still retaining your rights on the race course.

PRINCIPLES: There are some basic principles which need to be clearly established before any rules can be put into context.

Firstly, the rules are there primarily to allow boats to sail in close proximity without the risks of collision. Indeed, in a perfect world (!) there would never be a collision between boats as the rules provide a mechanism for avoiding boat to boat contact in almost every possible situation. It is important to remember that the same rules govern all sizes of boats and whilst a collision in a Comet race may not be terribly serious, it most certainly will be if between two 80' Maxi yachts in the Southern Oceans. The avoidance of boat to boat contact is an essential part of the rules and, in taking avoiding action or altering course in close proximity to other boats, always remember that there is a reaction time irrespective of the size of boat - things cannot happen quite instantaneously.

Secondly, whilst you may have right of way at a particular point in the race, you still have obligations towards other boats so as not to obstruct them further whilst they are in the act of keeping clear of you. I will expand on this later in the series but essentially there should only be one penalty for being the "give way" boat at any point of time. In addition, your obligations in keeping clear are not just to avoid collision with a right of way boat but, also, to the helmsman whose race can easily be spoilt, through no fault of his own, by your actions. The rules are not intended to be used as an additional element of race tactics but are there to allow us to complete the course in safety and without damage. That does not mean that there are no tactical elements to the rules but that they are a secondary consideration.

Finally, the rules make no provision for your competence as a helmsman or, indeed, the conditions under which the race is being sailed. It is an assumption of the rules that, if required to tack in order to keep clear of a right of way boat, you are able to do so equally in a force 1 wind on a lake or a force 6 wind at sea in any condition of tide and waves. Clearly, it is more difficult to meet your obligations of racing in strong conditions and, also clearly, the result of any collision is likely to be more damaging in all aspects to the boat and crew. In this situation, there are additional obligations on all helmsmen to adopt a common-sense approach and give extra room and warning in order to avoid any such potentially damaging positions.

RULES STRUCTURE: The rules are grouped into various sections, some of which are to do with the organisation and management of races (Part 2), general requirements of entering races (Part 3), other sailing rules not directly involved with the right of way between boats (Part 5) and protests and appeals (Part 6).

The key sections to do with right of way between boats are the following:

Fundamental Rules and Definitions (Part 1); and
Right of way Rules (Part 4) including obligations, principle rules with limitations and some exception rules which apply at obstructions, marks and in special circumstances.

Within the principal right of way rules are important references to transitional rules and these are critical to a real understanding of the rules.

At any point of time between two boats on the water, one of them has right of way with respect to the other, which is therefore obligated to keep clear. At some future point in the race, the relative obligation may either switch to the other boat or remain with the original boat but for different reasons and, at the point of change, there is a transitional period which is intended to allow the give-way boat "ample room and opportunity" to meet his obligations and keep clear.

This area of the rules probably causes more misunderstanding and confusion than any other but, clearly, boats cannot actually keep clear instantly and must be given the opportunity to comply with the requirements placed on them. At no point in the rules is it required that a boat anticipate that it will be required to keep clear of another at some time in the future. It is only required to begin to keep clear from the point at which the give way position is established and, thereafter, to keep clear albeit in a timely manner.

The principle of transitional relief from instantaneous action places limitations on both the right of way and give way boats which I will cover in some detail for specific cases.

RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS: What I have tried to explain briefly is that you have both rights and obligations under the racing rules of equal importance to the sensible conduct of a race. There is absolutely nothing wrong with knowing and claiming your rights at any point in a race as long as you are equally aware and compliant with your obligations during the same race.

The purpose of any race is to establish which boat can be sailed around a given course in the shortest period of time while proceeding in a seamanlike manner. This may sound a little old fashioned but it must be remembered that some serious damage or real personal injury can be caused during a collision and no prize is worth that possibility.

The rules are there to reduce, and preferably avoid, any such possibility but they have to be implemented in the right spirit such that we claim our rights and meet our obligations in equal amounts. Boat racing is one of the few sports where the competitors act as their own referee on the course and this can only continue to operate fairly if all helmsmen realise that giving

way is as important as that of claiming right of way so that we can all concentrate on sailing the race rather than playing any form of boat for boat "dodgems" on the water. It is rather sad to see a trend at the highest level, particularly match racing, for on-the-water judging of infringements but that will clearly never be an option for club racing and therefore the enjoyment of our racing is in our own hands and this does depend on a sensible knowledge of both the wording and the intention of the rules.

PROTESTS AND APPEALS: That being said, is there a place for protests and appeals in our racing? Yes, there most definitely is!

It seems, somehow, to have become unacceptable to protest another helm for infringement of the rules and yet the right for an independent judgement of a situation where two people do not agree on rule interpretation seems to me to be nothing more than the use of natural justice and a means of building up case law in order to provide guidance to competitors in the actual usage of the rules in specific circumstances.

I do not accept the use of the protest room solely as a means for a helm to attempt to argue away his obligations under the rules but, in the case of genuine disagreement of either interpretation of the rules or of the facts of a situation, a protest may be the only sensible way of reaching a conclusion and building up our knowledge of the rules from practical examples.

It is clearly difficult to word a set of rules in such a way as to cater for every possible combination of boats and their positions and still remain able to easily identify the right of way and give way conditions. In complex situations, with varying views as to the established facts of the case, it may only be possible to agree through a protest case and, if necessary, an appeal against the decision of a committee who, although independent, may still be wrong! Indeed, it is the appeal cases which effectively become the case law that we depend on for the detailed interpretation of the rules against which consistent results can be reached.

There is nothing wrong with a protest and appeal lodged in the proper spirit. However, if a protest is used solely as a means of avoiding right of way responsibility which is clearly established then the person concerned is in the wrong sport and certainly in the wrong Class!

JUDGEMENT AND PRACTICE: It may seem strange to say that you should practise the rules but it is true! The reasons people get in to trouble over complying with the rules in the hurly-burly of a race is often just through lack of anticipation and lookout for other boats on the water. With experience, it is often possible to be able to picture a situation developing on the water and to have a clear view of the options available as a get-out.

There is absolutely no excuse for being caught unawares by a boat which has right of way over you if you keep a sharp lookout and anticipate what he is trying to do on the race course. This level of experience comes slowly with time and racing, but it can be aided by practise as part of your sailing practise. As you sail around the lake or on the sea and practise your pure sailing technique, just keep an eye on the other boats in your immediate vicinity and note your rights and obligations towards them. It does not matter that you may not come close enough to ever have to alter course but, at least, you have noted them and established in your own mind what rules apply should it become necessary. If you

do this as part of your general sailing then it slowly becomes an automatic part of being on the water to the degree that you know subconsciously how you relate to other boats when it comes to racing. Just as you have to sail on auto-helm for much of the race while you consider tactics, you need an auto-rules reaction for most of the open water situations that occur. Once you have this degree of basic knowledge then the difficult situations at marks and obstructions can be concentrated on much more easily and with a greater chance of success.

PART ONE - FUNDAMENTAL RULES AND DEFINITIONS: In this section I will briefly cover those fundamental rules and definitions which make an important contribution to understanding the right of way rules to be covered in other articles.

The fundamental rules are clear and state:

- a. You must render assistance to others if possible.
- b. It is your responsibility to decide to race.
- c. You must compete in a sportsmanlike way through fair sailing.
- d. You must accept penalties (either retirement or alternative) if you know you have broken the rules.

It seems self-evident that these are the sound basis of the remainder of the rules and, as such, they rank above all other rules.

How many of you habitually ask a capsized boat if they are all right when you sail past nearby and could assist? If you do not then, at least, you are ignoring the traditions of the sea and, at worst, somebody could be in peril through your omission of a fundamental requirement. However, if you lose places through your actions, you may claim redress from the race committee.

If you decide to race on without penalty even though you know you have infringed a rule then you will inevitably affect unfairly a boat which has complied with the rules and thereby gain an advantage other than by fair sailing. Whilst you may get away with this in anything other than a blatant case, are you then satisfied that you have complied with the spirit of racing let alone the letter of the rules?

Fundamental rules are the basis of a mindset that enable us all to compete safely and fairly - apply them in that spirit!

The definitions are intended to clarify the precise meaning of words and phrases used in the rules of Part 4 and, as such, they have exactly the same status as the rules themselves. I will refer to definitions as required when discussing specific rules but some specific points should be made which apply throughout the rules.

Luffing and Bearing Away - these are the opposite actions of heading into or away from the wind until either head to wind or until beginning to gybe, (fig 1).

Tacking and Gybing - these are the opposite actions of altering course from either head to wind to a close hauled course or from directly down wind until the sail fills on the new tack, (fig 2). Note that these actions are completed in a fairly short period of time with only a small change of boat direction and that there is no reference to boat speed. You can have a boat having completed the action of tacking and yet be stationary in the water before it has gathered any way.

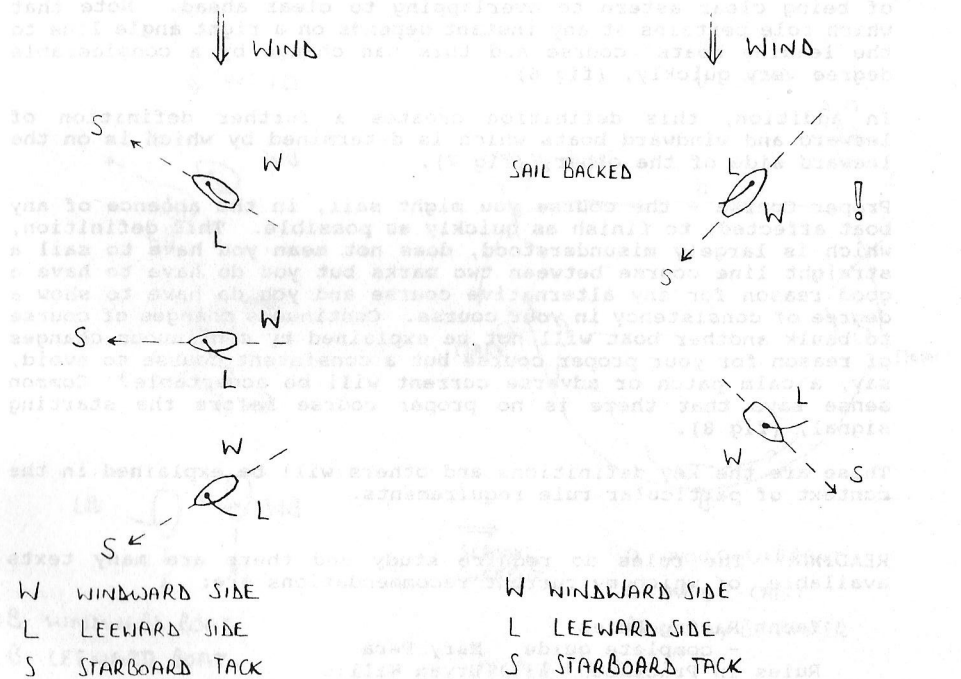
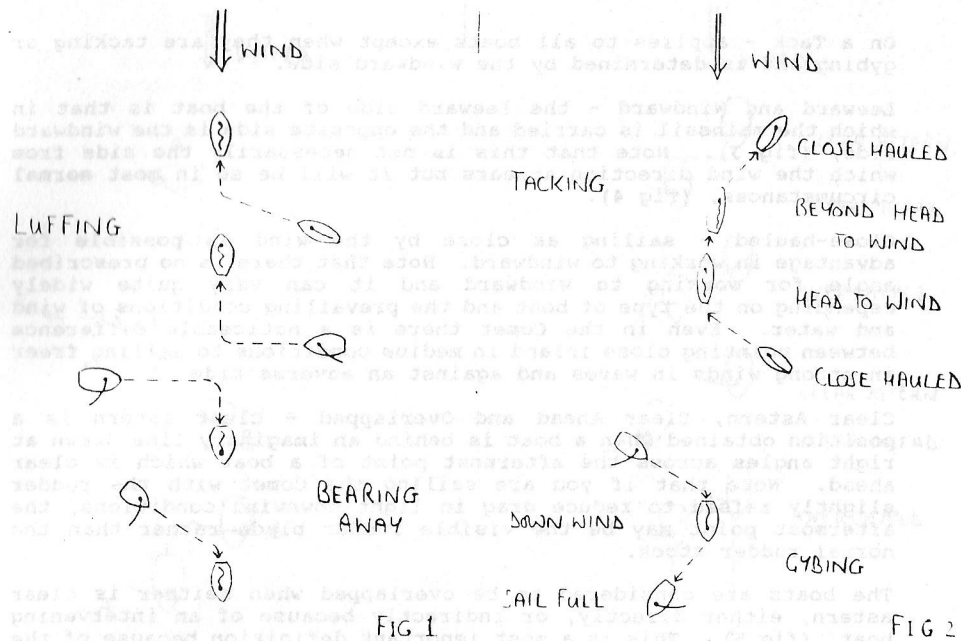


FIG 3

FIG 4

On a Tack - applies to all boats except when they are tacking or gybing and is determined by the windward side.

Leeward and Windward - the leeward side of the boat is that in which the mainsail is carried and the opposite side is the windward side, (fig 3). Note that this is not necessarily the side from which the wind direction appears but it will be so in most normal circumstances, (fig 4).

Close-hauled - sailing as close by the wind as possible for advantage in working to windward. Note that there is no prescribed angle for working to windward and it can vary quite widely depending on the type of boat and the prevailing conditions of wind and water. Even in the Comet there is a noticeable difference between pointing close inland in medium conditions to sailing freer in strong winds in waves and against an adverse tide.

Clear Astern, Clear Ahead and Overlapped - clear astern is a position obtained when a boat is behind an imaginary line drawn at right angles across the aftermost point of a boat which is clear ahead. Note that if you are sailing the Comet with the rudder slightly raised to reduce drag in light downwind conditions, the aftermost point may be the visible rudder blade rather than the normal rudder stock.

The boats are considered to be overlapped when neither is clear astern, either directly, or indirectly because of an intervening boat, (fig 5). This is a most important definition because of the number of rules which become active though changing from the role of being clear astern to overlapping to clear ahead. Note that which role pertains at any instant depends on a right angle line to the leading boats' course and this can change by a considerable degree very quickly, (fig 6).

In addition, this definition creates a further definition of leeward and windward boats which is determined by which is on the leeward side of the other, (fig 7).

Proper Course - the course you might sail, in the absence of any boat affected, to finish as quickly as possible. This definition, which is largely misunderstood, does not mean you have to sail a straight line course between two marks but you do have to have a good reason for any alternative course and you do have to show a degree of consistency in your course. Continuous changes of course to baulk another boat will not be explained by continuous changes of reason for your proper course but a consistent course to avoid, say, a calm patch or adverse current will be acceptable. Common sense says that there is no proper course before the starting signal, (fig 8).

These are the key definitions and others will be explained in the context of particular rule requirements.

READING: The rules do require study and there are many texts available, of which my current recommendations are:

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Yacht Racing Rules | |
| - complete guide | Mary Pera |
| Rules in Practise | Bryan Willis |
| Rules in Action | Gerald Sambrooke-Sturgess |

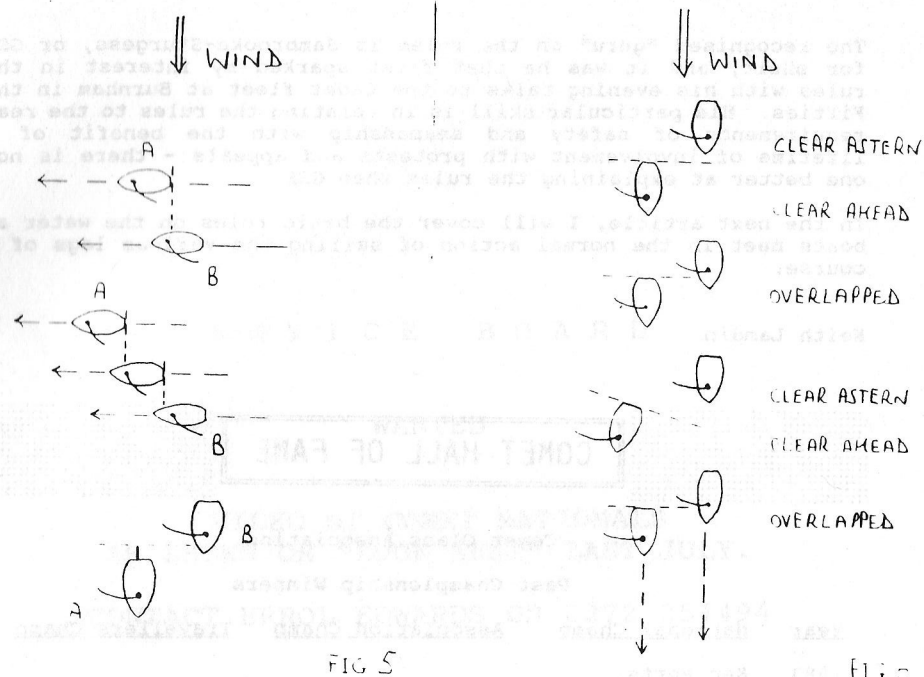
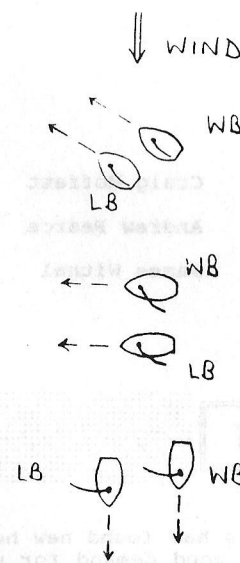


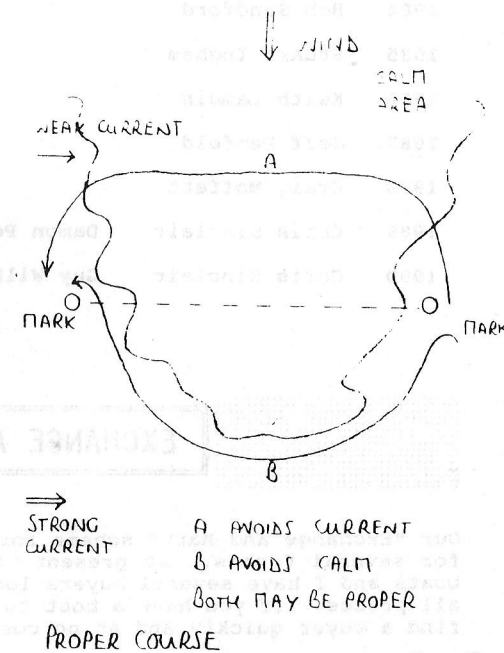
FIG 5

FIG 6



WB WINDWARD BOAT
LB LEEWARD BOAT

FIG 7



PROPER COURSE

FIG 8

The recognised "guru" on the rules is Sambrooke-Sturgess, or GSS for short, and it was he that first sparked my interest in the rules with his evening talks to the Cadet fleet at Burnham in the Fifties. His particular skill is in relating the rules to the real requirements of safety and seamanship with the benefit of a lifetime of involvement with protests and appeals - there is no one better at explaining the rules than GSS.

In the next article, I will cover the basic rules on the water as boats meet in the normal action of sailing the various legs of a course.

Keith Lamdin

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Comet Class Association

Past Championship Winners

<u>Year</u>	<u>National Champ</u>	<u>Association Champ</u>	<u>Travellers Champ</u>
1983	Ken Potts		
1984	Bob Sandford		
1985	Stuart Ingham		
1986	Keith Lamdin		
1987	Jeff Penfold		
1988	Craig Moffett		Craig Moffett
1989	Chris Sinclair	Damon Perrin	Andrew Pearce
1990	Chris Sinclair	Guy Wilkins	James Withal

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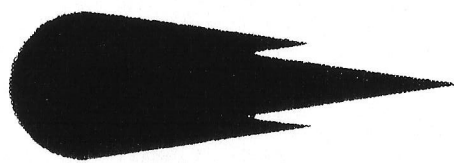
Stuart Lines

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