

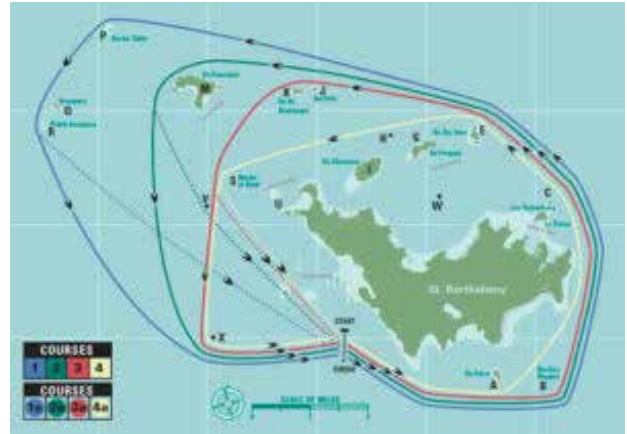
Fair Racing

Race Committee Plays a Vital Role

When considering ‘fair racing’ for anything other than one design racing, the Handicap Rule invariably come to the fore. That is certainly true in superyacht racing. The current handicap rule, the ORCs, receives close scrutiny by participants, yacht designers, builders and program managers. “This handicap is unfair!” has been heard many times over many years and under different rules.

The ORCs has been the handicap rule of choice for superyacht regatta organizers since 2015. Over that time frame this transparent rule and VPP have evolved, and by all accounts significant improvements and refinements have been realized.

It is however, important to note that there are other factors that come into play when one evaluates race results. Performance on the race course, yacht preparation (sails, bottom condition, etc.) and class breaks are three obvious ones. We delved into class breaks and all that entails in the February, [2019 issue of the SYRA Newsletter](#).



A fourth, important factor that does not garner as much attention, is the role the race committee has in providing as level a playing field as possible.

In addition to designating the appropriate wind range for scoring, which is essential and straight forward, the race committee must give serious consideration to ‘course configuration’. Some yacht owners and afterguards may not know that the ORCs is a “circular random” rule. From section 502 of the ORCs Rule: “Time allowances are calculated for a hypothetical course type in which the yacht circumnavigates a circular island with the true wind direction held constant. The race committee shall therefore attempt, when feasible, to establish course composition that features approximately the same amount of beating, reaching and running.”

As a practical matter, one cannot expect every race to reflect that precise course configuration breakdown. The race committee can, however, take steps to ensure there is a reasonable balance during any one race and certainly over the course of a multi-race regatta.

For example, if it turns out that the first race of a regatta featured very little upwind sailing and a heavy dose of reaching, then in order to compensate, the race committee should attempt to provide more upwind sailing and less reaching in the second race. There are real world limitations, including the number and type of course options available, the practical use of inflatable marks, and actual versus predicted weather patterns.

It is worth noting that when the ORC and SYRA evaluate the VPP and individual yacht ratings, course configuration figures prominently in any assessment or conclusions made.

If you have any questions, concerns or feedback on course configuration or any other issue regarding the ORCs or fair racing, we want to hear from you. Please contact Peter Craig at peter@superyra.org