



National Sonata Association News March 2001

The AGM and Committee Changes

The AGM was held at the Southampton Boat Show during the weekend of the fuel protests. Despite this, many did attend including a few who were happy to take on some of the vacant positions on the committee. A big thank you to Robin Nixon who has now handed over the Treasurers job to John Bolton and his Southern Area Reps hat to Andy Fernie and Matt Glasgow. Jim Dominy concludes his involvement with the Association with the production of this Handbook. We welcome Sam North as Publicity Officer and Tom White as Membership Secretary. We are also glad to say that Steve Tribe is going to continue running the 'Boats for Sale List' as the website and Jack Hardie's help have significantly reduced the workload.

National Championship Venues

Preparations are well under way for what could be the biggest turn out for a National Championships, ever. The Medway Yacht Club is pulling out all the stops to make this a week to remember and a fitting celebration of the class' Silver Jubilee. There is a flyer in this handbook with contact details for more information. Hopefully the week will include a 'do' of some sort where other members of the Association who are not attending the championships can join in celebrating the class' birthday. The last AGM confirmed the venue for 2002 as the Royal Tay Yacht Club on the east coast of Scotland. Their presentation information is also reproduced elsewhere in this book, and its clear that again it looks like being an excellent decision to decide to go the new venue for 2002.

The rotation of the Nationals around the country means its time for the South Coast again in 2004. Brixham (Torbay) has already shown an interest and anywhere else that wishes to be considered must be ready to make a pitch to the Skippers Meeting at the Medway Yacht Club at the start of this years Nationals in July/August. Having the decision taken then, ensures that not only do the most relevant members decide where to hold the Nationals, but it's done in sufficient time (2 years min.) to allow the organising club to make the arrangements and generate maximum support.

AGM

It's planned that the next Association AGM will be at the London Boat Show in January 2002. Hopefully there will be a return to the tradition of combining this with a social function (dinner ?). A suitable venue for the meeting has been offered by Elaine Middleton (from Maiden Marine and owner of 'Sonnateigna').

Trophies

At the Nationals in August it was clear that the link between individual races and specific trophies had become a little vague. We've now detailed in the Championship Guidelines (in the 'Technical' section of this handbook) what we believe was the original correlation. On another sheet, we've also tried to record 'who - won - what - when'. If you can add anything or provide corrections to the results table, please contact Alan Hassell.

Special Offers

The Association has signed up for a promotional scheme with Seajet Paints. They are marketing a range of products from 'Chugoku' who have been making marine coatings for 80 years. People who have been using their products down at the Medway Yacht Club have been impressed, as have a number of the yachting magazines. The benefits to the Association are that they will refund to us 10% of the purchase price. So you get a good quality product at about 30% cheaper than other brands and the Association gets a boost to its funds. After last season's refit, the Medway Yacht Club received a cheque back for £1000. The products seem well supported; there's a technical helpline and a free instructional video with orders over £50. Full details are also on www.seajetpaint.com. The paints can be ordered by phone, mail, fax or over the internet and are delivered to your door within three days, (free carriage on orders over £20). Just remember to tell them you're included in the 'National Sonata Association' scheme.

Insurance

Robbie Richardson says he's been getting comparative quotes from various insurance companies and has found this one to be particularly competitive for his Sonata.
John Bannerman Ltd
Peek House Tel: 020 7929 3400
20 Eastcheap Fax: 020 7929 3600
London, EC3M 1EB Email: 100744.535@compuserve.com

Advertising on the Boats and Sails

As an interim measure, it's been decided that the National Sonata Class should only allow advertising in accordance with ' ISAF Advertising Code sections 20.3.1 and 20.3.2(a) Cat A', which basically means 'none is

allowed', (with the exception of the traditional sailmaker's corner patch). This position will need to be endorsed at the next AGM and a rule to the effect incorporated in our class rules. So if you feel we should adopt a different position, promote your thinking on the 'Rules' section of the class bulletin board (see below) and get a proposal ready for the next meeting.

Rules and Rule Changes

The latest edition of the Class Rules as issued by the RYA is included in this package. This is the last 'paper' copy that will be issued by the RYA. In future, a downloadable version will be available on their website. This is not just an economy measure; it also ensures members always have access to the guaranteed latest version. As we are a National Class our rules continue to be administered by the RYA. This means revisions do take some time to pass through the various stages. (It was interesting to learn that David Thomas, the Sonata's designer, still has a final veto on any changes). This latest edition finally incorporates the rules changes regarding GPS and forward bunk cushions that were discussed at the Hamble Nationals several years ago.

So its important that any changes that people would like to see are discussed early as snap changes are impossible to make. A new area of the Bulletin Board on the class website has been set up by Jack Hardie specifically to allow debate about possible rule changes. This is the best place to garner everyone's opinion as attendance at the AGM is understandably restricted. For starters, there are suggestions concerning rudder specs, crew numbers (outlined below) and I believe Robbie Richardson has proposals for changes to the permitted sail cloths. There has been constant development in the world of sail cloths and perhaps its time we looked to see if any of them would bring benefits to the class.

The issue of a new set of rules often stimulates the search for that elusive loophole that leads to all conquering speed, so its perhaps worth restating the intended purpose of the rules as specified in Rule 1.1. The Class Rules are constraints that keep all the boats as similar as possible and hence provide decent one-design racing. They encompass certain dictated parameters plus 'any other matter which has influence on the basic speed of a National Sonata'. It goes on to clearly state that 'no alterations are permitted unless specifically stated'. So the boats can only deviate from the way fully finished versions left the Hunter Boats factory if it's specifically allowed in the rules. It can never be argued that something is allowed because the rules don't forbid it, rather it has to be assumed everything is forbidden unless specifically permitted. Examples would be that carbon fibre spinnaker poles are legal because (Rule 5.1.4.2) 'the spinnaker boom may be of any material', but lightweight floorboards are illegal (even if 10mm thick, Rule 2.4.2.1), not because they are banned, but because there is no allowance in the rules to deviate from the marine plywood ones fitted by Hunter in the original boats.

Proposed Rule Changes

Rudders: At the moment, only wood is permitted in the construction of a Sonata rudder. The new commercially available rudders however are glass sheathed and this is a good idea as it improves their longevity for little increase in cost. But is there a need to specify the amount of sheathing to prevent a glass sheathed wooden rudder becoming a wood cored (balsa) glass rudder ?

These are two suggestions for the revision of Rule 4.2.1, both of which would encompass all the commercially produced rudders that have been bought to date.

4.2.1 The rudder shall be predominately of solid or laminated wood. An optional sheathing of glass / epoxy is permitted.

or

4.2.1 The rudder shall be of solid or laminated wood, however an E-glass and epoxy sheathing (380 to 450grm biaxial or 350 to 400grm woven roving) is permitted. Maximum thickness shall be approximately 2mm (maximum), including flow coat and paint finish.

Crew Numbers: At the moment there is no control on crew numbers whilst racing in the the Class Rules. Although the Association's Championship Guidelines did try to give a lead, there was a feeling at the Nationals this year that further clarity was needed. There are two conflicting issues here: Whilst the class is keen to allow owners the flexibility to sail with crews of differing make ups, (families, children, light weights, etc) we must prevent 'rail stacking' or ' crew dumping' on a day by day basis depending on the forecast. There is no future in having to find a fifth person for a weeks regatta to 'come along in case you're needed'.

The proposed wording below tries to ensure that crew size is chosen far enough ahead of the event, that not even a long range weather forecast could influence the decision on crew numbers, whilst allowing the Race Officer to sanction changes in case of genuine unforeseen circumstances. Therefore the proposed section should be inserted into the Class Rules:

9 The Crew

9.1 The Sonata can be raced at all levels, including the National Championships, with a crew of three to five with the following provisos:

The intended number of crew should be stated (and named ?) on the event entry form.

No changes to either crew number, or actual crew members, are permitted without permission of the Race Officer.