**How Pursuit Races are run**

The principle of a pursuit race is that, if boats of different classes are sailed by crews of equal ability, at the end of a fixed time (normally 65 minutes) all should cross the finishing line together. So the slow boats start first and the faster ones have to catch them!

The start time for each boat is calculated using the boat’s Portsmouth Yardstick Handicap number (PY). The length of the race is also fixed eg. 65 minutes when, if everything was equal – wind and helm skill – the boats should all be in the same place having travelled an equal distance but at different speeds!

At Tamar a helm handicap is also used. Those who finish in the first three places of the race will have their handicap increased so they start later in the next race and will have to work harder to catch up. Helms who finish first and second get a plus two so they will start two minutes later in the next race. Someone finishing third gets a plus one so will start a minute later in the following race. Everyone else in the race, 4th downwards, gets the same minus score (-1) added to their handicap so they start a minute earlier

The current personal handicap is calculated before each race and added to the boat handicap.

Currently the range of handicaps is +3 to -12. (There is a cap on handicaps at -12 (see committee meeting minutes 17 October 2012). Handicaps are carried over from the previous season. New helms currently start with a personal handicap of 0. If they do not finish in the first three then they accrue a minus one handicap each race so building up their handicap. The greater minus score the earlier your start time!

Below is a table showing examples of how the helm handicaps change after races.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Pursuit Helms | Helm Handicap | Race 1 position | Helm Handicap | Race 2 position | Helm Handicap | Race 3 position | Helm Handicap | Race 4 position | Helm Handicap |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Anderson J | 0 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 1 |  |  | 8 | 0 |
| Anderson P | -4 |  | -4 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Bartrop L | -1 |  | -1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Axford S | -1 |  | -1 |  |  | 4 | -2 |  |  |
| Buckett J | -5 |  | -5 | 8 | -6 | 1 | -4 |  |  |
| Buckett N | -3 |  | -3 | 10 | -4 |  |  |  |  |
| Carter M | -7 |  | -7 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Chadney J | -2 | 10 | -3 |  |  |  |  | 7 | -4 |
| A Comber | -11 | 3 | -10 | 2 | -8 |  |  | 6 | -9 |
| Clifton A | 0 | 13 | -1 | 12 | -2 |  |  |  |  |
| Dabbs J | 0 |  | 0 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Duncalf J | -4 |  | -4 |  |  | 3 | -3 | 11 | -4 |
| Duncalf V | -5 | 5 | -6 |  |  |  |  | 1 | -4 |
| Harris D | -8 |  | 8 |  |  |  |  |  |  |