

The 2017 PLANNING PROCESS AT SOL

Although the matter and the concerns that started this paper are obviously serious, as you know me well enough, I will make it also a bit of fun for readers ;)

For those of you who are not familiar with the relatively new setup behind the scenes in SOL, I would mention that basically it is constituted by three bodies:

- 1) The Board (two members) representing a quite large number of shareholders (SOLers)
- 2) The Management Team (4 Heads). Each has a number of volunteers assisting with what needs to be done on daily basis.
- 3) One lonely COOrdinator (self) who interacts with all the MT members , is an MT member on his own , and most importantly , is the one who is asked by the Board to explain things when something is not totally right ! (Nice job I have created for myself eh ?? ;))))).

Now the “a bit more serious “part

Every year, around October, I draft a Document that is called (in the case of this past October) ““2016 ASSESSMENT AND 2017 PLANS “. The title speaks for itself. It is an audit of what has happened and, taking from various recommendations and complaints received during the year, stimulates a debate on what may be planned for next year.

This Document is then circulated throughout the Management Team, inclusive for this project purpose of the two Board members. Within about three weeks they return their feedback on all the various subjects, and, based on the majority feedback, I recompile the final Document, creating the next year’s plans and the agenda of actions to be done before year’s end to activate the various changes that have been agreed.

So ...let’s now take to the point of your immediate interest: the starting times.

During 2016 I have received a number of complaints regarding the “operation fairness “that was in place for the past TWO YEARS, where start times were spread equally across the time zones (see sprint races). The issue was raised on the basis that even when the start times were OK for OZ/NZ and the Europeans were steering in the middle of the night, only 6 to 10 Australasians were registered in a given raceThis seemed not right to a number of people who are the majority component of our Community.

I quote here the pertinent paragraphs of this subject in the final agreed 2017 Document.

QUOTE

3. 2017 NEW PROJECTS

3.1 START TIMES

We need to review our policy on start times, as we had some recent evidence that the present one is not the best:

Our present policy is:

--- Buddied races = we start at same GMT as they do

--- Other races except Sprints = we start at around 1000/1200 local of the start place

--- Sprints = In order to be fair to all areas the start times in Sprints in 2015 and 2016 have been spread equally throughout the clock , using three start times that would satisfy each one area if equally distributed.

It is by now evident that such fairness has worked against the interests of the majority, without stimulating at all participation by those Community members living in areas where the good start time would be planned. A recent example is a race in the middle of the night giving advantage to the Eastern Hemisphere, with only 8 participants from there.

So.....we needed to make a policy decision and that has been done:

In 2017 we will test a new start times distribution, that would account, WHERE POSSIBLE, for the proportion of overall composition of the SOL community in terms of "time zone".

Herewith the plan:

--- Buddied races = we continue to start at same GMT as they do

--- Races that mirror IRL racing will start at the same time of the mirror race (e.g. SWR)

--- Sprints = with the new Regional concept in place, start times will be linked to the optimum for each region.

--- ALL OTHER RACES : Before the end of 2016 SRC in cooperation with OPS and myself , will determine what percentage of the total Community can be estimated to be active in SOL in each of the three main areas , and apply such proportion to the start times of ALL OTHER RACES during quarter 1 2017. For the purpose of establishing such approximate proportion the Xmas to Xmas race in December 2016 will be used as base.

SRC will decide which OCEAN race of Q1 will be the bench mark for the purpose of establishing a proportion for Q2 and so on.

We will evaluate and eventually revise the project at the end of 2017.

UNQUOTE

Please NOTE that the above is NOT my initial input. This is the FINAL version that went out AFTER the feedbacks were received.

At this point you all have already understood that your reaction to the new system has been excessive, due to the fact that you had neither details nor rationale.

If you look at Q1 calendar , between Buddied taking place in Australasia, and your 10% of OTHER races , your area has 25% and not 10% of the good start times, AND.....you are not yet having your six Regional Sprints (all at your best start time...read NOR.)

Please note that this 2017 setup is stated as an experiment , and we ask you to be patient for ONLY ONE YEAR , whilst those who have complained and rolled the ball on this subject have been patient for TWO FULL YEARS .

Some have stated that Europe and the Americas are much more populated than Australia an NZ (TRUE) and that we should not expect same numbers as from Europe and the US. (TRUE)

One could say as well that the “Sail Racing Population” down under is far bigger than the one in Europe and the US in relative terms (TRUE) as Sailing is the number one sport there, whilst Football is the number one sport up and west, and Sailing is ranking as a Cinderella compared with OZ. (TRUE)

The above demonstrates that there are many ways of being right, depending on the perspective and the comparative math we use. In a good Community then the only solution is compromise and that will be this experiment.

Please note that after the one year test, should you be able to shout louder than those who shouted in 2016, you may win a return to equal balance of start times for all areas in 2018.

Please also note that should you be able to shout even louder than the Europeans, you may also need to find another Team of volunteers to run SOL in 2018, or at least (surely) another COOrdinator ;))))))))))

SO:my best possible recommendation to you is that you find a huge number of new SOLers in your area, and make sure that those “arrogant” (;)))) Europeans spend ALL their nights at the helm in future!! ;))

One thing is SURE : we will never believe that this platform should favor Europeans because it is an European platform as some hinted . Actually we will never believe this platform should favor anyone. On this you have my word and that of Maestro Svein , our Board President.

I hope the matter is clear by now, and I am sure I gained your comprehension.

NOWlet me take advantage of this literature effort of mine (in the middle of the night as usual)..to touch base with you (ALL) on another subject, that was in the Document, and is IMO of far more paramount importance than the start times:

One of the other items for discussion was: “Amount of racing “

Here a QUOTE (a mix from first draft and the final Planning Document) to introduce you to the matter:

QUOTE

(FROM THE INITIAL 2016audit/2017Plans Document)

2.2 Negative Items (not in any order of perceivable importance)

- **The very prime item is the falling numbers in participation:**

Even allowing for a reduced number of Championship races (11 per quarter this year versus the 14 per quarter last year), the total number of boats that registered to a Championship race last year at this time was 1258. This year that same number is down to circa 770. It could be the effect of the SWR, that was

part of the scheme last year, but in general our single event numbers are falling, and that is well visible to anyone.

- We did not manage to reduce the number of races to the point we possibly wanted. The total number will be 100 at the end of this year, compared with 108 of last year. If we think that lack of participation is linked to the excessive number of scheduled races (many of which overlapping) , we should once for all resist to the temptation of scheduling ALL the classics .In my opinion more racing will not produce anything else than further dilution of participation.

UNQUOTE

(And then from the final Planning Document):

QUOTE

1.1 General Comments

Many contributive feedbacks have been received, and the majority has been taken on board.

In general there is consensus on the way ahead. A subject where it seems impossible to agree to something is the "Quantity of racing". Some Solers (including myself) are convinced that the too much sailing is the key element for dilution in participation, whilst others are of the exact opposite opinion and would like to see more racing, saying that even with races of 50 participants a race would be interesting.

Whilst I must agree that IRL this would make a lot of sense, I am not sure that many of those 50 would participate to more than one or maximum two (manageable) races at the same time.

Anywaymore on this topic hereunder

(And thereunder....)

2. 2017 RACING

2.1 Quantity of Racing and Scheduling

In light of disagreement about quantity of racing , the compromised solution can only be that of continuing with present loads , perhaps trying out something that has not been fully practiced this far , but that can be looked at by SRC with a better eye : SCHEDULING.

I am herewith asking SRC to schedule racing in a way that avoids at maximum overlaps of active racing as follows:

--- "guess" race duration based on any available info

--- consider a race "finished" when at least 25% of fleet have reached finish line

--- If another race starts after that I would not consider overlapping

--- A race open but not yet started is NOT overlapping (i.e. practice racing is not considered in quantity)

--- Let's try to avoid 4/5/6 races in homepage

UNQUOTE

All the above to ask what ALL of you (the entire Community) think of the falling numbers per single race , and if you believe that LESS RACING would see more single race participation , or you believe that MORE RACING would stimulate more participation .

Sorry my friends ...I do not know how to start a poll, therefore you need to spell it out here.

Besides, I think that anonymous polls are only good for politicians, and not for such a great friendly Community like ours.

Happy Xmas to you ALL!!

Piero

;))