

RNIYC Sailing 2020

By now most sailors are wondering if we will sail this season. This is an ever-changing situation and the summary below relates to the most recent guidance.

On Monday (18th May) Stormont announced an easing of lockdown restrictions, some of which affect sailing. Richard Honeyford from RYANI said this morning *“our current interpretation is that this does permit all forms of boating activity (sailing, windsurfing, powerboating etc) but only when:*

- undertaken by individuals or members of the same household;
- there is no sharing of hard surfaces (including all types of boat);
- public health guidance is followed at all times;
- strict social distancing can be undertaken.”

What does this mean for sailing?

This legislation allows individuals, or those from the same household, to get on the water, where social distancing and other parameters can be adhered to.

It does not allow sailors and crew from different households to sail together.

What about Sailing at RNIYC?

This legislation throws up some specific problems to our club racing

1. Two people or more cannot sail together, unless they are from the same household
2. Rescue crews cannot man ribs together unless from the same household. Even if this is possible crews would be unable to “rescue” without breaking the current social distancing regulations.”

These barriers, amongst a list of others, make it impossible to organise regular club racing.

Individual single-handed sailors, or crews from the same household are however permitted to sail. As a club we understand that many of our members may wish to sail alone or with members of their household for pleasure. This would be in their own boat and at their own risk, without rescue cover. We will investigate how we can assist in making this happen as safely as possible and hope to issue some guidance next week. RYA urge that any such activity is undertaken in a conservative and considerate manner to help safeguard public health and not put any additional pressure on the emergency services.

What about the rest of the Season?

We are in the hands of our politicians, but social distancing is unlikely to disappear anytime soon. Even if all social distancing measures were lifted suddenly, which is very unlikely, a period of preparation will still be needed before a return to club racing was possible. The NI re-opening Plan has no dates, so unfortunately the timeline for any return to club racing is unknown. We are regularly updating our stance as guidance is made available.

“Further analysis...is being sought in order to assess when further activity, outside recreational boating, could take place.” RYA NI

What about Cadets Summer courses?

We plan to run courses if and when we can safely do so but this will depend on Government guidance. Our usual courses have a considerable organisational run-in time and decisions regarding these need to be made soon. We will do our utmost to safely provide some form of Cadet sailing and Courses for our members this season.

We await further steps and guidance along the path to normality, but unfortunately there is no timeline at present. We will have to be patient!

Jonny Millar
Rear Commodore Sailing
RNIYC

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