

Sussex Yacht Club - Racing Overview and Notice of Races - 2025

This overview is intended to function as a guide for SYC boats and as Notice of Race for each of the individual events and series.

The races described in the overview are organised by the Sussex Yacht Club and are governed by the World Sailing Racing Rules of Sailing 2025-2028, the World Sailing Equipment Rules of Sailing, the SYC Keelboat General Sailing Instructions and the IRC Rules.

Racing Details 2025

Skippers intending to enter the IRC division should produce a valid IRC certificate; those entering Pursuit races do not require this but may be asked to provide some details of their boat to the Keelboat Section Committee for the purposes of setting a handicap. Please send a copy of your 2025 current or revised IRC rating certificate to the Keelboat Section Committee via e-mail to secretary@sussexyachtclub.org.uk as soon as possible and at the very latest by Tuesday 22nd April 2025 for those wishing to be scored for the Spring series and at least 48 hours in advance of the first race of every other series.

Boats racing within the IRC class shall comply with the IRC rules as prescribed by their rating certificate. Should a competitor have reason to believe that this is not being complied with, the competitor can arrange a protest under rule 10 of the IRC Rules. Boats in the IRC division shall not change their rating during a series. They can however choose to race under their Non-Spinnaker Rating or Secondary certificate, providing it is for a whole series. Boats sailing in the Pursuit and Christmas Cracker races may have their handicaps changed after each race according to the rules of each division.

Current boat rating data is shown under Yacht IRC Ratings & Handicaps, and includes any changes made during the year. Skippers are responsible for their own application for IRC but the Club will help with the technical side and where possible negotiate group discounts for applications submitted through them.

SYC IRC certificate fee rebate scheme; sixth year 2025. If a boat that has applied for and obtained (through the Keelboat Section) a current IRC certificate, then it will be exempt from all SYC race fees (including Pursuits but excluding the RER) up to the full cost of the IRC certificate or £100.00, whichever figure is the lowest. These credits will be deducted when the invoices are raised.

While individual skippers are responsible for their IRC Certificate the Club intends to make use of the RORC IRC Advocate Scheme (assuming the terms remain favourable) and as such collective application of certificates will be made through the club. For more details on the scheme see here <https://rorcrating.com/irc-rating/gbr-irc-racing/irc-advocates/> but effectively Skippers will still need to complete their own initial or renewal applications and then submit them to RORC through the club. With a 15% discount on offer this represents excellent value and further details will be available at the Keelboat section pre-season briefing on Saturday 1st March 2025. Chris Hawkes offers his support in completion of applications/renewals, including support on sail measuring.

The additional SYC handicap scoring which reflects a boat's actual previous performance in SYC's Inshore racing from 2023 and 2024 onwards will continue. From 2025 the Long Inshore series will benefit from its own performance adjustments reflecting 2024 performance. This is described as follows:

The SYC handicap system has been developed with the intention of enabling closer racing between club boats irrespective of equipment specification and crew skill. It uses the IRC rating as a basis and then calculates adjustments to this according to a boat's racing results to produce a handicap.

The system has been designed to be transparent and easily understood. It is not influenced unduly by fast or slow rogue results. Rules, filters and caveats have been kept to a minimum for simplicity.

A handicap is calculated as follows:

- The corrected times for a race are calculated as normal using either the boat's current club handicap for the series or its IRC rating if no handicap has yet been produced.
- The median of the corrected times is identified and the rating required by each boat to match this time is calculated.
- The average of these calculated ratings over the race series gives the resulting boat handicap.

In order to ensure stability of the system, a minimum of 3 races must be sailed in a series for a boat handicap to be calculated. The boat handicap is calculated during each of the Spring, Summer and Autumn Inshore series. For Long Inshore racing the boat handicap is calculated over the previous year's series. The calculated handicap from one series is used for the handicap results of the subsequent series and so forth. The handicap resulting from the Autumn series is used for the following year's Spring Inshore series.

Pursuiting will continue with a simplified handicap system expressed as minutes before or after the nominal race start time.

WhatsApp, Emails and Notices

Any changes to these races will be communicated to owners/skippers by means of WhatsApp etc so it is vital that all owners/skippers maintain valid mobile and email details with the Keelboat Section. It is the owner or skippers' responsibility to ensure that messages can be received through these routes. The primary keelboat racing WhatsApp group is "SYC Race Management" and Pursuit racing is "SYC Pursuing". The main series(s) will continue to use VHF Ch.37 when on the water and Pursuing will continue with Ch.77.

Classifications and Eligibility

The classifications given for each event refer to the race division, series or group and the safety classification. Participants must comply with the safety requirements.

Unless described as an open event all SYC racing events are for SYC boats and skippers only. Those wishing to join in our racing should note that non-SYC boat skippers & new racing crews should apply for, "active" rather than "shoreside", membership of the club at the earliest opportunity; details are on the SYC website.

Race Tracking with eStela

During 2024, after trialling a number of tracking systems, we introduced eStela for all SYC keelboat racing. This enables skippers and other members to see the progress of a race in real time and/or from the comfort of the Clubhouse. Races can be re-run for analysis after they are completed and hopefully, we can all learn from what we see.

The Club pays a subscription to the developers for each year, but it is free to individual users. Setting it up on your mobile phone should be very straight forward and usually if your mobile has power (from the boat or a battery pack) it will continue to transmit for the duration. Ideally you should activate it before you leave the harbour for each race, the central system should then pick your boat up when it is activated. You can turn it off when you have finished racing.

We are very keen that all boats use eStela for every race, so please make a habit of joining in, we can all then benefit from the output.

Pursuit Series (Classification: Pursuit)

If you are new to racing, then Pursuing could be for you. Boats start in order of their handicap number (slowest go first) the courses are suitable for beginners to both racing and crewing. If you want to join in then speak to David Nunn (Escape) or use the website [Enquiry form](#), he will also arrange a handicap number for your boat if you don't already have one and for you to join the "SYC Pursuing" WhatsApp group.

The aim is sailing enjoyment, in friendly company with an element of competition. International Collision Regulations must be observed, as always when going to sea, along with the Racing Rules of Sailing.

There are three series of 7 races each run on Saturdays, with the best 4 results to count in each series. Start times for each boat will be based on an initial handicap expressed as +/- minutes from the nominal race start time. The aim is to achieve 100 minutes of sailing for a boat with a handicap of 0 (zero). Adjusted individual boat start times will be posted on the "SYC Pursuing" WhatsApp group together with signing on instructions a few days before race day. Courses are set on the day and posted to the WhatsApp group, before we leave the lock.

The first boat across the line in each race is the winner. Series points will be awarded as one for first, two for second and so on. There are prizes for each series and they will be awarded at the SYC Prizegiving Dinner in November.

Handicaps will be adjusted after each race throughout the year. A win carries a penalty of 6 minutes for the next race, 2nd place 5 minutes, 3rd place 4 minutes etc down to 1. If you are last you will be given a boost of 6 minutes for the next race, 5 minutes for the next to last and 4 minutes for 3rd from last etc down to 1. If 12 or more boats finish then this is applied in total, any boats finishing 7th or more from the start or end will not be adjusted. If less than 12 boats finish, then if it is an odd number the middle boat will not be adjusted, if it is an even number then adjustments will apply from both ends. These will stop at the middle and not overlap.

Inshore Series (Classification: Inshore)

The purest form of yacht racing, with exciting fleet starts, “round the cans” format and overall time correction for finishing results using IRC. With all boats starting and sailing in the same conditions and race area, it presents an excellent format for racing. Plus, practice and hone your race performance for events like Cowes Week and our own SYC Cup or the Sussex Regatta. Three series of seven Inshore, short course races held on Sundays. Courses will be set by the Race Officer on the day with an expected 1½ - 2½ hour race duration. These races will be scored under IRC and SYC IRC Handicap sections. Initially this series will start with the final calculated handicaps from the 2024 Autumn series, then into the Summer and again into the Autumn series.

Long Inshore Series (Classification: Long Inshore)

These take the fleet racing format into a longer event. Stretching the legs of you, your boat and crew, these events provide longer races with more tactical decisions to make. Weather and tide will play a much bigger factor in the result. With a series of races ranging from “there and back again”, to the race that begins one of the Rallies, or the famous Round Rampion wind farm. You have the option of races ranging from about 3-6 hours on average. An excellent building step into longer offshore racing.

A series of nine races of a medium length. Courses are specified below but further sailing instructions may be made by the Race Officer on the day. These races will be scored under IRC and SYC IRC Handicap sections; each race will reflect the latest rating derived from the previous year’s Long Inshore series.

Race 1 Ferguson Race, Saturday 19th April, start 10:00

Start Old Fort Line, SYC W to port, SYC 4 to port, Portobello Buoy (yellow can, charted at 50° 46.70” N, 0° 02.12” W) to port, SYC 5 to starboard, SYC E to port and then to the Finish.

A boat finishes when she has SYC W to port and bearing 180°.

Boats should take their own finish time, which should be sent to the “SYC Race Management” WhatsApp group within 2 hours of finishing.

Race 2 Solent Race, Friday 2nd May, start 10:00

Start on the Old Fort line, Mixon beacon to starboard, Street to starboard and then to the Finish.

A boat finishes when she crosses a line drawn between the eastern sides of Horse Sand Fort and No Man’s Land Fort.

Boats should take their own finish time, which should be sent to the “SYC Race Management” WhatsApp group within 2 hours of finishing.

Race 3 Tala Hinna Race, Saturday 31st May, start 11:00

Start on the Lancing line, SYC E to starboard, SYC 6 to port, BMYC 3 to port, Friars Bay Outfall Buoy (red can, charted at 50° 45.82” N, 0° 00.44” E) to port, BMYC 3 to starboard and then to the Finish.

A boat finishes when she has SYC E to port and bearing 180°.

Boats should take their own finish time, which should be sent to the “SYC Race Management” WhatsApp group within 2 hours of finishing.

Race 4 Black Rock Race, Sunday 29th June, start 11:00

This is an Open event and a separate Notice of Race will be published beforehand.

Suitable courses will be set for both Keelboats and Dinghies competing in separate fleets. The traditional course is Start line, BMYC1 to starboard, Finish. A course will be set by the Race Officer on the day which may include a committee boat start and or finish.

The Black Rock Race will also form part of the 2-day SYC Cup event as part of the Festival of the Sea.

Prizegiving for the SYC Cup will be held at SYC in the afternoon, once all boats are ashore after the Black Rock. The Black Rock remains a stand-alone Long Inshore event for the award of the Black Rock Trophy.

Race 5 Double Diamond Race, Saturday 5th July, start 10:00

Start on the Old Fort line, SYC W to port, SYC 2 to port, SYC 4 to port, SYC 6 to port, SYC W to port, SYC 1 to port, SYC 2 to port, SYC 6 to port, SYC W to port, SYC 1 to port, SYC 3 to port, SYC 2 to port, SYC W to port, SYC 1 to port, SYC 3 to port, SYC 4 to port, SYC W to starboard and then to the Finish.

A boat finishes when she has SYC E to starboard and bearing 180°.

Boats should take their own finish time, which should be sent to the “SYC Race Management” WhatsApp group within 2 hours of finishing.

Race 6 Round Rampion Race, Saturday 19th July, 10:00

Start on the Old Fort line, SYC W to port, all wind turbines and associated objects to port, (no cutting inside) and then to the Finish.

A boat finishes when she has SYC E to starboard and bearing 090°.

Boats should take their own finish time, which should be sent to the "SYC Race Management" WhatsApp group within 2 hours of finishing.

Race 7 Eastbourne Race, Saturday 9th August, start 10:00

Combined with a Rally at Sovereign Harbour Yacht Club.

Start on the Lancing Line, SYC E to starboard, SYC 6 to port, SYC 5 to port, BMYC 3 to starboard, Friars Bay Outfall buoy (charted at 50° 45.82" N, 0° 00.44" E) to port, Royal Sovereign red lateral buoy (charted at 50° 44.24" N, 0° 25.86" E) to port and then to the Finish.

A boat finishes when she has Sovereign Harbour Safe Water Mark (charted at 50° 47.43" N, 0° 20.72" E) to starboard and bearing 180°.

Boats should take their own finish time, which should be sent to the "SYC Race Management" WhatsApp group within 2 hours of finishing.

Race 8 Eastbourne Return Race, Sunday 10th August, start 09:00

Start will be a gate start set by the Race Officer on the day, Friars Bay Outfall buoy (charted at 50° 45.82" N, 0° 00.44" E) to port, BMYC 4 to port, BMYC 3 to starboard, SYC 6 to starboard and then to the Finish.

A boat finishes when she has SYC E to starboard and bearing 090°.

Boats should take their own finish time, which should be sent to the "SYC Race Management" WhatsApp group within 2 hours of finishing.

Race 9 Littlehampton Race, Saturday 6th September, start 08:00

Start on the Old Fort line, SYC W to port, SYC 4 to starboard, "Old Rustington weather station" (charted at 50° 46.20" N, 0° 29.55" W) to starboard and then to the Finish.

A boat finishes when the Yellow Buoy (YFL Y 5s, charted at 50° 46.27" N, 0° 30.54" W) is to starboard and bearing 090°.

Boats should take their own finish time, which should be sent to the "SYC Race Management" WhatsApp group within 2 hours of finishing.

Offshore Series (Classification: Offshore)

Unleash your inner Vendee Globe aspirations! A series of races focussed on longer distance racing where skippers and crews will take on the challenge of variable weather, tides, night sailing, watch systems, provisioning, and long-range navigation. The sense of achievement in completing these events is massive and is a source of pride for any participating crew - no matter their result. The taking part here is the reward. Encompassing the famous Royal Escape Race, this series is an excellent extension to our club racing and gives participating boats a taste of what it is like to take part in a bigger offshore racing, for example the RORC Series including the Fastnet.

A series of four races of approximately 60 miles or more. Courses are shown below but further sailing instructions may be made by the Race Officer on the day. These races will be scored under IRC and SYC IRC Handicap sections; each race will reflect the latest rating derived from the previous year's Long Inshore series.

A yacht will only be counted as competing in the Offshore Series if it enters at least two races. Therefore, the results of the Royal Escape will be included in the overall series but only for those Yachts which compete further in the Series. This ensures that any DNS, DNF or DNC results will be relative to the total number of entrants in the Series and not the total number of entrants in any one race of the series.

Race 1 Royal Escape Race, Friday 23rd May, start tba

This is the Club's major Open event and a separate Notice of Race will be published beforehand.

The annual iconic cross-channel race is the largest offshore race on the South Coast outside of the Solent and 2025 will be its 45th edition.

Participants will be required to register for The Royal Escape Race following the issue of the Notice of Race.

SYC boats' results will be extracted from the overall results as described above.

Race 2 Nab Tower Race, Saturday 21st June, start 07:00

Start on the Old Fort line, SYC W to port, all wind turbines and associated objects to port (no cutting inside), Nab Tower to port, S Pullar Cardinal (charted at 50° 38.83" N, 0° 49.17" W) to port, Owers S Cardinal (charted at 50° 38.60" N, 0° 41.07" W) to port, all Rampion wind turbines and associated objects to starboard (no cutting inside) and then to the Finish.

A boat finishes when she has SYC 2 to starboard and bearing 180°.

Boats should take their own finish time, which should be sent to the "SYC Race Management" WhatsApp group within 2 hours of finishing.

Race 3 Pactolus Race, Friday 11th July, start tba

The event is for SYC boats only but with a special invitation to SRF boats to participate.

An offshore race to coincide with the traditional Pactolus rally with hospitality from our friends at Société des Régates de Fécamp (SRF).

Start on the Lancing line, SYC E to starboard, keeping all Rampion wind turbines and associated objects to starboard, (no cutting inside), Greenwich Light Vessel to port, keeping the new Fécamp wind farm to starboard (no cutting inside) and then to the finish at Fécamp. The finishing line extends 3 cables westward bearing 105° true from the pier head of the western harbour arm at Fécamp. Boats must finish by crossing the line heading in a southerly direction and may make use of the waypoint 49°45.93" N, 0°21.56" E which falls close to a point midway along the finishing line.

Boats should take their own finish time in BST, which should be sent to the "SYC Race Management" WhatsApp group within 2 hours of finishing.

Race 4 Seaway Trophy Race, Sunday 24th August, start tba

A return race after our annual rally to St Valéry-en-Caux with hospitality from Club Nautique Valeriquais.

The start will be a gate start set by the Race Officer on the day then Greenwich Light Vessel to starboard, keeping all Rampion wind turbines to port (no cutting inside), and then to the Finish.

A boat finishes when she has SYC 6 to starboard and bearing 090°.

Boats should take their own finish time, which should be sent to the "SYC Race Management" WhatsApp group within 2 hours of finishing.

Club Races (Classification: Club)

This is not a series but a mix of individual races and regattas. Courses are shown below but further sailing instructions may be made by the Race Officer on the day. These races will be scored under IRC and SYC IRC Handicap sections; each race will reflect the latest rating applicable from the Inshore series.

Shake Down Race, Sunday 2nd March, start 11:00

A chance to get your boat ready for the Spring series.

The start and course will be set by the Race Officer on the day.

SYC Cup & Festival of the Sea, Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th June

The Festival of the Sea returns for 2025 for a 2-day event focussed on everything Sussex Yacht Club and being on (or in) the water. The Outriggers, Surf Skis, Dinghy Battle of the Beaches, Paddleboards, Crabbing etc. return and new events are planned and all will be supported by onshore prizegiving for each event, food/drink, and Sea Shanties.

The SYC Cup will be a 2-day format making the keelboat section an even bigger part of the event.

The overall SYC Cup will be decided on a Pursuit race and "round the cans" event on the Saturday and the Black Rock on Sunday. This makes the SYC Cup a real mixed discipline competition and adds a new dynamic for skippers and crews to focus on. Almost like a "triathlon" for the water.

Race 1 will be a Pursuit race using the latest handicaps from the Pursuit series race preceding the Cup. Race 2 will be a fleet race around SYC fixed marks and will start shortly after the completion of race 1. Race 3 will be held on the Sunday; it will be the Black Rock race from the Long Inshore Series, results will be used for the SYC Cup and the Long Inshore Series.

The SYC Cup will be awarded based on the combined points score of races 1 and the SYC IRC Handicap results of race 2. It will also be scored under IRC and an overall IRC SYC Cup awarded. This event may be opened to yachts from other clubs.

Prizegiving for the SYC Cup will be held at SYC in the afternoon, once all boats are ashore after the Black Rock. The Black Rock remains a stand-alone Long Inshore event for the award of the Black Rock Trophy.

Crews Race, Sunday 7th September, start tba

The helm for this race must be a club member, have raced on the boat at least once previously during the 2025 racing season and not be the regular helm. Owners are permitted to enter the race if they meet these conditions.

The start time and course will be set from Littlehampton back to Shoreham and will be announced on the pontoon on the morning of the race.

Boats should take their own finish time, which should be sent to the "SYC Race Management" WhatsApp group within 2 hours of finishing.

Sussex Combined Club's Regatta, Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th September

2025 is the turn of SYC to host this event at Shoreham. This is a stand-alone event and full details will be published separately in due course.

Christmas Cracker Series (Classification: Club)

This is a series of four 'round the cans' handicap races, using the current SYC IRC handicap to start, this will be the final handicap calculated from the Spring/Summer/Autumn Inshore series. These numbers will apply for the boat's first race but be amended for the next race(s) based on a simple adjustment, similar in operation to the usual Pursuit rules but with more weight! The starting IRC Handicap number will be adjusted as follows: A win carries a penalty of 0.100 for the next race, 2nd place 0.090, 3rd place 0.080 etc down to 0.010. If you are last you will be given a boost of 0.100 for the next race, 0.090 for the next to last and 0.080 for 3rd from last etc down to 0.010. If 20 or more boats finish then this is applied in total, any boats finishing 10th or more from the start or end will not be adjusted. If less than 20 boats finish, then if it is an odd number the middle boat will not be adjusted, if it is an even number then adjustments will apply from both ends. These will stop at the middle and not overlap. Courses will be set by the Race Officer on the day.

The Christmas Cracker races are not included in the Langley Coaster Trophy scores.