

MOSQUITO CATAMARAN ASSOCIATION OF SA (Inc)

Crew Age / Weight Eligibility Proposals

Background

At the 1996 annual general meeting of the MCASA the topic of crew safety, minimum crew weights and experience was discussed. The reason this matter was raised is that there have been a number of comments and newsletter articles following the recent national titles about the use of very young crews aboard the sloop rigged Mosquito.

To try and resolve what the concerns are with using young crews a sub-committee was formed to discuss the issue. The outcome from the sub-committee was a report to the June general committee meeting of the association. The basis of the concerns can be divided into three categories:

- a. Safety of the crew and skipper on the boat in rough conditions.
- b. The competitive edge from a reduced weight on the boat.
- c. The nature of the class and the need for training of younger sailors.

The decision of the sub-committee was that the issues could be best addressed by the introduction of a minimum age for sailors aboard Mosquitoes at events hosted by the MCASA.

Proposal

The sub-committee recommended to the MCASA general committee that the following eligibility requirements be included in the Notice Of Race for a regatta or state championships conducted by MCASA.

"All competitors shall be aged 12 years or older at the time of racing in any event conducted in offshore waters."

Offshore waters are any waters more than 1.25 nautical miles from the coast. This includes all such areas in the gulfs, Lake Albert and Lake Alexandrina.

The general committee of the MCASA requested that this proposal be presented to the members to allow for comment and discussion. If there is support for the proposal then the eligibility requirements will be introduced for the 1996/97 state championships.

Supporting Information

The following points are offered in support of this proposal.

- a. The association has a duty to consider the safety of competitors in any event hosted by it. This implies some obligation to reduce the possibility of occurrence of hazardous situations which it could have reasonably foreseen. Such a situation could arise in permitting a 9 year old crew to compete in an offshore race in 25 knots and 2 metre seas, as happened at the national championships at HSC.
- b. It will keep junior sailors in the junior classes long enough to receive adequate training in more controlled conditions amongst their peers.
- c. Limiting the minimum age of sailors on the boat helps ensure that they have developed the strength and maturity to be better able to handle an incident.
- d. An age limit helps address the issue of weight inequality between boats.
- e. This proposal does not permanently discriminate against any sailor. In time any sailor will become eligible to compete in a state championship.
- f. It is a measurable and consistent criterion unlike measuring competency or weight.