



International Optimist Class Association (UK)



IOCA EVENT GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS AND SAILORS

These guidelines are written with the intention of helping sailors and parents decide on which major events to attend and when might be the best time to leave the regatta fleet.

Parents and sailors should try to focus on their own needs rather than getting too caught up in what another sailor of a similar age is achieving, especially if their sailor is not developing at the same pace. Remember that we have sailors as young as 10 near the top of our fleets and 12 year olds racing for the first time in regatta fleet.

Progression will depend on a number of factors. When you started sailing, how much time and accessibility you have to sailing versus your peers and about your own personal development and growth rate.

It is important to think about enjoying sailing and not pushing your children too hard, perhaps going outside of their ability range too early. Ensuring a sailor develops confidence, keeping them engaged in the sport and allowing them to have a degree of success in the early stages of competing is important. In time this will enable them to succeed to the level they are capable of, whatever that may be.

FLEETS AND DESCRIPTIONS

REGATTA FLEET

This fleet is for mostly inexperienced sailors or juniors who are either beginners to racing (can sail a triangle course) or those who have some club racing experience and would like to improve their skills. There is a much softer style of race management to provide fun and experience. It also gives sailors an opportunity to be at the front of a fleet before moving into Main Fleet.

This fleet can provide the building blocks to future success and good racing skills will be learnt here.

MAIN FLEET

This will be the right fleet for the sailors once they can cope with very large fleets and longer courses. The races are run back to back (normally 3 races a day) and can be up to 50 minutes long so sailors will need to be robust and self-reliant. There are a large number of safety ribs on the water and a sailor should not shy away from approaching a rib to deposit lunch or ask for help, especially if they need help unzipping a drysuit. Many ribs carry a bucket and poncho for those who need to go the loo on the water.

As sailors progress they may wish to sail in the Main fleet to gain a ranking (from two out of three ranking events). This will allow them to be selected to take part in Squad based training and possibly be invited to the Selections.

Normally around 80 of the highest ranked sailors are invited to the selections where they attempt to qualify to represent GBR at the Worlds, Europeans and other events. This takes place at the end of April and is usually held in Weymouth.

It might take some time for a sailor to make significant progress and setting expectations is always key when a sailor moves into this fleet. Some sailors can progress rapidly, some at a more “chip away” pace, as long as the trend is upward each year that is what matters.

WHEN DO I MOVE?

If you are racing in the regatta fleet and are starting to have a good degree of success either on the podium or regularly in the top 10 it might be worth moving. The decision to jump straight into Main fleet will depend on how confident a sailor is and their short and long-term goals.

It is probably not helpful for a sailor to return to regatta fleet once they have raced in Main Fleet. It might feel like a step backwards and be demotivating. Careful consideration should be given to when to make the move.

The Selection policies for the events can be found under Members/publications on the class web site and on the individual event pages. See the list of events and descriptions below on page 3.

If you need further help, please feel free to approach the Selectors, there is usually always one of us available at the major events or speak to one of the IOCA committee members.

We hope this guide is helpful to sailors and parents and we look forward to seeing you all on the racecourse, whichever fleet you are in.

Steph Banham
IOCA Chair of Selectors

EVENTS AND DESCRIPTIONS

SPRING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Selection event – Yes, British Youth Sailing Team for Juniors, Irish Nationals

Venue – varied

Main fleet – YES

Regatta fleet – Not usually

Used for selection for training – Sometimes (Main fleet only)

INLAND CHAMPIONSHIP – Currently a ranker for Winter Squads

Venue – Normally Grafham Water, Lake

Main fleet - YES

Regatta fleet – YES

Used as selection for training – YES (Main fleet only)

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Main fleet – YES, often split Junior 12 and Under/Senior 13 - 15

Fleets - Regatta, Regatta Coached and Mini Racers - YES

Despite not being a ranker the class and selectors may opt to use this event to select a team.

Used as selection for training – Sometimes (Main fleet Juniors and Seniors only)

Competitive and FUN!

LATE SUMMER CHAMPIONSHIP – Currently a ranker for Winter Squads

Venue – Various, on the sea if possible

Main fleet - YES

Regatta fleet – Not always, only if venue permits

Used as selection for training – YES (Main fleet only)

END OF SEASONS CHAMPIONSHIP – Currently a ranker for Winter Squads

Main fleet - YES

Venue – Varies, normally lake venue

Regatta fleet – YES

Used as selection for training - YES (Main fleet only)

WINTER CHAMPIONSHIPS

Selection for anything else – Occasionally

Venues – varies each year, usually inland lake

Used as selection for training – Sometimes (Main fleet only)

Regatta Fleet – Sometimes, depends on venue and class resources