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Winter 2019



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Outgoing President's Message

As the outgoing president, I wish to thank the entire Regional Board and the members who supported the regional board with advice, patience, and dues. 2018 was a difficult year with several problems facing us.

### ***Declining PHRF Membership***

The region faces long term trend of slowly declining PHRF membership which appears to be result of regional demographic and economic trends. This trend has been seen as a problem which can be partially alleviated by encouraging more cruising oriented boat owners to race PHRF.

### ***“Corinthian” Adjustment Problems***

One effort over the last three years to increase participation was to make “Corinthian” adjustments for cruising oriented boats to allow them be more competitive in open racing. This year, it was fully implemented as automatic Corinthian adjustments, which created some anomalous ratings. Complaints early in the year caused a re-look at the assumptions behind the adjustments. The bylaws prevented a mid-year fix but a plan to correct some of the biggest problems emerged after a lot of thought and several meetings large and small. That is reflected in the “Configuration” adjustments of 2019 which I hope will provide more correct ratings.

### ***Progress on two technical problems was deferred***

#### *Standard configuration –*

The standard PHRF configuration assumptions (CLASS RULES Appendixes A and B) fit most existing classes but an ever decreasing number of new boat types. An effort to improve the configuration description system to encompass both older and newer boats was mostly delayed by lack of time and the desire to avoid too many database changes at the same time.

#### *Non-spinnaker adjustment -*

The non-spinnaker adjustment was originally intended to allow spinnaker and non-spinnaker boats to race together but is inadequate for that task. At present, it provides some adjustment for the difference jib and spinnaker sizes to make non-spinnaker class races fairer. The effort to develop a better formula was deferred for lack of data.

2019 should see progress refining the “Configuration Adjustments” and progress on the deferred technical problems. Thank you all for your patience.

Doug Hosford  
2018 SoCal



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## SoCal PHRF Summary of Rule Changes for 2019

The SoCal PHRF Board had its hands full during 2018 dealing with rule changes, led by the controversial “Corinthian Rating” program. That program was completely overhauled – and renamed – for 2019. We will look at the new program in a moment, but first let’s take a look at the other rule changes that took effect on January 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Rating Types**

The most significant “non-Corinthian” change for 2019 is a change to the definitions for our three rating types based on the wind direction expected for a race course. The goal was to clarify the types of courses that the three different ratings are based on. These definitions are set forth in Rule 2.2, and the changes include a change in the name of the “Buoy” course ratings, so that they are now “Windward/Leeward” (W/L) courses. The new definitions are as follows:

- W/L Ratings are intended to be used when the course is expected to be primarily windward/leeward legs on courses set in relation to the wind.
- RLC Ratings are intended to be used when the course type is neither W/L nor OWC.
- OWC Ratings are intended to be used when at least 2/3 of the course distance is expected to be more than 135 degrees from true wind direction.

### **Temporary Ratings**

This is mostly for new boats or boats with significant changes to their configuration. The Rules allow the Chief Handicapper to issue a Temporary Rating, for use while they wait for their regular rating to be issued. The duration of a temporary rating was increased from 90 days to 120 days. The goal is to allow more time for boats that are new to the area, or that have modifications, to develop meaningful race results before assigning a permanent rating.

### **The MIR Rule**

SoCal PHRF deleted the MIR Rule, which restricted the participation of professional sailors.

### **The New “CONFIGURATION ADJUSTMENTS”**

The program was introduced in January 2017, with the goal of getting more cruising-oriented boats out racing in local races even though they carry or use equipment that put them at a serious speed disadvantage. Unfortunately, the unintended consequences of this rating system were many, and our fleet was pretty vocal in sharing its discontent. In response to the complaints, the Board convened a special focus group and a meeting of the membership to consider changes to Appendix F, and as a result of these efforts the program was completely overhauled for 2019. We even threw out the “Corinthian” name and changed the title of Appendix F to “Configuration Adjustments,” since that’s really a more accurate description of these rating adjustments. The other changes are listed below, but we urge PHRF members to review the actual text of the rules on the SoCal PHRF website (<http://www.phrfsoocal.org/wp-content/uploads/Rules/lr.pdf>) for more detail.

### **Changes to Appendix F:**

1. Changed name from “Corinthian Racer Adjustments” to “Configuration Adjustments.”
2. Substantially changed the criteria for eligibility, to better ensure that the adjustments will be given to boats that are not already an active part of our racing fleet. Determination of eligibility will include a review by each boat’s Local Area Board after the boat owner submits an application for a Configuration Adjustment (the owner may attend the meeting but his or her attendance is not required).
3. Established a maximum Configuration Adjustment that a boat may receive, limited to 20% of the boat’s Regional RLC Rating.
4. Substantially reduced the credits available for cruising equipment.
5. Established a fee for Configuration Adjustments.
6. Boats are limited to 3-year eligibility for Configuration Adjustments, subject to annual review by Area Boards after that time.

And finally, many boats with Corinthian Racer Adjustments in 2018 will not qualify for Configuration Adjustments in 2019. Implementation of these changes will therefore require ALL boats who want a Configuration Adjustment to apply for 2019, even if they qualified for “Corinthian” Racer Adjustments in 2018, after which their applications will be reviewed by their Local Area Board.





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Letter From The 2019 President

First and foremost, its time to renew for 2019. Please visit the website to do so. Renewals are processed in the order received and many of us are excited about starting our seasons right away in January. To keep up with rising IT costs, dues will raise by \$5 for 2019, but not until January, so renew early and save.

Racing Cruisers, I'm reaching out to you specifically to thank you for all the feedback and constructive advice received last year. We had a productive set of meetings and are proud to debut Configuration Adjustments this year, an update to last year's corinthian system but with a few very important adjustments to address concerns fleetwide. Most notably, deletion of the Corinthian type of Rating. PHRF had not intended to create a separate class for Corinthian boats, when you're on the course, you're racers! From 2019 onward, all boats will race under the same type of Rating. If your fleet is large enough to support class splits, that's fantastic, and the Race Organizers can make the split however they see fit. We want you to know that you're a welcome member of the fleet, and we hope you sail often!

Also, to touch on a few commonly raised issues:

PHRF is an Observed Performance rating body. The numbers, areas, and formulas are used for reference to help the raters compare your boat to other similar boats. There is no underlying blackbox formula that delivers your rating. The rating assumes a well-prepared and well-sailed boat. Everything after that is based on comparison to others in the fleet as these ratings numbers are relative to one another. Why mention this? A few reasons, but primarily a reminder that bringing race-results to PHRF is the best way to make a case to have a boat's rating adjusted. What is the actual Observed Performance on the race course?

PHRF also cannot initiate a rating review internally. Each of us has been told at yacht club bar about this or that boat and why hasn't someone done something. Its up to you to do get that ball rolling - we can't see all race results all the time! Since there's no master formula - we need you to bring the review board race results. If you're constantly winning or losing, or see another boat that is and it doesn't seem right, you must initiate the rating review to see if there's a case for adjustment. Please visit the website under /Member Services/Request a Rating Review for more info.

PHRF's goal is to deliver the best rating we can for a given boat. We are not in the race management business, and we're not in the safety business. We are here to help sailors race, and race organizers deliver good regattas. The Configuration Adjustments are intended to get boats out, and keep boats on the race course who might otherwise think they couldn't be competitive without spending a pile of money or overhauling the vessel to remove equipment which they use frequently. Many of the values for the Adjustments varied from previous, and will likely vary again as the observed data keeps mounting. Please understand that this affects your competitors too, all boats float up and down together in the interests of the best possible rating.

See you on the water,  
-Jamie B. Myer, AIA



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## A Short PHRF History

To understand performance handicapping in Southern California, it is necessary to go back in time over 50 years to 1947. Imagine the yachting society of that era. World War II had ended only a few short years before. Fiberglass boats were still at least ten years away from initial production. The high aspect ratio sloop rig would not appear for a few more years. The yachts of that era were heavy displacement ketches and schooners, moderate displacement cruising sloops and yawls, sleek Meter boats, R-boats, and others. The racing craft, when not actually engaged in class racing, raced against each other using one of the measurement handicapping systems of that time (all spin-offs of the Universal Rule developed by Nathaniel Herreshoff in 1901), primarily the Cruising Club of America (CCA) Rule on the East Coast, and the Ocean Racing Fleet (ORF) Rule on the West Coast. One of a kind boats and non-racing craft were not rated. There was a need for a handicapping system that would rate all types and sizes of boats...a system that would be easy to administer at nominal cost. The organizers of the first race from Newport Beach, California to Ensenada, Mexico in 1947 had the desire to encourage as many yachts as possible to participate. Southern California Yachting Association (SCYA) appointed a well-known yachtsman, Hal Adams, to develop handicaps for the race that would potentially give all of the entrants a fair chance to win if they sailed well. It was called Arbitrary Handicap Racing. Hal gave each yacht a time allowance per mile based on its anticipated performance, and made adjustments based on past observed performance. About the only time the handicap system was used was for the Ensenada Race. Hal Adams generously served as the one and only handicapper for twelve years, until in early 1959, when he asked to retire. SCYA assigned Frank Dair to the position of Handicapper, with the request that he organize the yachtsmen racing in the Arbitrary Handicap Fleet into an association similar to the existing Ocean Racing Fleet. A group of yacht club representatives met and agreed to form such an organization. This group consisted of: Harry Wills (South Coast Corinthian Yacht Club); Al Holland (Win'ard Yacht Club – now King Harbor Yacht Club); Kenneth Street (Channel Cruising Club); Charles T. Brown (Long Beach Yacht Club and Little Ships Fleet); Frank Dair (Buccaneer Yacht Club); and Gene Barber, Howard Kupfer, and Howard Thompson of Little Ships Fleet. Frank Dair was appointed Chairman of the Organizing Committee. A few of the yacht clubs in Southern California had been experimenting with handicapping the boats in their respective clubs. Buccaneer Yacht Club, Cabrillo Beach Yacht Club, and Little Ships Fleet gave the yachts a time allowance per mile based on past performance. To secure a rating, it was necessary to participate in three races. The results of these races established a speed comparison from which a time allowance could be established. Of the clubs experimenting with performance handicapping, none had as many participants as Little Ships Fleet. The fact that 40 of their boats held both the Arbitrary Handicap Fleet Rating and the Little Ships Fleet Rating made it possible to correlate the two ratings, to extrapolate the ratings of other yachts, and to rate them all under one system.

After considerable debate about the problems of arbitrary handicap racing, the committee sent a letter to each skipper in the Arbitrary Racing Fleet outlining the objectives of the new organization:

1. Nominal annual dues,
2. Keep members informed of the fleet's ratings and events of interest,
3. Administration by people involved in yacht racing,
4. Obtain as many race results as possible and carefully record them for handicap review.

In 1959 officers of the organization were proposed and a set of by-laws were drafted. The name of the new association was to be the PACIFIC HANDICAP RACING FLEET (PHRF). A letter, dated August 1, 1959, invited each skipper listed in the Arbitrary Racing Fleet to the first official meeting, held at Cabrillo Beach Yacht Club. With 44 interested skippers in attendance, Chairman Frank Dair called the meeting to order officers were elected, and the by-laws were accepted. Elected officers were: President, Harry Wills; Vice President, Al Holland; Secretary, Charles T. Brown; Treasurer, Ken Street; and Fleet Handicapper, Frank Dair. The word "arbitrary" did not appear in the by-laws. Except in the case of a new boat, the handicaps were based on a boat's observed performance. Instead of one person handling all of the handicapping, an elected committee would rate the boats. Each year, new officers were elected. Annual dues were \$3. Within one year of the first meeting, the membership grew to over 350. PHRF Ratings were used in the Newport Beach to Ensenada Race, instead of the Arbitrary Handicap Fleet Rating and the PHRF system was born.

### PHRF Milestones

1963 - The PHRF Championship Regatta was established and the first challenger was Newport Harbor Yacht club. PHRF membership continued to grow throughout the decade.

1964 – Books for recording race results were distributed to the SCYA Yacht Clubs to assist in handicapping the boats. Time allowances were in increments of 6 seconds per mile.



1970/71 – PHRF success attracted the attention of many yacht clubs throughout the U.S., and they made numerous inquiries for information. Peggy Gregory courteously mailed out the list of established ratings, with a brief rundown of how the system operated (over 90 organizations eventually asked for this information). It became apparent that a nationwide PHRF entity would eventually be formed.

1973 – The Pacific Handicap Racing Fleet officially changed its name to the PERFORMANCE HANDICAP RACING FLEET. PHRF racing began to appear in yachting centers worldwide. US-PHRF was formed and performance handicapping became a nationwide phenomenon, headquartered in Peggy Gregory's office.

1976 – To more economically handle the increase in membership and race data, a new computer service became necessary. One with a modem, keyboard, and CRT was made available from General Electric through Ham Barhydt, an engineer and a PHRF handicapper.

1978 – PHRF found financing and purchased a new Jacquard microcomputer system with a Diablo printer for about \$40,000.

1979/80 – President Dave McMillan initiated handicapping by Area (basically each harbor in Southern California is an "Area") with a Regional Board overseeing the process – the system we have today. Areas had the freedom to make adjustments of plus or minus 12 seconds per mile to a boat's rating. Past President Jim Paul developed a ULDB formula to help in handicapping and Dana Point Yacht Club used it in their Winter Regatta. Peggy Gregory compiled a US-PHRF book that contained the ratings of all of the known yachts at that time from each Area. The book was distributed to PHRF organizations nationwide. PHRF membership reached about 2000. The Fleet Roster and Handbook were revised.

1981 – In order not to be confused with other PHRF organizations, the name was changed to the "PERFORMANCE HANDICAPING FLEET OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA".

1983 – Frank Dair, one of the founding members of PHRF (in 1959) was elected President of PHRF of Southern California. Al Michael, programmer and Chief Handicapper, was maintaining the computer system with some success, but the language was difficult and the company had been out of business for years. Service did not exist. A new Northstar system was obtained for about \$5000. Al's knowledge of racing allowed him to program to the handicapper's needs, and he documented it so that it could be understood by other programmers.

1986 – President Gordon Graham established the Marine Industry Racer (MIR) Rule, limiting "professional" participation in PHRF racing. MIR's were defined as those individuals whose income is derived from performance sailing, developing sailing equipment and sails, etc., and who have sailing skills beyond the reach of anyone who does not sail for a living. At this time, the economy tightened and PHRF membership began to decline a little.

1991 – The PHRF of Southern California Class Rules and By-laws got a major overhaul. A new 386 computer that handles Windows and dBase3+ was purchased. Laptop computers were purchased for the Chief Handicapper, Area B, and Area G. They were set up with a scoring program developed by San Diego Yacht Club, and modified by Ken Gust for PHRF. At the PHRF Championship, the concept of making classes not only with consideration to rating, but also to boat type was introduced. PHRF membership was about 1,750.

1992 – Asymmetrical spinnakers began to appear and were rated. "Big Boat Advisor" and "Ancient Mariner Advisor" positions were added to the Regional Board. A comprehensive review of all the "big boats" was performed. Chief Handicapper, Ken Gust, established a "Race Results".

1994 – President Pete Johnstone, Chief Handicapper Gerhard Klose, Data Systems Officer Ken Gust, and Big Boat Advisor Dan Nowlan implemented a "dual rating" system after two years of background work. "Buoy ratings" and "random leg" ratings were established to recognize that some boats performed dramatically differently on the two popular venues. Buoy racing was defined as windward-leeward courses, and random leg racing was defined as long distance, or point-to-point races, or races around fixed marks without regard to wind direction. The year ends on a sad note with the untimely passing of Bobbie Novodvorsky.

1996 – Faster, lighter boats, and "sport boats" with asymmetrical spinnakers and moveable bowsprit poles begin to appear and the dual rating system is able to rate the boats. Handicapper Ken Gust retired from the Regional Board after six years of service to focus on handicap racing in San Diego.

1997 – Data Systems Officer Paul DeCapua establishes the PHRF web site ( [www.phrfsocal.org](http://www.phrfsocal.org) ) that includes the membership Valid List and the Ratings By Manufacturer List. The Rating Certificates were revised to make information easier to find.

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For questions, comments or to submit an article for consideration please contact David Haas at davidhaasmail@gmail.com

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