

RULES OF THE THAMES "A" RATER ASSOCIATION

Revised 4th December 2016

For clarity the rules are organised in the following sections :-

- A) Introduction and Object
- B) Class organization
- C) Registration and certification of yachts
- D) Rules relating to the hull
- E) Sail measurement, spars and rigging
- F) Rules applying to the class during racing
- G) Ratings

SECTION A - Introduction and Object

A1 Object

The object of the Association is to preserve, foster and develop the Thames "A" Rater. (The Rater)

A2 General Responsibility of Members

It is the responsibility of every member to ensure that his or her actions do not in any way bring the Rater Association into disrepute. In the event of such an occurrence, the officers of the association, as defined in B4, are empowered by majority vote to temporarily suspend a member. The member concerned shall be informed in writing and has the right to present his case for review, either in person or in writing, to an extra-ordinary general meeting which must be held within 28 days of official notification. The extra-ordinary general meeting following the hearing may take whatever disciplinary action it considers appropriate.

A3 Measurement Certificate

Every yacht shall hold a valid measurement certificate before being eligible to race. The measurement certificate shall:

1. Show the names of all owners as defined in Rule B1.
2. Record the sail areas and dates of measurement as defined in Rule E5(d).
3. Record the weight of any correctors fitted and hull weight as defined in Rule D5 if under 750 lbs.
4. Be endorsed annually by the owner in respect of buoyancy as defined in Rule D3.
5. Record :-
 - Length of mast.
 - Measurement of goose neck to sheer line.
 - Measurement of bowsprit length.
 - Length of whisker pole.
 - Length of jib boom.

The Rater Association may, at its unfettered discretion, examine any boat and refuse to issue a certificate, or cancel the validity of a certificate already issued if, in the opinion of the Class Measurer(s) and Rater Captain, specification or rules are not clearly complied with.

SECTION B - Class Organisation

B1 Membership

Membership of the Association shall consist of Rater owners and/or part owners of at least one 64th share (to be known as full members) and associates who are persons interested in fostering the objects of the Association not being Rater owners or part owners. Members must also hold membership of Thames Sailing Club or any other club recognised by the Association. It shall be the responsibility of each syndicate to advise the Secretary of the Association, in writing, of any changes in ownership as they occur.

B2 Fees

1. All full members shall pay an entrance fee of £5 and all associate members £5
2. There shall be no other fee or subscription except as agreed by the Association in general meeting for specific purposes. The Treasurer shall keep a proper account of the Association's receipts and expenditure and shall submit accounts to the Annual General Meeting.
3. There will be a £5 fee or such other sum as may be agreed for the issuing of a Measurement Certificate.
4. Each syndicate owning a Rater shall pay an annual boat levy in the amount as determined by the Association at the AGM. Prior payment of the levy shall be a requirement for certification.

B3 Management

The affairs of the Association shall be managed by the elected officers acting in committee and/or full members in general meeting, or such committee(s) as they may nominate from time to time.

B4 Officers

A class captain, a vice captain, a treasurer, secretary, webmaster and an official measurer or measurers shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting. The class captain may not serve in office for more than three consecutive years. He will convene, act as chairman and ensure accurate minutes of all meetings are kept and generally administer the class on behalf of the Association. Minutes of all meetings will be available to full members on request.

B5 Meetings

The Annual General Meeting shall be held in the Autumn. Additional meetings may be called at the discretion of the class captain and shall be called by him or failing him, the vice-captain on

the requisition of full members representing at least 4 Raters. Fourteen days' notice (but see B8 in respect of rule changes) of all meetings, setting out matters of major importance, is to be sent to at least one full member representing each Rater. Full members representing at least 40% of the Raters holding current certificates shall form a quorum. In the absence of the class captain and vice-captain, the members present shall nominate the member who is to take the chair and who is to record the minutes.

B6 Voting

Voting at meetings shall be on the basis of 5 votes for each Rater holding a current measurement certificate or which has held one in the last three years and 2 votes for each Rater not holding a current certificate. Except for a change of these rules in accordance with rule B8, all matters shall be decided by a simple majority of those boats present and voting or represented by proxy. Proxy votes must be lodged with the chairman 24 hours prior to the meeting. The chairman shall have a casting vote.

B7 Disposal of Raters

Each member shall be deemed to have given to the Association an undertaking that in the event of his desiring to transfer his Rater to a person or persons not being a member of the Association, or to dispose of it in any way, he will use his reasonable endeavours to see that the purchaser shall become a member of this Association. Failing this, he will, before concluding the sale to that person or persons give notice to the Association of his intention to sell and the Association an option to submit a bid for the same.

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B8 Change of Rules

No alteration shall be made to these rules except at a general meeting called for that purpose of which 28 days' notice shall be given to at least one full member representing each Rater specifying the change or changes it is proposed to make. Such notice is also to be displayed on the website and/or the notice boards of clubs where two or more Raters are regularly based. Proposed changes, together with the names of the proposer and seconder are to reach the Secretary not less than 42 days before the date of the meeting.. Two thirds of the total number of votes available at the meeting, directly or by proxy, are required to effect any such alteration.

SECTION C - Registration and Certification of Raters

C1 Registration of Raters

A register of Rater owners and a copy of the latest measurement certificate shall be kept by the Secretary. Owners are responsible for their boat's certificate and shall keep the original.

C2 Change of ownership or measurement certificate

Any alteration to a Rater affecting its measurement certificate and/or ownership shall be immediately notified to the Association through the Secretary and the register amended accordingly.

C3 Sail Numbers

Newly constructed Raters shall be allocated a sail number by the class captain. Sail numbers shall be allocated consecutively.

C4 Official Measurer

The Rater Association shall elect an official measurer, or measurers, for the purpose of measuring Raters and the issuing of certificates. Within 28 days of request by an owner with a Rater holding a number issued by the Association, the measurer shall complete the process of measurement, provided that the Rater with its mast, rig and sails shall be made available in timely fashion, and set up so as to facilitate the measuring process. The costs of measurement shall be the responsibility of the owner. The class captain or official measurer may re-measure a Rater at any time.

SECTION D - Rules relating to the Hull

D1 Existing Raters

No alterations to an existing hull shape or profile will be allowed with the exception of repairs and renewals needed to preserve the longevity of the hull. Rules D3, D4 and D5 as defined below shall apply.

D2 New Yachts

A new hull will only be considered to be an A class Rater hull if it is an exact replica of an existing Rater as defined above, taken from either an existing hull, or original lines, subject in both cases to a tolerance of one and one half inches.

D3 Buoyancy

A minimum of 800 lbs buoyancy shall be provided and inspected annually by the owner to verify that it is securely attached to or built into the hull. Where buoyancy is provided by inflatable bags these shall be adequately inflated at all times whilst racing. The owner shall endorse the measurement certificate with the date of inspection. The endorsement shall remain valid for a period of twelve months.

D4 Rubbing Strakes

The maximum width of any new rubbing strake shall not exceed 2.5" measured in plan width.

D5 Minimum Hull Weight

The hull will be subject to a minimum weight of 750 lbs, this weight to be measured to include all fixed fittings, which include the bowsprit and fittings if fitted, tabernacle and pin, centreboard and pin, complete rudder assembly including tiller and extension, floor boards, buoyancy bags and fixings if fitted, toe straps and fixings, painters, all blocks and cleats normally attached to the hull for whatever purpose, kicking straps and control lines for sails and backstay but excluding sheets, sails, mast, stays halyards, boom, whisker pole or jib boom. A maximum of 50lbs weight of correctors shall be permitted under this rule. The hull shall be weighed dry, the hull having been out of the water for at least 28 days.

D6 Mooring Points

Two mooring points, being either rings or 'horseshoe' eyes, each with an internal diameter of not less than 1.5", shall be fixed on the centreline on the deck one at the bow and one at the stern, at a maximum distance of 36" from the extremities of the boat excluding bowsprit, as adequate anchorage points for mooring purposes.

D7 Mooring

All Raters shall be equipped with permanently attached mooring lines fore and aft of adequate strength and each at least 30 feet in length.

When moored alongside another boat all Raters shall ship on that side a minimum of two spherical fenders of at least 12 inches in diameter.

SECTION E - Rules for Measurement of Sails & Spars

E1 Identification Marks

The mainsail shall carry the allocated number placed in accordance with The Racing Rules of Sailing Appendix G, and shall be of uniform colour in sharp contrast to the sail.

E2 Spars

(a) Only a single mast will be permitted the overall length of which shall not exceed 44'6". The mast, when stepped vertically shall not exceed a height of 43' from the sheer line.

(b) Only one jib whisker pole may be carried which shall not exceed in length the distance measured from the foreside of the stem to the aft side of the mast set in its aftermost position.

(c) Only one jib boom may be carried, the after end of which shall be attached to the mast so that it shall not be capable of being set more than 3" from the mast. The jib boom shall not be longer than the distance measured from the foreside of the mast in way of its normal point of attachment to the inside of the forestay fitting on the stem or bowsprit.

(d) Only one main boom will be permitted. A single gooseneck shall be fitted on the mast such that the pin shall be attached to the mast not less than 3 feet above the sheer line.

(e) In addition to (a), (b), (c) and (d) above, if the craft is rigged as a gaff or gunter or lugsail, an additional spar may be used to achieve this but the above rules must still be upheld.

(f) Replacement or rebuilt masts, booms and whisker poles carried on board a Rater must be presented to a measurer to ensure that they comply with these rules.

(g) A bowsprit may be attached to the hull which on the River Thames will be limited to a maximum extension from the bow of 24".

E3 Rigging

(a) The mast shall be supported by at least one of each of the following - forestay, port and starboard shrouds and either backstay or port and starboard running backstays.

(b) All sails shall be capable of being lowered without affecting the stability of the mast or its security in the boat.

E4 Sails

(a) Only 2 sails are permitted to be carried on board and a spinnaker is prohibited on the River Thames. On open water an extra sail (spinnaker) with a maximum area of 400 sq ft may be carried.

(b) The maximum sail area, excluding spinnaker, shall not exceed 350sq.ft. subject to the following:

(1) Exceptions to this limitation are permitted in the case of original wooden Raters, defined as being those built prior to 1st January 2012, where the maximum sail area, excluding spinnaker, shall not exceed 385 sq. ft.

(2) Boats may choose to sail with a reduced sail area but without change to their rating.

(3) There is no limitation on the size of foresail or mainsail

(c) Battens:- There are no restrictions on the length, size or number of battens in any sail.

(d) There are no restrictions on the design, material or position of sails, ropes and wires, other than the rules above.

E5 Measurement of Sails

It is intended that the total area of the sails shall be measured using successive triangulations and the following procedure:

The sail shall have sufficient tension applied to its edges so as to ensure that as much as possible of the sail lies flat and the majority of the folds in the luff disappear. Measurements shall be taken to the outside edges of the sails, including ropes or wires. Zip fasteners and other devices should be measured either open or closed in such a way that reflects the actual usable sail area when set.

(a) Mainsail

The battens are to be in place, but withdrawn sufficiently to allow the luff to be straight as possible. The main triangle is then measured. The area of the leach is measured by successive triangulation; the perpendicular of each triangle shall be positioned at the maximum width of the segment, except that they shall be positioned so that the perpendicular of the lower triangle shall not be less than 6". If the lower part of the leach is straight the second triangle may be taken to meet the leach at the upper end of the straight part to simplify calculations. If the edge of the sail is curved the area is divided into triangles until the perpendicular of a segment is less than 6". The area of the remaining segment is taken as two-thirds chord times width. If the edge of the sail is straight it shall be divided into convenient triangles. The areas of the roaches on the luff and foot are measured using the same method.

The measuring points at the corner of the sails shall be the intersection of the continued smooth edges of the sail.

Any negative areas of the luff, foot and leach shall be subtracted from the total area and any positive areas on the luff and foot shall be included.

(b) Foresail:-

The area is to be measured by successive triangulations using a similar method to that used for the mainsail.

(c) All linear dimensions shall, after addition of its components, be rounded off to 2 decimal places (0.01 sq. ft.).

(d) For all sails which have been measured and found to comply with the rules, the actual area shall be marked legibly in imperial units of not less than 1" in height adjacent to its tack. The Measurer shall sign and date the sails and shall record the same on the measurement certificate.

(e) Replacement or substantially altered sails must be measured and found to comply with the rules and the details entered on the Measurement Certificate.

(f) The requirements of E5 (a), (b), (c) and (e) will be deemed to have been met if a sail has been measured, and marked in accordance with E5(d), by the sailmaker. A computer generated A4 plan of the sail shall be kept with the measurement certificate.

SECTION F - Rules applying to the Class during Racing

F1 Restriction on Helmsman

No person may helm in a race sailed under these rules unless they are a full member of the Rater Association. This rule may be waived for Club racing at the discretion of the Sailing Committee of any recognised Club.

F2 Racing Rules

All Raters sailing in a race shall:

- (a) Race according to The Racing Rules of Sailing and such special rules as the Association may make from time to time.
- (b) Carry a crew of 3 persons including the helmsman, except by mutual agreement between all the other helmsmen in that race. Clubs may waive this rule for club series racing but not for one off events or open meetings.

F3 Prohibitions when sailing on the River Thames

- (a) Any apparatus or contrivance outboard or extending outboard or to windward and attached to the hull, spars or rigging or to the person of the helmsman or crew, the purpose or effect of which is or may be to support or assist in supporting a member of the crew outboard or partially outboard to windward.
- (b) Bumpkins, outriggers, sliding seats, trapeze wires, bilge boards, double rudders and similar contrivances.
- (c) Hydraulic, electrical or electronic equipment other than watches, bilge pumps and video cameras for crew use and publicity purposes only.

F4 Advertising

Advertising on boats, including sails and all equipment, shall comply with World Sailing Regulation 20 (Advertising Code).

SECTION G - Rating

Handicaps will be determined by a handicap committee consisting of the Rater Captain, plus a helm from the fastest and slowest boats in the FRP and wooden fleets respectively, based on the results of the most recent Thames Championship. In the event that the Rater Captain is one of the latter four, the closest helm to the Rater Captain in their category shall also be co-opted to the committee. This committee will meet, either in person or electronically, at least twice per year and publish a list of handicaps on 1st January annually or more frequently if needed. The overriding principle the committee will work to is to encourage the older and slower boats to compete. This rule shall not preclude individual clubs from operating a separate system for club and invitation racing.