

ON THE WATER UPDATES

Accessible sailing

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Modifications can be tailored to suit individual crew, and will be allowed so long as they don't create an unfair advantage.

trim will become accessible to a much wider group of sailors.

The class then asked if other parts of the boat or equipment could be a barrier for disabled sailors. As a result, the class is allowing any modifications the owner feels necessary to accommodate individual crews' needs. The changes simply need to be declared and assurance given that they don't offer an unfair performance advantage.

This is a new concept for the class and it will be monitored closely and adapted as needed to ensure it maintains the fair racing ethos the class has worked hard to establish.

A WELCOME CHANGE

'This is an exciting development for keelboat racing and the SB20 class should be commended for leading the way in helping to make sailing more accessible for everyone,' says Jack Fenwick, RYA's Keelboat Development Manager. 'The sailing community works hard to promote inclusivity and diversity within boating, but rarely do we see changes to equipment to make it more accessible. Putting systems in place that make the sailing less about physical strength and more about sailing skill will, I'm sure, make for competitive and enjoyable racing for the class in the years to come.'

'It's great to see the SB20 class make these changes and help ensure it's a level playing field on the water,' adds Joff McGill, RYA Sailability Manager. 'There's some great sailing and racing to be had in keelboats and the class is proving it is committed to an experience that is safe, fun and open to everyone to participate in.'

By making these equipment rule changes, the SB20 class is sending a message: if you want to race, they're working to ensure nothing can stop you.

Racing for everyone

Boat designers and manufacturers, such as the SB20 class, are making sailing more accessible

When the SB20 was introduced in 2001, designer Tony Castro's aim was to create a one-design sports keelboat that delivered competitive racing while bridging the gap between high-performance dinghies and racing yachts. The design was different: crews faced inwards and hiking was prohibited. The light hull, with a large bulb keel, was fast and stable. Crew weight was limited to ensure fun and affordable racing for crews of three or four.

Over the past 20 years the class has provided inclusive, competitive class racing. Father and son David and Roger Hudson assembled a South African SB20 team made up of non-sailors from the townships and narrowly missed out on a World Championship win.

Roger then went on to partner Asenathi Jim to compete in the 470 class at the 2012 Olympics. Christina Summerhayes raced an all-girl SB20 crew at the highest level. The class promotes Youth and Masters trophies at major championships.

As part of its evolution, the class regularly reviews areas such as crew weight to ensure fair, competitive and inclusive racing. A recent review made an exciting change to the jib purchase system. The current 2:1 purchase can make it very highly loaded, and generally restricts the role of jib trim to larger, stronger men. The new class rule allows a 3:1 system to be used as an alternative. By reducing the load on the sheet by a third, it's hoped the important role of jib

