

CODA position on the Optimist Green Fleet

The Optimist Green Fleet is a special fleet for *novice* racing sailors with the purpose to encourage them to attend their *first* number of Optimist regattas. The Green Fleet allows them the transition into competitive sailing once they master the basic sailing skills, for example they may have completed the CYA (Canadian Yachting Association) White Sail courses. The emphasis for the Green Fleet is to provide a fun and learning regatta environment in order to encourage the participant's early and continued involvement in Optimist racing in particular, and competitive sailing in the long run.

In order to further the Green Fleet purpose of encouraging novice racing sailors, an effort should be made to present more 'trophies' in Green Fleet than would normally be awarded in similarly sized White, Blue or Red Fleets. Additional token rewards are encouraged, for example for accomplishments such as simply participating, finishing all races, for sportsmanship, use of racing rules, self-rescue after capsizing etc.

It is important for sailors, their parents and coaches to appreciate the Green Fleet as an important transitional stepping stone before the 'move up' into an age and skill appropriate fleet. By having the White, Blue and Red Fleets, the Optimist class is taking potential age differences between sailors into consideration.

Considering the above and the guidelines below, one will understand that the Green Fleet is not meant to be a place where a talented skipper stays to collect 'easy' trophies. A sailor in this position, while collecting prizes, will hardly be challenged and develop his or her skills.

The main target to keep in mind is that Optimist Fleets, including the Green Fleet, are there to keep the competition fair and challenging for everyone. The Fleets level the playing field and give skippers of all ages and skills a chance to compete against their peers and to have a fair chance to take home a trophy.

Regatta officials and coaches are urged to uphold the Green Fleet objectives by limiting Green Fleet participation to appropriate skippers. The recommended Sailing Instructions below which clearly state those guidelines for the Green Fleet will help avoid potential conflict. Note: if it is chosen to permit Green Fleet coaching while racing, or not, the Sailing Instructions should clearly address this.

The following then are CODA Green Fleet Guidelines to Coaches and Race Officials.

The Optimist Class Green Fleet is open to skippers who meet all of the following criteria:

1. Skippers must be age 15 or under on December 31st of the current year.
2. Skippers shall not return to Green Fleet competition after having competed in other Optimist Fleets (i.e. in White, Blue, Red or similar advanced Optimist fleets), *except* where no Green Fleet was offered at such event(s).

3. Upon placing 3 times in 1st, 2nd, or 3rd position overall in a regatta, (or any combination thereof), a skipper shall advance to his/her appropriate age group Fleet (White, Blue or Red). *

4. (Use either 4.1 or 4.2):

4.1. *No coaching* of Green Fleet skippers will be permitted while racing. Violation of this instruction may result in any penalty, which the jury deems appropriate, up to and including the disqualification of the coached skipper from the regatta.

4.2.. *Coaching* of Green Fleet skippers while racing is permitted, however coaching shall be limited to skippers in the bottom half of the fleet in any given race. Coach boats shall neither create wakes nor otherwise interfere with competitors. Violation of this instruction may result in any penalty, which the jury deems appropriate, up to and including the disqualification of the coached skipper from the regatta.

To adopt the CODA recommended guidelines for an event, organizers could just include the following in the Green Fleet Sailing Instructions:

Green Fleet: CODA Green Fleet criteria apply. Coaching will not be allowed while boats are racing *OR* Coaching will be allowed in the bottom half of the fleet during any given race. (*Choose one*)

* Where necessary, the Provincial Sailing Authorities or Regatta Officials may approve variations from any of the above criteria, in order to satisfy their unique regional requirements. For example, one can imagine that in certain regions with very limited participation in any given Green Fleet regatta, a skipper may not be ready for the regular fleet even after leading the local Green fleet on more than 3 occasions.