

Shorthanded Offshore Sailors of Texas Class Bylaws

The Shorthanded Offshore Sailors of Texas, SOS-TEX, exists to promote fair and competitive amateur racing among those interested in shorthanded long bay and offshore racing. These bylaws consist of three parts, Administrative, Activities, and Policy.

Administrative

Organization

Members

1. The SOS-TEX is made up of boats that are sailed by one or two crew. These members choose to race as a class to create an active venue for utilization of their boats that will ultimately protect and preserve their economic value. They believe that the growth of this class will ultimately benefit the sport of sailboat racing. Others that want to further the class may join as 'Crew'.

Officers

Fleet Captain

1. The Fleet Captain shall represent the fleet to all local sailing organizations
2. The Fleet Captain shall call and chair all meetings
3. The Fleet Captain shall deliver the Fleet by-laws to the local yacht clubs and sailing organizations.
4. The Fleet Captain or his representative shall be the initial point of contact for all protests under these by-laws.

Secretary Treasurer

1. The Secretary Treasurer shall keep records of all regattas sailed by the fleet.
2. The Secretary Treasurer shall establish a bank account or assume the existing bank account and keep records of expenses and receipts.
3. The Secretary Treasurer shall be responsible for publishing the final language of all changes to the by-laws.
4. The Secretary Treasurer shall be responsible for procurement of prizes for the season championship.
5. The Secretary Treasurer may act in the Fleet Captain's absence to perform any of the Fleet Captain's duties.
6. The Secretary Treasurer shall keep notes of all meetings and inform the membership of all significant items.

Election

1. The Fleet Captain shall be elected by a vote of the membership prior to the General Meeting each odd numbered year. The Fleet Captain shall take office at the end of the meeting and hold office until the end of the meeting in the next odd numbered year.
2. The Secretary Treasurer shall be elected by a vote of the membership prior to the General meeting of each even numbered year. The Secretary Treasurer shall take office at the end of the meeting and hold office until the end of the meeting in the next even numbered year.

Amendment

1. Any form of polling of the members may be used for amendment of these by-laws or for any other action requiring a vote. Members shall have the final text prior to voting. If the percentage of votes for the action exceeds 75 percent (rounded to the nearest whole percentage) of the eligible membership, then the action passes, unless otherwise indicated in the bylaw covering that action.

Dues

1. Dues shall be Fifty dollars annually, due at the general meeting and delinquent two months after that. Dues are for the Calendar year. The Fleet shall keep a minimum balance of two hundred dollars for contingencies. The members agree to support the actual expenses of the annual SOS-TEX Social event and pay an assessment, in advance, of the expected costs above the available funds (if required).

Activities

Meetings

1. A general membership meeting is to be held in January or as early as possible each year.
2. The annual SOS-TEX Social is to be held between November 25 and February 28 each season. Owners, crew, spouses, and sponsors, etc are to be invited. Season championship prizes will be awarded.

Season Championship

1. The season Championship shall be awarded to the boat with the best performance in five of the following six regattas. Scoring of the championship shall be by low point scoring. Non-entrants of regattas score the higher of 10 or the number of entrants plus one.
 - a. LYC Bay Race I Regatta
 - b. LYC Heald Bank Regatta
 - c. HYC Freeport TORC Regatta
 - d. LYC / GBCA Regata de Amigos (Galveston to Veracruz) in even numbered years or GBCA Race to the Border in odd numbered years
 - e. LYC Bay Race II Regatta
 - f. SOS-TEX Offshore Regatta
2. "Keeper" trophies are to be awarded for Champion, second and third place in Single and Double handed fleets.
3. In addition to the Season Championship prizes, a drawing will be held at the Annual Social, wherein each boat will receive one valid entry for each event entered.

Policy

Membership

1. The membership shall be made up of Boat Owners whose boats are in compliance with the restrictions given below, have paid annual dues, and who agree to abide by these by-laws.
2. In addition others interested in furthering the efforts of SOS-TEX can join as 'Crew' if they have paid annual dues, and agree to abide by these by-laws.
3. Any member who fails to abide by the Policies in these by-laws shall be disqualified from the entire regatta in which the infraction occurs. A member who fails to abide by the same policy in two regattas or has three separate infractions each of different policies shall be disqualified for the season. An infraction occurs when it is reported or discovered. A disputed infraction may be settled by the officers or by the regatta protest process.
4. Membership of any individual or boat may be revoked or reinstated by a vote of the members in which no more than two dissenting votes are cast.
5. The members may offer membership to any boat/owner by a vote of the members with no more than two dissenting votes.
6. Any qualifying boat may race in the SOS-TEX Class as a guest for one regatta per year, provided the owner complies with all other provisions of these by-laws. Results of the guest regatta count toward season championship if the guest becomes a member.
7. Restrictions
8. The boats shall have a valid PHRF Certificate.
9. Boats must be fully equipped cruiser/racer type boats that have all required safety equipment and have not removed any equipment unless permitted to do so by PHRF.

Skipper and Crew

1. Skipper and Crew may be anyone of which one must be eighteen (18) years or older.
2. The boat owner agrees not to pay any compensation to any crewmember other than actual incidental expenses during a regatta.

Racing

1. The scoring system for SOS-TEX shall be PHRF (time on time and distance). The scoring system may be reviewed annually.
2. SOS-TEX's goal is to provide both Spin and Non-Spin, and single and double-handed classes (4 each to make a class). If there are not enough boats entered for separate single and double handed classes, they will be sailed as one class with no adjustments to any ratings. If there are not enough boats entered for separate Spin and Non-Spin the SOS-TEX Class will sail as one. Boats will be scored in the race based upon their PHRF Certificate for the class they applied for. Boats will be scored separately for Season Championship based upon SOS-TEX Classes. If there are enough boats to separate classes, the first attempted division will be single-handed and double-handed and subject to 'orphan' clause below. The second division will then be Spin and Non-Spin fleets within the single and double-handed classes also subject to the 'orphan' clause below.
3. SOS-TEX Orphan Clause: No separation of classes can result in boats being 'orphaned' without a class to sail in. Example: 8 boats register, 5 double handed Non-Spin, 1 each single-handed Spin, double handed Spin and single-handed Non- Spin. The 5 boats in double handed non spinnaker will not be split off because it would 'orphan' the remaining 3 boats without a class unless the governing regatta will allow a class of 3.
4. SOS-TEX will allow use of autopilots or wind vanes during class races after the boats have cleared the starting area.
5. The SOS-TEX requests that the yacht clubs use their best efforts to obtain and report start and finish times for the boats in this class. SOS-TEX will provide for scoring if requested by the clubs.
6. All boats must comply with the U.S. Coast Guard's requirements for recreational vessels and have the following minimum equipment. NOTE: ** indicates items that are not mandatory for races whose entire course is within Galveston Bay.
 - a. Lifelines or safety lines leading from both sides of the cockpit forward and well secured at each end.**
 - b. Fire extinguisher meeting U.S. Coast Guard requirements.
 - c. Manual bilge pump of at least 10 gallons per minute capacity.
 - d. Anchor with suitable rode.
 - e. Seacocks and soft wooden plugs to close all through hull openings.**
 - f. Navigation lights.
 - g. Compass.
 - h. Charts and piloting tools.
 - i. Lead line or echo sounder.**
 - j. Foghorn.
 - k. Radar reflector.**
 - l. Waterproof flashlight.
 - m. First aid kit.
 - n. At least two gallons of fresh water.**
 - o. Life jacket with whistle and strobe light attached, for each crewmember. Mandatory that all single-handed sailors wear life jacket at all times while racing.
 - p. Safety harness with tether for each crewmember. All crewmembers should be tethered to boat or jack lines while above deck. Mandatory use of harness and tether sunset to sunrise when offshore.
 - q. VHF radio (refer to additional sailing instructions for each race for the specific channel needed).
 - r. Three red parachute flares or orange smoke flares, and three red handheld flares.**
 - s. An alternate means of propulsion
 - t. Other equipment requirements of NOR of sponsoring yacht club.
7. The decision to start a race and/or to continue to race and full responsibility for providing appropriate safety and other required equipment for racing is entirely up to the owner of the boat.
8. These SOS-TEX by-laws are intended to apply only to formal racing on Galveston Bay and in the Gulf of Mexico. This does not preclude formation of "SOS-TEX" Classes for other races or regattas using these rules or a modification of these rules if agreed by all participants.