

60 Years of the Portsmouth Yardstick



The Portsmouth Yardstick Scheme enables different classes and types of boat to race together under a handicap system. By using the Scheme, Sailing Clubs are able to easily get a variety of differing boats including Dinghies, Multihulls, Keelboats and Cruisers all racing together fairly.

Now celebrating its 60th anniversary, the Scheme has developed to accommodate new boats and continues to provide a fairer handicap system.



1947

Sidney "Sinbad" Milledge (Soon to be creator of the Portsmouth Yardstick) tests his local handicap scheme at Langstone Sailing Club using the Island One design as the scratch boat.

1950

Milledge receives support from the Portsmouth Harbour Racing & Sailing Association, goes through mass analysis of data and publishes the first edition of the Langstone tables for club handicappers to assign and adjust handicap numbers. These numbers would in later years be known as Portsmouth Numbers (PN).

1960

Due to mass use and popularity of the Portsmouth Yardstick Milledge hands over the administration to the RYA due to volume of post.

1976

The now YR2 document is published using Milledge's previous documentation as found in the Langstone tables. Race data is collected through an annual questionnaire similar to today's annual return to collect national handicap data.

1980

Specimen races are created by the RYA to be used by club handicappers to aid handicap number adjustment and analyse club race data.



1986

The Langstone tables are removed from the YR2 due to the increased level of Portsmouth Yardstick racing and the lack of development within the tables. This enables newer and faster boats to be catered for.

1995

Due to the change in performance in boats especially Multihulls the Portsmouth handicap numbers are all multiplied by an agreed factor of 9.462, subsequently PN's are expressed as 4 and 3 digit numbers as opposed to the original 3 & 2 digit numbers.

2007

YR2 is published on the RYA website allowing clubs to easily integrate PN lists with various results software and reference YR2 documentation.

2009

The first edition of the Portsmouth Yardstick website is launched and tested by a small number of clubs to gain feedback and test recommended results being given by the website.

2011

The RYA release all Cruiser data and give confidence factors to all numbers allowing Cruiser clubs to allocate trial numbers with ease.

Further developments to the Portsmouth Yardstick website is carried out after feedback from users of the website since 2009. Returns of Portsmouth Yardstick racing are split 50/50 between the website and paper/electronic returns forms.

2012

Celebrating its 60th anniversary the Portsmouth Yardstick receives a big push from the RYA to get clubs using the scheme to its full potential.

The PYS website version 2 is published in two tiers to allow ease of use by clubs and get clubs adjusting handicap numbers to give fairer racing. PN grading is removed from the national list to give clubs further confidence in adjusting Portsmouth Numbers and highlight that the national list is a list of recommendations only.

1948

Milledge continues to develop his handicap scheme and creates Langstone tables (later to be adopted by the RYA as the YR2 document) now being used for interclub regattas in the Portsmouth area for Dinghies and some Cruisers.

1952

Milledge creates the Portsmouth Yardstick which is a tool for converting elapsed time to corrected time based on a handicap number. The equation to which the yardstick was based on is similar to that of today: $\text{corrected time} = (\text{elapsed time} / \text{handicap number}) \times 100$. The Yardstick has a range of 1 hour to 3 hours for times and a handicap range of 65 to 150.



1973

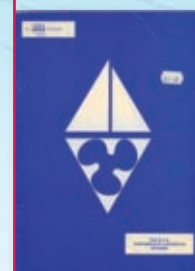
The Portsmouth Yardstick is introduced to Multihull racing.

1977

Returns forms are separated out for differing categories to include four return forms for Dinghy, Multi, Keel and Cruiser. These would allow four differing published lists of Portsmouth Numbers.

1981

Within the Cruiser division of the Portsmouth Yardstick; propeller, engine & keel configuration is captured to allow for the same class with a differing configuration to be handicapped against one another.



1990

Consideration of a Power/Sail handicap scheme to work with the Portsmouth Yardstick proposed by the Royal Lyngington Yacht Club is approved. This is administered by the Royal Lyngington Yacht Club and is designed to allow boats to motor sail although is not further developed.



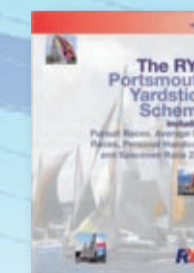
2002

The RYA start development of an electronic returns form for clubs to fill in and return to the RYA for analysis, making data easier to analyse and intergrate.



2008

The RYA Technical Department begin development of a Portsmouth Yardstick website to analyse and recommend adjusted Portsmouth Numbers to allow clubs to develop their own lists for racing.



For more details visit:

www.rya.org.uk/racing/Pages/portsmouthyardstick.aspx

