



Middle Harbour Amateur Sailing Club Inc.

The Laser Club

Members Handbook

Revised June 2022

The Club

Location

Middle Harbour Amateur Sailing Club Inc (MHASC) is located below Parriwi Road and accessed from Spit East Reserve carpark and at the end of the 'No Thru Road' laneway that runs alongside Middle Harbour Yacht Club (MHYC).

The location is shown on Googlemaps with a map photo available, link here: [MHASC](#).

Club email address is mhasc.laser@gmail.com (goes to both Commodore & Secretary).

Postal address is:

Middle Harbour Amateur Sailing Club Inc.
PO Box 920
Spit Junction
NSW 2088

Background

MHASC is proudly 'The Laser Club'.

The Club aims to provide a friendly, competitive, safe, inclusive high-quality sailing experience for members who enjoy a common interest in dinghy sailing, fitness and activity, challenge and achievement, and a good-fun social environment.

The Club is entirely run and maintained by member volunteers as an 'amateur community sailing club', with no paid employees. The main functions of the Club to be managed are racing events; property and members facilities maintenance; and administration functions.

There are lots of opportunities to provide volunteer help and every member is expected to contribute. We are guided by the general principle that 'many hands make light work'.

MHASC is an 'Incorporated Association' and the operations are governed by a Constitution. You can view a copy here: [MHASC Constitution](#). Some of the Committee members' contacts are listed in the 'Useful Contacts' section below.

All members are asked to observe the 'Members Terms & Conditions' which they sign when joining the Club and renewing their Annual Membership each year. See below for these.

Club members have a wealth of experience in Laser sailing and the running needs of the Club. Feel free to ask anyone for a tip – and you may find them giving unsolicited advice as well.

The Club has a proud history, originally formed around 1949. Club members built the premises on the current site around 1960 and have maintained the building and facilities ever since. The Club transitioned to the Laser class around 1976, and it quickly became the only class raced at MHASC and has remained that way ever since.

Some current members have achieved top level results in the Laser class:

- Vanessa Dudley – 2013 and 2016 World Grand Master Laser Radial Champion and 2014 Australian Female Sailor of the Year
- Robert Lowndes – 2015 and 2016 World Great Grand Master Laser Radial Champion
- Jeff Loosemore – 2019 World Great Grand Master Laser Radial

Notwithstanding this array of talent, the skills of members cover the full spectrum, and the handicap system provides enjoyable and competitive racing for all levels of fitness and ability.

Further details on the Club and a history is available here: [Our Club](#)

Useful

Contacts

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Commodore | Graham Jennings | 0417 061 634 |
| Secretary | Naomi McKeown | 0418 636996 |
| Treasurer | Jonathan Brown | 0497 292 955 |
| Club Captain & Boat Storage | Diane Sissingh | 0409 918 793 |
| Results & Website | Rob Lowndes | 0419 266 257 |
| Race Duty Co-ordinator | Vanessa Dudley | 0418 118 133 |
| New Members | Matt Kuhn | 0429 128 692 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Club Sponsors | <p>MHASC is indebted to the continuing support of our two sponsors:</p> <p>NB Sailports (Laser dealer, parts & equipment) and Zhik (specialised dinghy sailing clothing available at most Sailing outlets and online).</p> <p>The Club encourages members to support these Sponsors when making their own purchases.</p> |
| Parking | <p>8 parking spaces are located directly in front of MHASC clubhouse for club members for club activities.</p> <p>On Race days, we attempt to accommodate parking for all members in the restricted space which is also the dinghy rigging area.</p> <p>If you are not a Mosman resident and prefer parking where access is easier, it is possible to apply for annual Public Parking permits from the Mosman Council for Spit West Reserve and Spit East Reserve if desired.</p> |
| Web Site/ Social Media/ Newsletter | <p>MHASC web site is http://www.mhasc.org.au/</p> <p>The website provides a wealth of information on the Club including the Racing Calendar; Sailing Instructions; Race Duty Roster; Race results; links to a number of useful Laser sites including NSW/ACT Laser Association events; and a 'Racing Skills' area accessible by members only that provides a wealth of information.</p> <p>We encourage members to follow our Facebook page Middle Harbour Amateur Sailing Club.</p> <p>A regular email update is sent to members from the Club's website. To avoid it being caught as spam we recommend (mhasc.laser@gmail.com) in added to your email address list.</p> <p>Members can communicate with members for Club related activities via GoogleGroups (mhasc-member@googlegroups.com). This site is particularly used for organising mid-week sailing activities.</p> <p>If you have any issues with these communications or sites please contact the Club Secretary.</p> |
| Racing | <p>Racing is scheduled to start at 1300 (at 1400 during daylight saving time), from the first week in September to late April. A Race Briefing is held approximately 90 minutes prior to start time to enable the Race Committee of the day to communicate conditions, possible race course and other important information. Some Winter Racing is conducted in the off season.</p> |
| Insurance | <p>To race, we require all members to have 3rd Party Public Liability Insurance for \$10million. We also encourage our members to consider comprehensive boat insurance as part of their racing plan.</p> <p>Club membership includes Sailing Australia membership which automatically provides Personal Injury Insurance, see link: Personal Injury Insurance.</p> |
| Sailing Outside Organised Events | <p>Members often engage in mid-week sailing and training sessions on their own initiative. This is a great way to increase skills, proficiency and knowledge. From a liability perspective, engaging in these activities which are not part of the Club's official Race Calendar are at a member's own risk. As always, the decision to go out on the water is yours and yours alone.</p> |
| Sailing Instructions | <p>MHASC racing is governed by the Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS and Special Regs) and MHASC Sailing Instructions which are in the Racing section on the MHASC website.</p> |
| Racing Format | <p>The Race Calendar provides for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Club Championship Trophy – Outright results, 14 heats on select Series event days. 2. NB Sailports Spring Series – Handicap series, 18 heats from season start to Xmas. 3. Zhik Summer Series – Handicap series, 18 heats New Year to season end. 4. Short Race Series – Outright results, up to 6 heats each race day and usually held prior to Laser Association Championships. 5. Marathon Race – One longer race around the Harbour, early January. <p>Apart from the Marathon and the Short Race Series, all races have a target time of 50 minutes. NB Sailports, Founders & Zhik Series are raced under the club's handicap system. See website for more information on the handicap and scoring system, and Sailing Instructions.</p> <p>A post-season Awards Presentation function for all members, partners, guests, is usually held in May each year.</p> |

Your Laser and Rig

Racing is provided for all rigs, 4.7, Radial and Standard.

As the Laser class develops and evolves, new and complimentary equipment is introduced as alternatives to the Class approved equipment.

Whilst MHASC encourages the development of the class, all equipment used during MHASC club races must be Class approved equipment. Visit the [ILCA website](#) if in doubt, or ask for assistance.

Access to Club House

Members can apply for a Club key which operates all locks at the Club.

The key is for use by the club member only for the sole purpose of using club premises and facilities.

The Club's security measures must be adhered to at all times.

This included ensuring all appliances are disconnected, and the club house is left secure and locked.

The dinghy ramp is for launching lightweight sailing dinghies (by hand only) and the chain across the ramp must be left taut and secure when the ramp is not being used.

Chains and locks to parking spaces and grassed area are to be in place and secured before leaving.

We ask our members not to pass their key onto non-members for temporary access to the club without prior notification to the committee.

Boat Storage and Racking

Boat storage is offered as a valuable service to MHASC members for storing Laser dinghies, subject to availability and current financial membership. Contact the Club Captain for any enquiries.

Members may also store their Laser gear with their boat (within reason).

If your boat is in a storage rack please;

- Ensure your dolly is also stowed in a safe manner, and that doesn't restrict other members to access their dolly.
- Do not obstruct access to any part of the club with your boat and/or dolly.
- Ensure boat, foils and spars and other fittings are labelled with name, sail/boat number and are kept within the racking space allocated and stored neatly.

Storage rack allocations will be reviewed from time to time as vacancies occur, and periodic racking reviews are undertaken by the Club Captain and Commodore (at least annually post sailing season).

Rack allocations will be based on a combination of;

- sailing participation frequency – (i.e., competition, practice including mid-week sailing) and,
- volunteer contribution to the Club (including the premises and facilities).

Members that are not sailing regularly and/or not making volunteer contributions to the Club may be asked to change to an alternative rack location.

If your boat is in a preferred racking location (Levels 1 & 2) and you are not planning to sail, or are unable to sail for a period, you are asked to consider a location swap with others who could use the space actively. Refer to the Club Captain.

Boat and gear storage at MHASC is at member's own risk. The Club's Insurance policies do not cover boats stored at the Club or personal belongings. Members must ensure they have the appropriate insurance policies in place. The Club takes no responsibility for any boat/gear that is missing, lost, stolen, borrowed, misplaced, or otherwise damaged.

No member is to borrow another member's equipment without the permission of the owner.

If a member's subscription lapses, they will be asked to remove their Laser from the Club.

In the event of a dispute the decision of the Commodore will be final.

| | |
|---|---|
| Associations | <p>The Club membership fee includes membership of Australian Sailing and the NSW & ACT Laser Association which hosts a number of regattas each year. Also see Australian Laser Association</p> |
| Regattas | <p>The Club encourages members to participate in the NSW/ACT & Australian Association Regattas. They are fun, provide an excellent opportunity to further racing skills and meet like-minded people. MHASC usually has a strong presence and often make travel and shared accommodation arrangements to make it easier and more fun!</p> <p>Attendance at NSW & ACT District Laser Association regattas is encouraged and generally no formal racing is scheduled on regatta race days. See the Club Calendar for regatta dates.</p> |
| Club Laser | <p>MHASC has a Club Laser available for use by prospective members, visitors and club members in need. See the Club Captain. To encourage the growth of our Club the priority is generally for potential new members. Terms and conditions for use of the Club Laser are on the website: Club Laser Terms & Conditions</p> |
| Race Management | <p>As an amateur sailing club, we require all members to actively participate in our Race Management program.</p> <p>All members are rostered on for at least one Sunday per season to assist in Race Management. This ensures all members get to sail throughout our racing season. Average points are awarded on these days.</p> <p>New members are rostered for Race Duty with an experienced club member. The Club website contains the Race Officer Checklist and Emergency Plan & 'How To' Aids essential to your duties and responsibilities are on your rostered day.</p> <p>The Club also encourages members to hold a Power Boat licence which assists with Race Officer duty, knowledge of the waterways and boating rules.</p> |
| Coaching and Mentoring | <p>Members frequently organise mid-week sailing sessions which provide a great opportunity to train on the water, experiment, learn, ask questions, discuss ideas and exchange information in a non-race environment. These sessions are initiated by a member sending out a 'google groups email', link; mhasc-member@googlegroups.com</p> <p>MHASC operates a mentor system whereby, if they wish, a new member is assigned to an experienced sailor who will guide you through your first few months of racing. The scheme is designed to facilitate your entry into the club and to Laser racing.</p> <p>Each season the Club holds 'Rules Nights', 'Race Management Nights' and other events to update members knowledge and help ensure a high standard of racing and race management. All members are encouraged to attend these.</p> <p>MHASC plans to offer a 'Learn to Race' Programme for the 2022/23 Sailing Season, further details to be advised.</p> <p>From time to time, MHASC will operate Coaching Sessions from an official Sailing Coach with Laser experience and background. Contacts can also be provided for further coaching.</p> <p>The Club also has a 'Racing Skills' section on the website with links to useful sites on Laser sailing, link here; Racing Skills. Contact the Commodore for the password.</p> |
| Club Facilities and Refreshments | <p>The Kitchen facilities, common room and outdoor deck are available to all members and their families. Members are asked to keep the kitchen clean and tidy after using it by wash up all items returning then to the cupboards. There are no cleaners.</p> <p>A limited range of cold drinks is available from the club fridge at low cost. Coffee and tea is available free of charge. We encourage everyone to use the areas available for chats and debriefing after sailing.</p> <p>Male and female change rooms are available. As an amateur club we again rely on each member helping to keep the areas clean and hygienic – there are no cleaners.</p> <p>When using the facilities during the week, it's your responsibility to make sure that the areas you use are cleaned, belongings and things used are put away, and all taps are turned off before leaving.</p> <p>We request no sailing gear or personal belongings be stored in the change rooms or boat storage area. The Club takes no responsibility for lost gear.</p> |

Member Terms & Conditions

- I agree to compete in accordance with the Club's 'Sailing Instructions', including the 'Club's Safety Policy' and respect that my behaviour 'on and off the water' needs to be consistent with the safe, fair, inclusive, and friendly competitive Club environment.
- I agree that membership of the MHASC is entirely at my own risk. I will not hold the Club or its officers liable for any injury to persons, or damage to equipment, in the event of a mishap on the water, or on the Club's premises.
- I acknowledge that insurance for person & property is my own responsibility, and that the Club's insurance does not cover my participation in Club activities.
- I undertake to maintain:
 - Personal Injury Insurance cover (provided automatically by Australian Sailing to financial members).
 - 'Off the Beach' Dinghy Insurance cover with 3rd Party liability insurance of at least \$10 million, & I understand that the Club strongly recommends I have comprehensive insurance. I will provide the Club with policy details of my 'Off the Beach' Dinghy insurances.
- I acknowledge the risks inherent in Laser sailing, & that the Club does not and cannot provide rescue facilities for all contingencies. Attention is drawn to Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS) Rule 4. Decision to Race: 'The responsibility for a boat's decision to participate in a race, or to continue racing, is hers alone.'
- I undertake to compete in accordance with the Racing Rules of Sailing, Australian Sailing Special Regulations Part 2 for 'Off the Beach Boats', and the by-laws of the International Laser Class Association (ILCA). Accordingly, I undertake to:
 - Always wear an approved PFD 2 (EN393-50N) when sailing a Laser.
 - Ensure restraining fittings are used for my mast, centreboard and rudder at all times.
 - Ensure the condition of my boat is fair and reasonable to minimise the rescue need for gear failure.
- If allocated a boat storage rack:
 - I will keep my boat & dolly in the location allocated unless a new location is approved.
 - I will clearly mark my boat, spars, foils, fittings and other personal possessions with my boat # and name.
 - I agree that storage of my boat, spars, foils, fitting & other personal possessions (all of which are clearly marked with my name & boat #) on the club's premises is entirely at my own risk. I acknowledge that the insurance policies held by the Club do not cover these items.
 - I acknowledge that the Boat Storage Officer may change my rack allocation. Only in exceptional circumstances & with the prior approval of a Committee Member will I use clubhouse access areas for the storage of my boat or gear.
I accept that the storage of my boat at the Club's premises is conditional on me being a fully paid member and that racking will be allocated on the basis of sailing participation and volunteer contribution with the Club. I agree to remove my boat from the Club premises if requested, including if I am not a financial member of the club, or if I am not sailing regularly.
- I agree that my email address will be used for communication on Club & sailing matters and may be available to other members for these purposes.
- I will not use or disclose the email address of other Club members for communication on other matters without the agreement of that member.
- I will not operate the Race Committee Boat davit crane without authorisation from the Committee.
- I accept that if I fail to pay my fees for one or more years, the Club has the right to sell my boat if stored at the Club, to recover unpaid fees.

Privacy Policy

Any personal information you provide to MHASC will only be used for the purposes of operating a sailing Club, including the release of details to the State and National Yachting Authorities and Class Associations. If you have any queries or concerns about your personal information, please contact the Club Secretary.

The Laser

Background

The Laser was designed in 1969 by three Canadians - Bruce Kirby, Ian Bruce and Hans Fogh. They had in mind a high performance single handed, strictly one-design dinghy that could be car-topped, was light weight but strong, simple to rig and inexpensive to buy.

Its enormous popularity is testimony to their success in achieving those goals. The Laser is now the most popular dinghy in the world and is sailed in most countries. Other reasons for its popularity are;

- a. Large production runs have kept costs down but re-sale values remain high.
- b. The rig is very simple and maintenance costs are low.
- c. The boat is easy to sail - but difficult to sail well.
- d. The strict one-design approach ensures very close racing and provides an excellent platform for honing tactical skills.

It is interesting to see the number of America's Cup and Olympic sailors that started competitive racing on a Laser.

Apart from the original Standard rig, two alternative rigs – the Radial and 4.7 – have been introduced. These rig options make the boat easier for younger, older, and lightweight sailors to handle in stronger winds. Women mostly sail the Radial or 4.7.

For all racing sailors, the most important criterion for selecting a boat is fair and strong competition. The Laser offers exactly that.

One Design

The Laser is one of the most strictly controlled one-design classes in the world. Production standards are rigidly controlled so that, when new, the hull, foils, spars and sails are virtually identical. Class rules limit the changes that can be made to the ex-factory product. About the only fittings that can be 'customised' are the tiller and extension, the hiking strap, ropes used and the water bottle.

As the saying goes....the only difference between each boat is the nut on the end of the tiller.

How to Win on a Laser

Oh that winning was as simple as observance of a few rules! Experienced sailors generally agree that the following are key ingredients to improvement:

- a. **Time on the Water:** Spend as much time on the water as possible and use that time productively. Practice boat speed and handling in all conditions.
- b. **Number of Races:** This is essential for developing starting technique and fleet tactics which are best learnt in the big fleets that are encountered at Laser regattas.
- c. **Racing Rules of Sailing:** A good knowledge of the rules is required to give you confidence to mix it in close and to keep your friends.
- d. **Keep the Boat Flat:** Keep the boat as flat as possible, especially when sailing to windward.
- e. **Boat setup:** Learn what each control line does and how it is used in various conditions.

One of the remarkable things about Laser sailors is their willingness to pass on their knowledge to other competitors. So never be afraid to ask. The Guns argue that the faster you are, the more you will push them to go faster.

Books to Consult

A number of books have been written on Laser racing and some are listed below. Further tips can be found by going to the Club website Racing Skills link; [Racing Skills](#)

- Dr Michael Blackburn: *Sail Fitter*
 - Dick Tillman & Dave Powlinson: *The New Laser Sailing*: Thelford Press, 1988.
 - Ed Baird: *Laser Racing*: Fenhurst Books, 1982.
 - Tim Davidson: *The Laser Book*
 - Glenn Bourke: *Championship Laser Racing*: Fenhurst Books, 1993.
 - *LaserCoach* 2000 Interactive CD ROM
-

-
- Ben Tan: *The Complete Introduction to Laser Racing*: Singapore Sports Council, 2000.
 - Ben Ainslie: *The Laser Campaign Manual* including CD.
 - Paul Goodion: *RYA Laser handbook*.
 - RYA *The Racing Rules Explained*

Check online for availability. Some may be available from dealers, ship chandlers and Boat Books, 31 Albany St, Crows Nest, NSW . Tel 1800 024 807.

Also consult the ILCA Handbook for useful information on Class Rules and boat care.

Your First Sail on a Laser

Until you have a little experience, the Laser is a difficult boat to sail in a breeze above say 12 knots. Therefore your first sail should be in a light breeze. To develop confidence, intentionally capsize the boat and practice righting it by applying weight to the centre board. Of course before you launch, ensure the foils and mast are attached to the boat and cannot detach.

Tips on Righting a Capsized Boat

Be reconciled to the inevitability of a capsize (once in an important regatta our Bronze Medallist tells us he capsized in 8 knots of breeze). The following tips may make it easier to right the boat:

- As you capsize, let go of the tiller and/or extension – even the Carbon Fibre tillers can be broken – but hold on to the mainsheet.
 - If cleated, uncleat the mainsheet and release the boom vang.
 - If the boom is sitting up vertically and the sail is full, use the mainsheet to collapse the sail into the water.
 - If you have capsized to windward you must swim to the other side of the boat. Better still swim under the boat. However, when you right the boat be prepared for the boat to capsize on top of you. To prevent this, one alternative is to swim to the bow and attempt to turn the boat head-to-wind. However, the best alternative to recover from a capsize to weather is use the centreboard in the normal way and as the boat begins to come up, wrap your body around the centreboard and hang there underwater until the boat is stable, reach up to the new weather rail, then haul yourself on board.
-

**Welcome and Good Luck
from The Laser Club**