



Middle Harbour Amateur Sailing Club

The Laser Club

New Members Pack

June 2016

The Club

Location

Middle Harbour Amateur Sailing Club Inc (MHASC) is located in Lower Parriwi Road, The Spit, just south of the Middle Harbour Yacht Club. The postal address is:

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

Background

The club has exclusively raced Lasers for more than 30 years and has spawned a number of world champions and Olympians including:

- Glenn Bourke: Three times Laser World Champion and Barcelona 1992 Olympic representative in the Finn class.
- Michael Blackburn: 2006 Laser World Champion, Laser Olympic Representative 1996, 2000 (Bronze) and 2004.
- Jacqueline Ellis: Women's World Champion 1988,1996
- Jo Dikkenberg: Youth World Champion 1998
- Ben Austin: ISAF Youth World Champion 2000
- Gabrielle King, ISAF and ILCA World Youth Champion 2007 to 2008
- Peter Heywood, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009 World Grand Master Laser Radial Champion

And more recently:

- 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

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.

Useful Numbers

Acting Commodore	Chris Kelleway	0416 223 537
Treasurer & Secretary	Jonathan Brown	0497 292 955
Club Captain & Racking Officer	Diane Sissingh	0409 918 793
Handicapper	Rob Lowndes	0419 266 257

Club Sponsors

MHASC is indebted to the continuing support of our two sponsors: NB Sailsports (Laser Dealer) and Zhik (specialised dinghy sailing clothing)

Parking

8 parking spaces are located directly in front of our club available to all club members. On Race days, to accommodate all our members, space is restricted, and we utilise all space available in the parking area at the rear of the club.

Web Site

Our web site is: <http://www.mhasc.org.au/>

The site provides details of upcoming NSW/ACT Laser Association events, the annual MHASC race calendar, duty rosters, our race results and links to a number of useful Laser sites.

Access to Club House

Access to the club is available to all members at any time. On joining the club, you will be issued with a key, after provide a Key Deposit Levy. We ask all members to adhere to our security measures, by ensure all appliances are disconnected, all gear has been stowed and the club house is secure and locked, and we also request that outside chains to ramp, grass areas and parking spaces are 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.

Racking And Stowage	<p>Limited racking is available for boat storage. Apply via the Racking Officer.</p> <p>If your boat is in racking please ensure your dolly is also stowed in a safe manner for other members to access their dolly. Boats or dollies should not obstruct access to any part of the club. Boats, foils and spars and other fittings left in the club must be numbered and are stored at the owners risk as they are not insured by the Club.</p>
Your Laser and Rig	<p>Racing is provided for all rigs, 4.7, Radial and Standard Rigs.</p> <p>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 club races must be class approved equipment. Visit ILCA website if in doubt or ask the Committee for assistance.</p>
Racing	<p>Racing is scheduled to start at 1300 (at 1400 during daylight saving time), from the first week in September to the end of April. A briefing is held approximately 90 minutes prior to start time to enable the Race committee of the day to communicate conditions, and possible race course.</p> <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>
Sailing Instructions	<p>Sailing Instructions are included in the Race Programme. Refer to website.</p>
Racing Format	<p>The race calendar provides for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Club Championship: 16 heats over eight Sundays. b. Zhik Summer Series: 12 heats over six Sundays. c. NB Sailsports: 12 heats over six Sundays. d. Short Race Series: Up to 6 heats each race day over six Sundays. e. Marathon Race: One race only. <p>Apart from the Marathon and the Short Race Series, all races have a target time of 50 minutes. Zhik and NB Sailsports series are raced under the club's handicap system. See website for more information on the handicap and scoring system</p>
Associations	<p>The Club membership fee provides for membership of Australian Sailing.</p> <p>To compete in any NSW& ACT Association or Australian Laser Associations hosted regattas, you will be required to become a member of the NSW&ACT Laser Association via there website.</p>
Club Boat	<p>A club Laser is available for uses by members. See the Club Captain. We also like to encourage the growth of our Club and the Laser Class, and will be happy to offer use of the boat on Sunday Race days to new sailors trialling the boat.</p>
Regattas	<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>
Race Management	<p>As an amateur sailing club, we require all members to activity participate in our Race Management program. 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. As a new member you will be rostered on with an experienced club member. Average points are awarded on these days. Please refer to our Race Management Guide to see what your duties and responsibilities are on your roster day.</p>

Mentor System

The club 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.

Laser Dealers NB Sailsport – website: www.nbsailsports.com.au

Zhik clothing can be found at most Sailing outlets and via the Zhik website – www.zhik.com

Club Facilities and Refreshments

The Kitchen facilities and common room are available to all members and their families. We just ask that you keep the kitchen clean and tidy after using it by wash up all items returning then to the cupboards. A limited range of cold drinks is available from the club fridge at cost. Coffee and tea is available free of charge. We encourage everyone to use the area for chat and after sailing de-briefing.

Change rooms are for everyone to use, and as an amateur club we rely on our members to maintain a clean and hygienic area. When using the facilities during the week, it's your responsibility to make sure that the area is cleaned, and all taps are turned off before leaving. We request no sailing gear is stored in the change rooms or racking area.

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.*

Safety Policy

Our safety policy cannot be compromised. The International Laser Class Association and MHASC are determined to keep its safety record intact. These are the simple rules the club will enforce.

1. Your decision to race is yours and yours alone. Club members will not pressure you in any way to sail. In strong winds you should not leave the shore unless you are confident of your own ability and safety.
2. Whether racing or not, all sailors must always wear an approved buoyancy vest.
3. You must ensure that the foils and mast are secured to the hull and cannot detach if the hull turns upside down. The club measurer will provide advice if needed.
4. In strong winds, you should always keep clear of a lee shore and breaking waves.
5. If you are excessively tired, then retire.
6. Always stay with your boat.
7. If you retire, attempt to notify the Race Officer on the rescue boat of your departure.
8. On race days, always sign-on.
9. Both the Rescue Boat Ramp and the Launching Ramp can be very slippery. Be very careful.

If you are in trouble, raise an arm above your head and wave it backwards and forwards.

Remember Rule 4 of Racing Rules of Sailing: "4. The responsibility for a boat's decision to participate in a race or to continue racing is hers alone".

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 some of the links on our web site.

- a. Dr Michael Blackburn: *Sail Fitter*
- b. Dick Tillman & Dave Powlinson: *The New Laser Sailing*: The Thelford Press, 1988.
- c. Ed Baird: *Laser Racing*: Fenhurst Books, 1982.
- d. Tim Davidson: *The Laser Book*
- e. Glenn Bourke: *Championship Laser Racing*: Fenhurst Books, 1993.
- f. *LaserCoach* 2000 Interactive CD ROM
- g. Ben Tan: *The Complete Introduction to Laser Racing*: Singapore Sports Council, 2000.
- h. Ben Ainslie: *The Laser Campaign Manual* including CD.
- i. Paul Goodion: *RYA Laser handbook*.
- j. RYA *The Racing Rules Explained*

All of these and other useful titles on Racing Rules, Tactics, Fitness etc. are available from International Laser Class Association web site (www.laserinternational.org/library) and most are 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 capsized (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.
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**Welcome and Good Luck
from The Laser Club**