



SNIPE CLASS INTERNATIONAL RACING ASSOCIATION

Pietro Fantoni

Commodore

e-mail: pfantoni@hotmail.com

Class office

2812 Cañon Street
San Diego, California 92106 USA

+619-224-6998

Fax: +619-222-0528

e-mail: office@snipe.org

www.snipe.org

September 20, 2018

Participation at Snipe Nationals

Or how to have a good number of boats at our main events

These are difficult times for sailing in general, and the numbers are going down in many events and for many classes. Sometimes, somewhere and for some reason a regatta can be a great success in term of number of boats.

For example last year the US Nationals in Winchester (Boston area) attracted 53 boats, the biggest participation in recent memory, on one of the smallest lakes used for Snipe sailing. This year, Green Lake, Wisconsin attracted less boats. I understand the advantage of occasionally placing the Nationals in an area with a small fleet, hoping that the regatta will boost local Snipe activity. But this is an high-risk decision, especially if competitors from other regions decide to stay home.

As Commodore and sailor (I sail quite often outside my country), I would like to see the Nationals have a good turnout, which will lead to greater publicity for the class.

Last year our Nationals in Italy had only 20 boats. Why? The location was perfect, it was a nice place for a vacation and for sailing (Isola d'Elba in Tuscany). But it was difficult to reach (you needed to book a ferry ride well in advance), and it was expensive. Also, the timing was not good, and in Elba there isn't a local fleet.

On the other hand, this year SCIRA Italy organized a Master's Nationals in early July in Lake Molveno (in the Alps, gorgeous venue). Two days of sailing, no measurement, and they had more than 40 boats. A great event!

Now I am here in Talamone for the Open (Senior) Nationals. Talamone is a fantastic place for sailing, but it is late September, with 1 day of measurement and 4 days of sailing). We have fewer boats (33) than the Master's Nationals.



Participation at Snipe Nationals

In my opinion, these are the points to consider for having a successful event and a decent turnout:

1. Local fleets. It is better to hold a big regatta in a place where there is already a strong fleet. It is easier to attract competitors to a regatta in a "traditional" Snipe location.
2. Venue. Some venues attracts sailors for their fame. Avoid expensive places that are difficult to reach. Too windy or (too light) air is not good for the "average sailor". Also it is very important to make after-sailing gatherings easy. If you are in a nice place, you can tour, shop, drink, and eat. Snipe sailors love these things.
3. Period of time. We should avoid organizing Nationals outside the traditional summer holiday period for families. September is too late; people start again to go to the office, business activities are at high level after the August pause, schools are open, etc.
4. Make things easy, no complications. These days people don't have much time for sailing. We need to reduce the days for measurement. I will discuss with Antonio Bari regarding "in house certifications" for sails. Also we should only check lead is in the boats according to the MDS, check the safety equipment, and stamp sails. Measurement complications repel sailors from regattas.
5. Days of racing. I like a 4 day championship. But in many countries now, the Nationals are 3 day and in some cases 2 day regattas. People don't have so many days of holidays to use on sailing.
6. Reduced entry fees, more social activities. How? Sponsors? Maybe the hosting fleet (not the club) can organize an informal BBQ with music by friends, which would be less expensive and more fun than a formal dinner organized by the club. Try to find cheap accommodations (for example, the clubs in Spain always have special prices for the hotels) or adequate alternatives (cruising boats, camping, etc.). Social activities and accommodations have to be communicated to the sailors well in advance, so they are attracted by the program.

Regattas need to be both planned and advertised well in advance, or people will not make plans to travel. It is a lot of work to put on a great event, but it is almost as much work to put on a not so great event for fewer boats.

Do you have other ideas for improving participation at Nationals? Please let me know.

Pietro Fantoni
SCIRA Commodore