

Administration – Race Management / Volunteers

The format for course racing remained the same as previous years. Some small changes were made - Wings started on a new three-minute start sequence and the course area was defined. Numbered race rash vests were introduced for Wings thanks to Surf Doctor & The OTC for their sponsorship with this. The continued support of Ali Masters and James Faley as the main class coaches was great over the 2023 course racing season. We thank them for their continued support of the UKWA and pathway classes, along with other coaches who have attended events.

In 2023 we did have an increase in volunteers coming forward out on the water. With some committing to the whole season, whilst others were volunteering as and when they could. This has meant that we have been able to begin to train up new crew both on the committee boat and on the rescue/mark layer boats. We did still have a number of events that we were looking for volunteers right up until the last minute. This does make the planning of race management before an event difficult.

The National Windsurfing Championships was re-branded to become The National Windsports Championships as we introduced Wing Foils for the first time at this event. The event was held at Grafham Water Sailing Club. This event is huge to run, manage and operate both on and off shore and takes months of behind the scenes planning. However, the 9th year was successful, with lots of happy sailors. We saw three courses, over 160 competitors, 53 volunteers, 15 ribs, plus numerous coaches, and coach boats.

Slalom events saw the regular crew continue to support these; however, no additional crew could be sourced when somebody was unable to attend. This meant that Bob had to give up his own racing to crew so that events could still go ahead. Whilst we thank Bob for this, it is not a long-term solution. There were some changes made to the format of slalom racing following consultation with sailors. The pro fleet became the international fleet, and the amateur fleet became the National fleet. Wing and master blaster fleets remained unchanged. The international fleet became a fin OR foil fleet with a cross over wind strength on 11+knots introduced. We saw some fantastic fin racing at a number of events. Some changes to the race management at slalom events were introduced mid-season. This was to define the racecourse area and a no jumping rule was also introduced to ensure the safety of the crew and other competitors. We predominantly ran straight finals at events due to low numbers.

The UKWA supported the initial application of Zed Spencer-Milnes to become a National Race Officer and Tessa Ingram's application to renew her National Race Officer qualification. Both qualifications were approved by the RYA.

At the end of 2023 Rob Strange decided to step back from volunteering although we may still see him at a couple of events in 2024. We thank Rob for the many years of outstanding service he has given to both the course racing and slalom racing tours.

We are of course always looking for new volunteers both on and off the water including behind the scenes e.g to run our social media.

Thank you to all those who have volunteered / supported the UKWA in any way during the 2023 season.

Tessa Ingram
Director of Administration, Race Management / Volunteering