

ORC Handicapping at MHYC

MHYC introduced ORC as an additional handicapping system for Saturday divisional racing from Season 2021-2022, supplementing the PHS (Performance Handicapping System) that has served the club well for many years.

ORC International (ORCi) and ORC Club (ORCc) use the Velocity Prediction Program (VPP) to rate boats of different characteristics. ORC relies on the measurement of a boat and its sails, affecting their theoretical speed. Unlike PHS, ORC Club does not use the prior performance of the boat and its crew to determine the handicap. With ORC, a boat's handicap remains constant from week to week. Identical boats (with the same size sails etc.) will have identical ORC handicaps.

What club races does it apply to?

Over the past couple of years, ORC has only applied to the MHYC Saturday divisional racing (Inshore Pointscore Series & Ocean Series) and did not apply to any other racing fleet at MHYC. In 2025, the club is introducing an ORC pointscore to be run alongside the PHS scoring of the Pacific Rigging Wednesday Non-Spinnaker Pursuit Series. As this is a pursuit series, ORC results will be based upon elapsed times.

Why ORC Club?

There are several handicap rating systems available including IRC, ORCi, ORCc, PHRF and AMS. While a number of boats already have IRC Certificates, the MHYC Sailing Committee has decided that ORC Club was the best option to encourage more boats to obtain a Measurement Rating as it provides the right balance of science and simplicity to generate a handicap at a relatively low cost to boat owners.

ORC Club works with all monohull boats ranging in size from sportsboats through to superyachts and everything in between. ORC Club has several key benefits over other measured handicap systems:

- Simplicity of measurement - ORC Club requires a small number of measurement points and the ORC database already holds these measurements for over 128,000 boats.
- ORC Club is not type forming - ORC Club does not compare the characteristics of one boat against another. ORC Club measures each boat's theoretical performance potential.
- It is relatively inexpensive to generate an ORC Club certificate (currently a new application for ORCc is \$115 whereas ORCi is \$650)
- ORC Club is an open rule - anyone can look at any other boat's certificate and measurements that have been used. ORC Club enables skippers to do a test to see what impact any changes to their boat or sails has on their handicap
- ORC Club is widely used internationally and has recently seen rapid growth in Australia

Whilst ORC can be applied at a club in several ways, for simplicity MHYC has decided to use the following elements of ORC Club:

- single number handicapping (irrespective of wind conditions or course location) - time on time handicapping (all purpose or windward-leeward)
- not activating the two-handed handicap option

Why change?

MHYC has implemented ORC Club in response to members seeking a measurement-based approach to handicapping in addition to the existing PHS. ORC Club provides an alternate to PHS on a boat's performance in a race. Unlike PHS handicapping, ORC Club handicap remains the same from week to week, regardless of how well a boat was sailed in previous weeks. "Sandbagging" is impossible with ORC Club.

Am I required to race under ORC Club?

No - divisional racing on Saturdays in the current Season will have the following options:

- PHS only
- PHS and ORC

Racing under ORC Club is entirely optional. All boats in the Saturday divisional racing will automatically be entered under PHS handicapping. Skippers will need to 'opt in' to also race under ORC Club. Skippers will NOT be able to enter ORC Club only. The entry fee for Saturday divisional racing is the same, irrespective of the handicap options selected.

ORC (including ORCi and ORCc) is now the primary scoring method for Saturday Pointscore racing and this is reflected in the Saturday prizegiving policy – Prizes are awarded for 1st, 2nd & 3rd on ORC, 1st only on IRC and 1st only on PHS in each division.

What are the benefits?

The key benefits of ORC Club are:

- ORC Club handicapping provides an absolute measure of a boat's performance
- ORC Club provides a fixed handicap for all boats enabling skippers to have a constant reference point of their performance from week to week
- ORC Club allows identical boats to compete on the same handicap
- ORC Club certification provides a skipper with a chart of 'Boat Polars' where the ORC Club Velocity Prediction Programme (VPP) calculates target boat speeds of a boat across a variety of wind strengths and wind directions

What does an ORC Club certificate cost?

An ORC Club certificate is currently \$115 for the first application and for annual revalidation (spinnaker or non-spinnaker).

If a boat racing under ORC Club makes any changes to measurement on their boat (e.g. changing the size of their mainsail) they will be required to apply for an ORC Club certificate amendment before using the new mainsail. A certificate amendment, a change of ownership or an additional certificate (two-handed, non-spinnaker) is currently \$50. All certificates expire on 30 June each year, irrespective of when issued.

How do I participate?

To race under ORC Club at MHYC, you need to complete the following simple steps:

1. Download and complete the New Application excel spreadsheet for Australian Sailing's ORC page - <https://www.sailingresources.org.au/ratings-hub/orc/>
2. Contact Australian Sailing's Ratings Manager Chris Zonca at ratings@sailing.org.au and provide as much measurement detail you have on your boat
3. Australian Sailing will work with the measurements provided to generate a certificate
4. Once you have made payment, Australian Sailing will issue you with an ORC Club certificate
5. Send a copy of your current ORC certificate to the MHYC Sailing Office

Note: If you have a valid ORCi certificate you DO NOT need to obtain a separate ORC Club certificate.

How do I get my boat measured?

In the first instance, contact Australian Sailing and check what measurements they may already have on your boat. As the Offshore Racing Congress (ORC) has an extensive boat database, it's unlikely that you will need to get your boat completely measured. Your sail maker should be able to provide you with the measurement of your sails. ORC Club certificate uses self-declared measurements. You do not need to have an official measurer complete any measurement of your boat.

Who administers the ORC Club rule?

The ORC Club Rule was created and is administered by the Offshore Racing Congress. The Offshore Racing Congress was established in 1969 and is based in London. The Offshore Racing Congress is responsible for managing the ORC Club rule, annually reviewing the ORC rule, and running ORC World Championships annually.

In Australia, the ORC Club rule is administered by Australian Sailing. All applications for an ORC Club certificate in Australia are made by an owner directly to Australian Sailing.

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How many boats are in ORC Club?

There are over 125,000 boat certificates on the ORC database. It is expected that over 90% of boats racing at MHYC in current season have a boat file in the ORC database. Anyone can search the ORC database from the ORC website for a same or similar boat and its certificate.

How will divisional splits be managed?

Divisional splits will apply to both PHS and ORC handicapping and are based on the range of entries received. A boat that has elected to race in both PHS and ORC will be on the same start line as another boat in the same division that has elected to race in PHS only.

Where can I find more information on ORC Club?

Further details on ORC Club can be found on the Australian Sailing website

<https://www.sailingresources.org.au/ratings-hub/>

Go to <https://orc.org/sailors/active-certificates-database> to search the ORC database for an ORC International or ORC Club certificate.

For assistance, please contact the MHYC Sailing Office sailing@mhyc.com.au or call 8969 3103.