



## [Advice on choosing which fleet is right for you](#)

This document is for those sailors who are not sure which fleet to enroll into at the British National & Open Championships 2023. It does not form part of the Notice of Race and is just intended to be supplementary advice. Before reading this, you should read the entry conditions set out in the Notice of Race, to see which fleets you are eligible for.

The Regatta Fleets at the British National & Open Championships 2023 provide a programme of activities for the less experienced sailors who do not wish to compete in the Main Fleet. The objective is to provide 5 full days of Optimist based activities, both on and off the water, including training and racing specially adapted to the age and abilities of the participants. There will normally be one lay day (planned for Wed) during the event which allows sailors (and parents) a day to relax. Participants and parents should note that the aim is for a balance between these activities (and for the sailors to have a fun time), and completion of a full racing series is not a primary objective. Sailors whose primary focus is on racing are therefore encouraged to join the Main Fleets (Junior or Senior).

The Regatta fleet is split into two separate fleets:

- > [Regatta Fleet](#) - a stepping stone to the Main Fleet next year
- > [Regatta Coaching](#) - a balance of coaching, fun and racing

Please note that all sailors should be capable of completing a triangular course in a moderate breeze and of capsizing recovery without assistance.

### [Regatta Fleet](#)

This fleet is for sailors with experience of regatta racing who want to race all day but who are not yet confident to join the Main Fleet. This fleet seeks to bridge the gap between Coaching and Main Fleet. The general idea is that (subject to weather conditions) in the early part of the week, sailors come in for lunch, but by the end of the week they do a full day on the water, so that they get the experience of what a full day's racing in Main Fleet will be like.

The majority of races will count towards the racing series. However, the Race Management Team may include some training races depending on the weather conditions, or if they consider it appropriate and useful for the sailors.

Race support is provided throughout the week by qualified coaches with shorebased briefings before sailing to cover key points in the racing and local sailing conditions (e.g. weather). Sailors will be allocated to a support boat for the week who will provide on water support (e.g. rules, gear failure, holding lunches and other on water support). It is not intended that the sailors will be "coached" on the water but they can provide feedback to the sailors who will be able to go alongside to ask questions between races (similar to the main fleet environment). After the racing there will be a daily debrief in the groups reflecting on the days racing.

The fleet is intended for sailors who are ready to develop more independent skills in a supported environment in preparation for Main Fleet at subsequent events.



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To get the most out of Regatta Fleet, you will need to already have mastered all the standard techniques of boat control, even in quite windy conditions, and be keen to learn more about race tactics. Sailors should have already raced both at club and open meetings. Sailors will normally have completed their RYA Level 4 as a minimum.

## Regatta Coaching

This fleet is coached in groups in the morning and race in the afternoon. Regatta Coaching is intended for sailors who have competed in some regional regatta fleet events and have begun to race in their clubs. Sailors come in for lunch each day.

In Regatta Coaching, you will get plenty of help with improving your boat handling techniques, as well as building on your racing skills. For those who have just started racing, there will be plenty of support for the latter part of the fleet during races, and the goal is to make it a fun and positive experience for younger or less confident sailors.

For sailors who are Oppy 7 or under, please see the separate document for younger sailors. At a minimum, sailors should have completed their RYA Level 3 or equivalent level to enter this fleet (see below).

## Thinking about making the jump to Main Fleet

The Nationals can be a good event to have your first go at Main Fleet because it is divided into Junior and Senior fleets. So if you are Oppy age 12 or under, this is the one national event of the year where you won't be up against the entire 14 and 15 year old contingent. However, be prepared for long days out on the water (can be up to 6 or 7 hours) and big start lines.

Moving from the Regatta fleet to Main fleet is in some ways a bit like moving up to secondary school. Be prepared to find yourself at the back of the fleet instead of the front. Even though it might seem quite overwhelming at first, it won't be long before you look back at Regatta Fleet as a long distant memory.

If you just want to race, and are less interested in having coaching, then you may be better off in Main Fleet. If you are keen to improve your racing techniques and skills, and have the opportunity to try out new techniques in a racing environment, then Regatta Fleet may be the place for you.

Don't forget your friends! Sailing can be fiercely competitive, but it's lots of fun too, and most of that fun comes from being with your friends. If you move up fleets at the same time as a few of your friends, or you know a few people already, you will enjoy it a lot more and it won't feel like such a big deal.

Still not sure? Feel free to get in touch and have a chat about your circumstances/options.

## Requesting to be in a fleet where you don't comply with the entry criteria

The entry conditions are set out in the Notice of Race. In exceptional circumstances, the organisers may use their discretion to allow sailors who do not comply with those conditions to enroll in a Regatta Fleet. This applies to sailors who are too old, too young, too experienced or not experienced enough. However the circumstances must be exceptional and you are likely to be asked:



# International Optimist Class Association (UK)



- to explain why the sailor should be allowed to enroll; and
- to support this with evidence (e.g. race results from other events, recommendation from local coach), to demonstrate why the sailor should be in that fleet.

Requests must be made no later than 1st June, to give the organisers time to consider the request. Any decision by the organisers is in their absolute discretion and they are under no obligation to provide reasons for the decision.

For sailors who are Oppy 7 or younger, there is a separate document with information on what is required and how to apply, which you can download from the website.

## Note for Regional Training Group/ex Zone Squad sailors

As a general rule, we would expect sailors who have participated in an RYA Zone Squad/ Regional Training Group, or been a member of an IOCA (UK) international event team, to sail in Main Fleet. However, sailors may apply to the organisers for discretion to be allowed to compete in Regatta Fleet. Please read section 4 of the Notice of Race for details.

## Changing your mind

Entry to the Nationals opens a long time before the event, which can make it difficult to judge which fleet is going to be the right one. If you enroll in a fleet and later want to switch to another fleet, please let us know by 26th June 2023 and we will try to find places if available. The earlier you let us know, the more likely it will be that we can accommodate your request.

Switching from Regatta Fleet to Main Fleet is more straightforward as it is not coached, but you need to request the move by 26th June 2023 to get a refund. After that, it is at the discretion of the organisers. Don't forget this is subject to there being places available in Main Fleet, so don't leave it too late.

## What's my Oppy age?

Your Oppy age is the age you will be on 31st December 2023.

## Still not sure

We hope that you have found this document useful. However if you are still not sure and would like further help or advice, please do get in touch.

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