

# Past events and results in the US and considerations if you're considering hosting an Offshore mixed gender double handed regatta.

**The first, very successful event here in the US was hosted by Oakcliff Sailing** (<https://www.oakcliffsailing.org/regattas/>) in Oyster Bay, NY, May 14-15 2019. Dawn Riley saw the need and opportunity for an introduction to basic offshore short handed sailing and she cleverly converted her fleet of 6 Melges 24's to double handed training platforms for the 2024 newest discipline. Sailing overnight in the waters of Long Island Sound the young graduates of Oakcliff's legendary program got a great taste of what an abbreviated version of the Olympic event might be like. It was successful and there are solid plans to move forward with more in 2020!

Dawn Riley speaks to the event: -----

<https://www.sailingscuttlebutt.com/2019/01/17/testing-keelboat-event-paris-2024/>

<https://www.yachtsandyachting.com/news/213864/Oakcliff-first-to-preview-Olympic-offshore-event>

And the press release on the completed event: <https://myemail.constantcontact.com/FOR-IMMEDIATE-RELEASE.html?soid=1103048756806&aid=LMPwVVbRyrc>



***The US's second event, hosted by Annapolis YC September 28th***, was a regatta specifically focused on doublehanded racing. Raced on the Chesapeake Bay the mixed gender group raced in a fleet of 7 J/105 one design keelboats. Here is the link to the website including the results.



AYC Double  
Handed Distance Ra

<https://www.sailingscuttlebutt.com/2019/08/08/promoting-olympic-shorthanded-sailing/>

Here's some incredibly valuable information and lessons learned about the event, providing one designs boats and the safety standards that ideally need to be considered. Chris Groobey, and enthused supporter of the event and knowledgeable one design and offshore sailor shared his thoughts. I even included Chris's contact info in case you're looking host an event and have questions. Thanks Chris!

1. As double-handed regattas grow in popularity, it's important to differentiate between boats/classes that are designed and routinely set up for offshore racing and those that are raced as one-designs. A J/105 is very different from a 36-foot ORC boat, yet they can both be perfect for DH racing, especially as the discipline grows in popularity and especially in events where organizers utilize borrowed boats from local fleets to encourage participation from both local and traveling racers. But mixing apples and oranges in a regatta is frustrating for competitors and poses special challenges for organizers and race committees. At some point the organizer has to draw the line on what differences will be permitted among boats. Is it ok for some boats to have autopilots and some not? Multiple sizes and shapes of spinnakers and headsails? Keeping things simple and avoiding the perception of an arms race, especially in the smaller one-design classes, seems to be the way to go.
2. It's important to try to strike a balance between safety and accessibility. Or, in other words, to match the safety requirements to the regatta, boats and venue. Meaning no disrespect to the people who wrote them, the US Sailing Safety Equipment Regulations offer a very conservative, blanket approach to issues that are best addressed by local event organizers, including the RC and participants. Most one-design classes and local racing authorities have their own safety regulations and most racing boats do not comply with many of the "coastal" US Sailing SERs that an RC might assume should be the standard for safety equipment in any offshore DH regatta. Demanding that competitors install masthead VHF antennas, purchase the latest in GPS-equipped VHF radios and equip themselves with layers of communications devices, AIS systems, EPIRBs and SOLAS flares is a recipe for driving away potential competitors, but organizing authorities and RCs may feel constrained from deviating from the US Sailing SERs for liability reasons. In the end, while it is always the competitor's ultimate decision to race, the RC can also make day-of-regatta decisions as to the course to be sailed, and whether to race at all, given local conditions, weather predictions, available safety assets, ease of communication with racers and

first responders, etc. Summer in the Chesapeake is very different from summer in San Francisco, for example, and one size does not fit all on safety requirements.

3. That said, once the minimum safety equipment has been determined, it can be helpful to work with a local or national retailer to come up with a list of recommended products with perhaps a discount for participants in the regatta. Similarly, the word can be put out to other local sailors that items like EPIRBs, MOM buoys and even flares would be appreciated on a loaner basis -- although attention then needs to be paid to MMSI and EPIRB registrations and limitations on changing MMSIs in electronic equipment.

4. Clarity in and consolidation of safety requirements is important. The truth is, it is very hard to normalize USCG, state, local, class and US Sailing safety requirements. Everyone uses different terms, requires different locations and levels of equipment and leaves certain requirements open to interpretation. Especially for regattas where competitors and boats travel to the racing location and there is a day-of-racing safety inspection (especially when there are multiple inspectors), it's helpful for the organizing authority to put together a cheat sheet of what is actually required so that there are no surprises at inspection.

5. Most importantly, it's very helpful to keep an open mind and not stand on tradition. In this day and age, especially when competitors will be spread out over distances beyond normal VHF range, it's silly not to make full use of cell phones, group messaging apps, tracking devices, emergency hotlines that are relayed to multiple watchstanders affiliated with the organizing authority, etc. The RC volunteer who maintains that the only proper communications methods are signal flags on the yardarm and a black powder cannon should be left ashore for regattas like these.

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