

ECC 2019 Survey – Summary with Recommendation to future events

Draft 3 – 4th June 2019

This is Martin Fordham - Commodore 2019. I would like to start by saying what a pleasure it was to meet so many of you this year in Athens.

During the year and in preparation for ECC 2019, we conducted a survey of specific issues with the Commodores to get a consensus of the main principals for the ECC.

We had decided early on to conduct a survey of the ECC fleet at the end of the 2019 event - to add to the Commodores' views and help future ECC organisers understand the preferences of the fleet. To date we have received 21 survey responses and we thank you for your contributions.

This document is an analysis of these responses and we have created a set of Recommendations from them. The Recommendations are influenced both by the 2019 ECC event and the history and traditions of the ECC over its 26 years of competition.

Background

The following may come across as an excuse, but it isn't, as I take full responsibility for any of the organisational issues good or bad, and there is no attempt to apportion any blame. I suspect that any ECC event is affected by similar issues, and that previous Commodores will recognise them (or issues like them) from the year of their Commodore-ship.

The point is that each ECC year is different. We have different locations, different Support Teams, different charter companies, different local race officer, different levels of sponsorship, different crews, etc. Above all, we have a different Commodore and a different Commodore's team.

With events that repeat year after year, issues can be ironed-out and not repeated. With the ECC, and our tradition of visiting different locations each year, this sort of continuous improvement is much harder. We can try to learn from previous years and previous experiences but because each event is unique, we have to be ready to face events as we find them - and adjust accordingly to try to provide as good an event as we can - that is safe and fun for all.

Clearly a single venue would have some advantages, but I think we would lose a lot of the ECC's charm by doing this.

Here are a few of the "bumps" that hit the 2019 Organizing Team within the 48 hours running-up to the ECC. I mention them partly for context - of what it's like running an ECC event - and partly because they influence some of the survey comments.

Event	David Donnelly advised he would not be participating in the ECC Support Team as he had another position. David is a highly experienced sailor and racer. He travelled with the Commodore's team on the Recce trip and advised on the choice of harbours we visited. He was scheduled to the support the Race Officer during ECC 2019 and work with the Support Team.
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	He has extensive local knowledge, and we had intended that he would guide the Support Team at each port
Commodore 2019 Comment	<i>There was not much we could do about his decision at that late stage!</i>
Recommendation	<p>If the ECC plans to visit small harbours again in future, draw up mooring schemes in advance - that can be shared with the Fleet and the Support Team boats</p> <p>This would have reduced the time taken to moor in Hydra and Perdika - as fewer boats would have needed to anchor, and the fleet could have been fitted into a smaller area.</p>

Event	The day before the event, two of the new boats in the fleet (with charter contracts signed etc) were withdrawn as they did not have the government paperwork approved
Commodore 2019 Comment	<p><i>The other 2 boats in a similar situation were OK and the docs were apparently submitted at the same time.</i></p> <p><i>Even a local contact in the government office couldn't help.</i></p>
Recommendation	<p>None.</p> <p>Thank goodness our Organizing team and Support coordinators were on the ball and managed to get two alternative yachts!</p>

Event	On the day of the event one of the yachts was sold and we were told we could not have it. (Again, the charter contracts had already been signed.)
Commodore 2019 Comment	<i>Unrepeatable.... (removed for the sake of politeness!)</i>
Recommendation	<p>None.</p> <p>Thank goodness our Organizing team and Support coordinators were on the ball and managed to get an alternative yacht!</p>

Event	The Committee Boat was not able to anchor in more than 20 meters of water.
Commodore 2019 Comment	<p><i>On the first day of racing we discovered that we were not able to anchor in more than 20 meters of water as the capstan was not powerful enough to raise longer scopes and could not run rope over it.</i></p> <p><i>We had planned to anchor in 40 metres which would have given us many more areas to be able to start and wind direction options for the racing</i></p> <p><i>During the week this had various impacts.</i> <i>Sometimes we had to use rope extensions using the mainsail electric winch to help, sometimes we had to use two marker</i></p>

	<i>buoys as the start line - with a "hovering" Committee Boat. Not ideal!</i>
Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the anchoring capabilities of the Committee Boat are consistent with the requirements for racing in the area selected • Where unusual finishing is necessary, such as the long finish line North of Methana on Tuesday, ensure the Race Officer clearly defines the finish line - maybe between an existing landmark (with coordinate) and the committee boat.

Summary and recommendations of some of the key areas raised:

Event and Survey Observation	Mooring in Hydra etc.
Commodore 2019 Comment	<p><i>See above re drawing-up plans of mooring in small areas beforehand that can be shared with the Fleet and the Support Team boats.</i></p> <p><i>Clearly the mooring in Hydra did not go as planned, and the Commodore's team would like to apologise for that.</i></p> <p><i>However, the ECC Fleet needs to take some responsibility for the efficiency of mooring - by cooperating with other crews in their approach to harbours, and following the instructions from the Support Team.</i></p> <p><i>We cannot have a daily race from the finish line to the entrance of the next harbour.</i></p> <p><i>On most days, crews know who finished in front and behind them in the race (as recorded on their race declaration forms!). They should enter port in that order and keep well clear of the entrance until it is their turn to moor.</i></p> <p><i>Of course, the race had been cancelled before our arrival in Hydra, so we didn't have a finishing order to use for mooring.</i></p> <p><i>The harbour police in Hydra were certainly not amused by the un-seamanlike behaviour in blocking a working harbour entrance with the attempts of some yachts to jump the queue. This made it a little harder and longer to get in.</i></p>
Recommendation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If the ECC plans to visit small harbours again in future, draw up mooring schemes in advance - that can be shared with the Fleet and the Support Team boats 2. Commodore 2019 to discuss with the Commodores whether penalties should be applied for un-seamanlike ECC mooring behaviour in the future. <p><i>Example - for consideration: For every position gained by a Crew entering the harbour ahead of their race finishing position (or Mooring Order position), twice as many positions are added to the Crew's final position in that days' race - or the next day's race if there wasn't a race that day!</i></p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. To have an alternative "Mooring Order" prepared - perhaps by lottery - in the event that a race is cancelled again. If two races are cancelled, the Mooring Order could be used in reverse on the second occasion, etc. 4. Commodore to emphasise above at Skippers Briefing 5. Where possible the skipper of the Support Boat could moor or position himself in a suitable position to call the boats in to the harbour in order. This would give freedom for others in the fleet to go for a swim etc. elsewhere.
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Survey Observation	Crews working outside the rules and endangering other crews
Commodore 2019 Comment	<p><i>This is unacceptable. No-one wants to sail with or against an unseamanlike crew. The ethos of the ECC is to promote safety.</i></p> <p><i>A race protest committee had been selected and was available in 2019 but was not called upon.</i></p>
Recommendation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The fleet should identify anyone deliberately stepping over the line of safety & outside the rules 2. The Commodores should review the sanctions to be taken in future against unsafe / unsportsmanlike crews 3. Where possible, support Ribs should monitor the windward mark where these incidents often occur

Survey Observation	Party close to boats
Commodore 2019 Comment	<p><i>We did try to achieve this:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We advised the arrangements in the last Bulletin - to enable everyone to plan for it.</i> • <i>Self-funded Restaurant reservations or fixed-price meals were offered at the Skippers Registration in 3 villages.</i> <p><i>Approximately 50% of the fleet took advantage of this at each of the venues</i></p>
Recommendation	Continue this approach but make it clearer that these are Party opportunities - not just meals ashore.

Survey Observation	Organise social events during the week to encourage all participants to join in								
Commodore 2019 Comment	<p><i>I am not sure how to respond to this as we had the following events during the week in Greece:</i></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Day</th> <th>Activity</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><i>Saturday</i></td> <td><i>Welcome Party</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Sunday</i></td> <td> <i>Free evening in Hydra after long day</i> <i>Of course, I understand that several crews were not able to take advantage of this because of the late mooring</i> </td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Monday</i></td> <td><i>Meal option in Ermioni (50% + supported)</i></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Day	Activity	<i>Saturday</i>	<i>Welcome Party</i>	<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Free evening in Hydra after long day</i> <i>Of course, I understand that several crews were not able to take advantage of this because of the late mooring</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Meal option in Ermioni (50% + supported)</i>
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		<i>Again, I understand for some crews it may have been difficult due to bad weather and anchoring in the bay in Ermioni.</i>
	<i>Tuesday</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Silver Foil Hat competition in Poros with over 60 entries</i> • <i>Greek night by quay (50% + supported)</i>
	<i>Wednesday</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dinghy race in Epidavros</i> • <i>free evening to look at local sites</i>
	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Meal option in Perdika (50% + supported)</i>
	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Prize Giving</i>
	<p><i>These offered opportunities to socialize during the week.</i></p> <p><i>Without additional sponsorship we were unable to arrange any other events where the entire Fleet could come together.</i></p>	
Recommendation	<p>If individuals or crews have other suggestions on how to achieve this, please contact the Commodore directly.</p> <p>Contact should be established early including offers of assistance to execute the idea for the evening</p>	

Survey Observation	Motivate young crew and skippers
Commodore 2019 Comment	<p><i>Great idea and something that has apparently been discussed previously by the Commodores.</i></p> <p><i>Encourage and/or sponsor in some way an experienced younger sailor as a co-skipper (say under 30). After a few years' competing would be able to be elected as a skipper in his/her own right or take over from the existing skipper.</i></p> <p><i>This could be seen an extension of the Skipper's Leadership role - as described by Francois Abiven at the last Skippers' Briefing</i></p>
Recommendation	That the Commodores take ownership of this action for further development.

Survey Observation	Run the event at the end of May
Commodore 2019 Comment	<p><i>Unfortunately, that could make the boats less available/more expensive, clashes with other regattas as the business picks up towards High Season.</i></p> <p><i>The smaller ports would also be busier.</i></p>
Recommendation	No action proposed

Survey Observation	Provide more information over VHF radio re: postponements, proposed revised start time and line position.
Commodore 2019 Comment	<i>Agreed</i>
Recommendation	Pass-on to new Commodore

Survey Observation	Racing – more racing
Commodore 2019 Comment	<i>Agree - the recommendation was our plan!</i>
Recommendation	Ensure Race Committee boat / catamaran and Commodore's boat are moored such that they can get out straight after the daily Skippers Briefing so they can to set up daily race promptly.

Survey Observation	Lack of sponsorship, to fund low key parties for beer on quayside
Commodore 2019 Comment	<i>Agreed. The business climate was challenging in 2019.</i>
Recommendation	<p>Probably need to assume that the climate will be similar in 2020.</p> <p>Historically, there have been close ties between the major ECC sponsors and the event itself, with many of the sponsors taking part in the ECC.</p> <p>It's reasonable to expect that this will continue, but that means that each crew has a role to play in sustaining existing sponsorship and developing new sponsors.</p> <p>Please could each crew think about how they can help the new Commodore with this? We can't just leave it to Commodore!</p> <p>If you have ideas about how to generate sponsorship, please bring them forward (via ecc.commodore@gmail.com) as soon as possible - so that relationships can be established.</p>

Survey Observation	Better infrastructure at harbours
Commodore 2019 Comment	<p><i>The ECC has visited many locations over the years. I like this approach because of the variety that it offers. However, the consequence is often varying levels of facilities.</i></p> <p><i>We did advise skippers via the Bulletins of what was going to be available. We are sorry if this was not as expected.</i></p>
Recommendation	None

Survey Observation	Race Organisation
Commodore 2019 Comment	<p><i>A lot of effort went into this year's organisation with respect to the Rules, Sailing Instructions and getting Greek National Sailing Federation approval (which validates insurance). handicapping etc.</i></p> <p><i>There was little discussion of these matters at the daily Skippers Briefings, so we presumed that these were understood.</i></p>
Recommendation	None

Survey Observation	Availability of Results
Commodore 2019 Comment	<p><i>Traditionally the ECC Results are announced at the Skippers Briefing at 0900 the next day - and medals awarded.</i></p> <p><i>This provides time for the Race Officer and Commodore's team to collect Declaration Forms and to review any uncertainties before publishing the Results.</i></p> <p><i>This year the Results were also posted on the ECC website minutes afterwards the Skippers Briefing.</i></p>
Recommendation	Continue to monitor the Fleet's preferences

Survey Observation	Use of Regatta Management software
Commodore 2019 Comment	<i>This is an interesting proposal and one that requires further evaluation.</i>
Recommendation	Recommend forming ECC "Technology Team" to evaluate options available.

Survey Observation	Provide GPS trackers on all the boats to help Race Committee, and interesting for participants, sponsors and public.
Commodore 2019 Comment	<p><i>There was a GPS tracker on the Commodore's boat this year - and the details were available during the ECC - via the ECC website.</i></p> <p><i>However, this is a great idea and we did think about it but it was costly and could only have been arranged if we had had more sponsorship or if the entry fees were raised.</i></p> <p><i>Keeping the Entry Fees low is a key objective of the Commodores.</i></p>
Recommendation	Include in ECC "Technology Team" remit to evaluate options.

General items of interest.

Survey Observation	Digitize! / ECC Website
Commodore 2019 Comment	<p>The ECC website has been going through a year of evolution.</p> <p>We are evaluating a new website, and when it is launched shortly there will more opportunities to do other things such as posting your own crew photos for the logbook, declarations, crew lists – wait and see!</p>
Recommendation	

Survey Observation	Site-seeing
Commodore 2019 Comment	<i>It is lovely to go to another country and see some of its history etc. That is part of the charm of the ECC.</i>

	<p><i>However, the ECC is a sailing regatta first - as was confirmed this year in our consultation with the Commodores.</i></p> <p><i>We did not have enough sponsorship money to organise anything formally, but we did point out - for example - the Epidavros Theatre in the Logbook and provide the contact details of a land transfers company - for any crews who wanted to arrange this. I know a few of you did so.</i></p> <p><i>Our crew all stayed another two days in Athens sightseeing and it was lovely to bump into a few of you who were doing the same.</i></p>
Recommendation	Continue to organise the ECC race venues in interesting locations