



Top Tips from Topper Parents for National Events.

There are typically over 150 sailors involved in national events, which can be great fun for the sailors and also for the parents. We have compiled a list of tips for parents who are supporting their sailors at these events. The objective of these tips is to provide some insight into why certain things happen on the beach (the place where the boats launch from).

As always, sailing is a participatory sport. The majority of the people supporting the ITCA events are volunteers. Please get involved!

Membership

Every competitor must be a current member of a National Topper Class Association. Competitors that are not already a member of a National Topper Class Association may join ITCA (GBR) at registration, or pay to become a temporary member of ITCA (GBR) for the duration of the event.

Numbers, numbers, too many numbers ...!

Sail Numbers - Mainly important for regional or local racing. Sail numbers must be positioned and displayed correctly on your racing sail. Sail numbers stay with a boat and do not move with the sailor. See the link below for the specific type and location of the sail numbers.

Championship numbers – these allocated by ITCA (GBR) once you become a member. This number stays with a sailor throughout their time in the Topper, regardless of changes in sail numbers. If you are entering an ITCA (GBR) event as a temporary member, a temporary championship number will be allocated to the sailor for the event.

Where must championship numbers be displayed:

Where	Notes
Starboard side of the cockpit rear face.	If a boat is returned to shore with the sail furled, these numbers make the boat easily identifiable and it can be matched back to the correct launching trolley
The sail (both sides)	There are specific locations for the championship numbers on the sail; details can be found in the class rules https://www.sailing.org/classes/topper#Documents
On the trolley	Matching the correct boat to the correct trolley is really important – so clearly marking it can speed identification.

At National Events, the Sailing Instructions state that the launching trolley of each boat shall have a tag attached to the handle clearly identifying the championship number of the boat. Tags may be purchased from the race office. Feel free to also write your champ number clearly on your trolley ... the easier it is to find the better.

Tally numbers

Tally numbers are an important part of the safety system that the class operates. It allows the safety team to know how many sailors have gone on the water and, more importantly, that all sailors are back on shore. *The safety team cannot stand down until all tallies are accounted for at the end of the day.*

Tally numbers are allocated to sailors at all National events. Every sailor is given a tally band with his or her specific tally number on. It must be worn clearly and visible on their wrist.

Red tally bands mean the sailor has a medical condition of some description. First aiders onshore and on the water, as well as the race office, have details of what medical condition has been stated.

Sailors must tally out (collect their band) BEFORE they launch and tally in (return their band) within a set time period after they return to the shore - the time allowed is listed in the Sailing Instructions and the exact time deadline will be announced each day! If a sailor does not tally out before launch, or fails to return their tally once ashore, penalties will be given!!!

What happens on the beach, how can you help?

It can be very confusing for new Topper parents to work out what happens on the beach and how things are organised.

The volunteer beach master is mainly responsible for organising the helpers on the beach. To be clear, the helpers are the parents!

The beach master is also responsible for giving the signal to launch, once granted by the safety crew. During the racing, the beach master will also help sailors back in to shore, should they have to abandon racing.

Beach Masters are in contact with the race office and safety crews, and will be informed if a sailor is coming ashore due to technical or medical problems, or if the whole fleet is coming in.

The beach master is not responsible for your child, but they will offer help. If your sailor comes back into shore during racing for whatever the reason, it is the parent's/shore contact's responsibility to come to the shore to meet the sailor.

It is important to bear in mind that not all sailors have a parent on the shore to catch them, fetch their trolley or help them drag the boat up a steep shore. A large team of parent volunteers (typically around 50!) are out on the water in safety boats, on the committee boat, mark laying, in the race office, being a first aider etc. and are hence unable to help their own children.

Launch and Recovery

At national events some people officially volunteer to help with launch and recovery, organise the trolleys (more on that later) and help retrieve the sailors when racing is finished.

When it is nice and sunny, with moderate winds, beach organisation is usually very manageable. In strong winds, things will quickly get more difficult: boats come in faster, more capsizes on the way in, tired sailors, sometimes cold sailors, sails flapping loudly making things a bit hectic and difficult to shout instructions, organise the volunteers, hear the radio etc.

All parents can make a huge difference to ensure the beach runs smoothly:

1. **Sorting Trolleys:**
Offer your help to the beach master to sort the trolleys by number. Once sailors have launched, trolleys are sorted by championship number into rows i.e. 0-99, 100-199, 200-299 etc. This makes retrieving the right trolley easier after racing and also means that any parent on the shore will know where to find the correct trolley.
2. **Recovery:**
When the sailors come ashore, the beach master or one of the beach team will shout championship numbers to parent helpers – you may have found your own child's trolley, but if they are not yet in sight please go and retrieve a trolley of a boat that is actually approaching the beach, take it to one of the recovery team then help pull that sailor's boat up the beach. We often see sailors in the water, cold and tired after a hard day's racing waiting for a long time until someone gets their trolley. It's quite a challenge to retrieve 125+ sailors all at the same time, especially on windy and wavy days - the more helpers we have the quicker and smoother it will run.
3. **Get your waders out and join us!**
You may notice some parents who have put on dry suits or waders. They help launch boats in the water for less experienced sailors or help in the water when things get extremely busy on windy days. If you have a dry suit or waders, and it looks to be a windy day, feel free to join in with the team in the water. These guys should be handed the next upcoming trolley so they can get it to the right sailor, no point in wasting a good pair of waders fetching trolleys on dry land!

Other useful tips and hints...

- It's a good idea to label all your sailors clothes, kit and bags with name, championship number and even better a mobile number. If someone has found your item or if it is handed into the race office they can just call you as the sailor is easily identified by championship number.
- We recommend parents attend the sailors briefings – it's good to have an idea of what happens on the day, what the plan for racing is etc.
- For all fleets, the sailor should go on the water with some snacks and a drink. The longer they will be sailing, the more snacks and drinks they should take with them.
- A small dry bag works well to take snacks onto the water in. Safety boats will hold food for topper sailors (please make sure it is in something water proof and labelled) – sailors should remember which boat has their food! Water bottles should be labelled also, and preferably attached to the boat / tied on. Even on cold days, hydration is really important!