# HOW HMS WORKS

There have been lots of ways of handling more boats than can be sailed together at one time.
Some have been quite bizarre and best forgotten.
HMS is derived from EORS which was invented by Peter Stollery
In principle the Skippers are ranked from best to worst and then divided into small enough groups to sail at once.
The worst group sail in the first heat and the best 4 or 6 of them are then promoted to the next group and sail with them.
This process is repeated until all have sailed.
The results of those heats, collectively they make a race, then establish a new pecking order.
The worst group again sail and so on.
To make this system work we need to have 4 more boats scheduled for the bottom heat than all the others.
Then when the 4 are promoted we again have the same number of boats sailing.
The numbers don't always allow that to be exactly so but the principle is OK and any extra boats go in the higher heats.

Now we need an order to start with as we don't have a previous race to use.
So we use a somewhat different approach for the first race.
The skippers are split into heats with a mixture of ability in each heat.
The Race Committee use known ability where possible and random selection where not.
Having sailed the heats of Race 1 the top few skippers from each heat go into the top heat for race 2.
The next few into heat B and so on.
That's where it gets tricky as all those who finished say 7th, and thus performed equally, must be in the same heat for Race 2.
Take 37 boats in 3 heats as an example.
Remove the 4 extra needed for promotion leaving 33.
Divided into 3 heat gives 11 in each.
Add back the 4 to get 15 actually sailing at any one time.
So how do you sort out 11 boats for the top heat?

The solution is actually quite simple.
Use the schedules provided!
All the donkey work has been done for you.
You will find that Race 2 is a bit of an oddity if you study it.

So knowing how many boats you have start with Race 2 schedule and see what it tells you to do with them.
Using the same number of heats for Race 1 ensures that things work out

Our example says  12, 12 and 13 for A, B and C in Race 2
So 13 sail in heat C and 16 in B and A.

Race 1 with 3 heats has 12 in two of the heats and 13 in the other.
So the top 4 boats from each heat of Race 1 go into Heat A of Race 2
Those finishing in 5th to 8th places go into heat B
The rest, all 13 of them, go intoHeat C

When race 2 has been sailed we have the boats in a new order and use the Race 3 and following races schedule to sort them into heats.
This time the schedule says 11, 11 and 15.
With the 4 promoted that gives 15 in each heat
So the top 11 boats in Heat A of Race 2 go into Heat A of Race 3
Then the next 5 go into Heat B of Race 2 together with 6 from heat B of Race 1.
The remaining 6 together with the 9 from heat C of Race 1 go into heat C of Race 2.
Much easier to understand when you have a fleet control board to work from.

Now you will often hear HMS described as “4 up and 4 down”
That’s true only for races 3 onwards and only if nobody drops out and comes back after dropping out.
If you ALWAYS consult the schedule when the number of boats change you won’t go wrong.