

21 December 2021

Conclusion of the 2021 Performance Compensation System Trial

In a motion to encourage younger and lighter sailors into the RS700 class, it was proposed at the 2019 UK Annual General Meeting (AGM) to trial a modified performance compensation system during the 2019-20 season. However, due to COVID-19 pandemic, insufficient events were sailed during the 2020 season to be able to judge the potential pros and cons of the system. As a result, the 2021 Performance Compensation System Trial was approved in March 2021 and has been in use throughout the 2021 season at all UK and International Events.¹ With the 2021 season now complete the RS700 Class Association now needs to decide whether it wants to retain these performance compensation settings or revert to the previous ones (that are in temporary abeyance).

A detailed description of the 2021 Performance Compensation System Trial and the arguments behind it can be found here:

<https://www.rs700.org/documents/p1etmk29q815f019um1hco1odq5v83.pdf>

In summary the trial completely removes the requirement to carry lead in the boats and extends the range of the compensation table to bring more sailors onto it.

As the trial sponsor, I have attempted to provide some data to assist sailors understand what impact the trial settings have had across the class in terms of the number of boats affected and any change in their relative performance. A spreadsheet of these findings is here:

<https://www.rs700.org/documents/p1fqgqlt9g76c1u5fd1u1g1h1v8v3.pdf>

which analyses data across the 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 seasons. To protect personal information, sailor's names have not been presented and I've only included UK sailors for whom I have weigh-in data available. There are further sailors included in 'hidden lines', but the data is either incomplete or they are non-UK sailors whose results only relate to the pre-trial period (ie 2018, 2019).

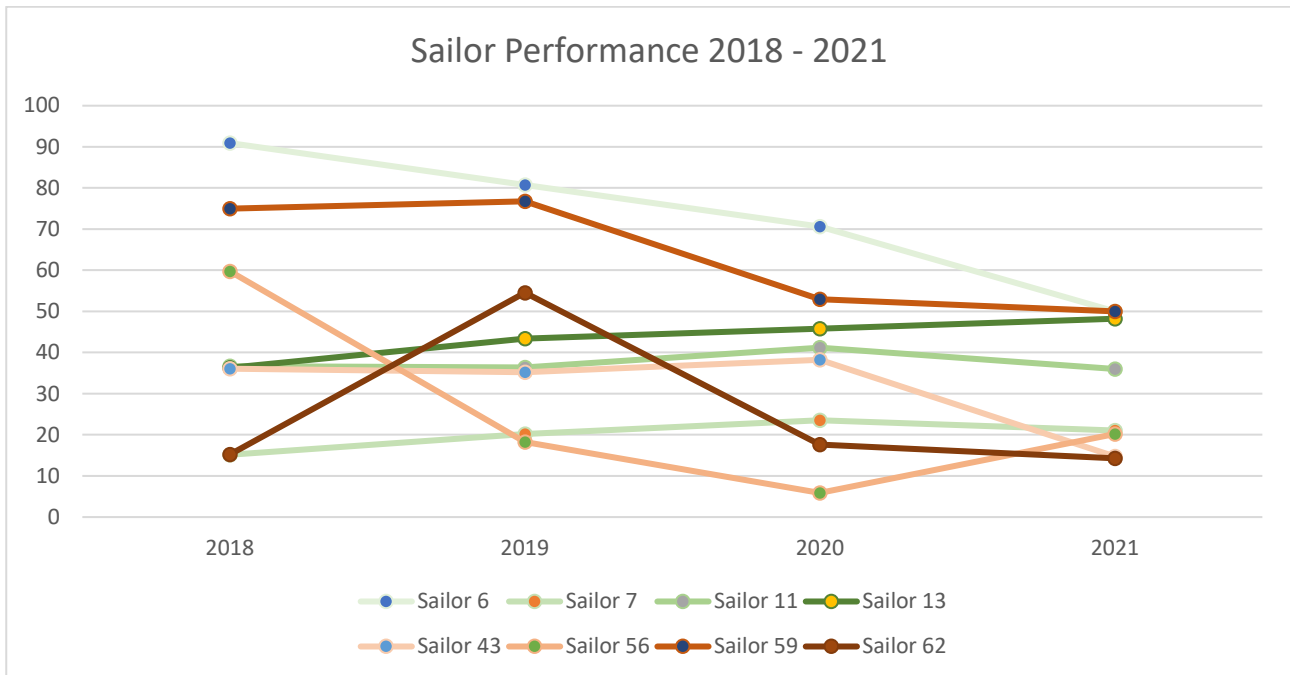
Although the spreadsheet is quite comprehensive, it is relatively difficult to extract any meaningful trends that could indicate if the trial settings have introduced a notable shift in the relative performance of sailors across the weight range. To attempt to do this I have converted sailor's positions at events into a % position; so, a sailor who won an event where 10 sailors attended you would have a 10% score, whereas the sailor in last position would have 100%. I then selected 4 light sailors and 4 heavy sailors that sailed across the 2018-2021 period and calculated their average performance each year. The table below shows the selected sailors, their weight and performance across the four-year period. A graphical representation is on the following page.

% Performance Data for Selected Light and Heavy Sailors (low best)

Sailor	Weight	2018	2019	2020	2021
Sailor 6	76.4	91	81	71	50
Sailor 7	77.7	15	20	24	21
Sailor 11	79.3	37	36	41	36
Sailor 13	80.9	36	43	46	48
Sailor 43	97.5	36	35	38	15
Sailor 56	104.9	60	18	6	20
Sailor 59	106.5	75	77	53	50
Sailor 62	106.9	15	55	18	14

Note: Orange boxes interpolated due to lack data

¹ The 2021 Compensation System table had slight change to the original 2020 trial settings to correct a minor error in the calculations that required some lighter sailors to reduce their rack width.



The above data shows that 3 of the 4 light sailors remained relatively consistent with one showing significant improvement, whilst 3 of the heavy sailors showed improvement and one was (relatively) consistent. As the heavy sailors were all 'hole 1, no lead' across the whole period it demonstrates that they have not been adversely affected by changes to the lighter sailor's boats. Instead, I believe that the dominant factor has been the prevailing wind strength at the events and a sailor's skill development / maintenance throughout the COVID period.

Although it is difficult to establish any firm conclusions from the above trends, the following facts can be extracted from the raw data:

- An additional 9% of UK sailors would be brought into the compensation range.
- 48% of boats could remove the lead ballast.
- 50% of sailors could increase a hole on the rack settings.
- No sailor reduced a rack setting (or added lead).
- At the 2021 Nationals, 60% of the sailors attending were on the compensation range (vs only 24% at the 2019 Nationals).

Anecdotally, the majority of sailors appear to like the impact the trial settings has had on boat performance and event attendance; with no sailors at the 2021 UK AGM indicating that they would vote against keeping the revised settings. Additionally, I'm being approached by numerous lighter sailors who are expressing interest in the boat; with two hole-8 sailors at my sailing club actively trying to buy RS700s as the boat has become a more attractive proposition.

In conclusion, the data shows that the trial settings have brought more sailors onto the compensation range, allowed all light sailors to remove their lead, while 50% of sailors have been able to increase their rack settings. Although there was some concern that the trial settings would (relatively) disadvantage heavy sailors, there doesn't appear to be any evidence of this. The trial aimed to get more people onto the compensation range and encourage more lighter sailors to join the class; so, having 60% of sailors on the compensation range at the 2021 Nationals vs only 24% at the 2019 Nationals is a notable success and a positive indication for the future of the Class. I would therefore encourage Class Members to vote to retain the current compensation system settings at the forthcoming vote.