

Make Your University Sailing Event Environmentally Sustainable



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Introduction

Within BUSA, we believe that progress towards environmentally sustainable sport is happening, but slowly. As sailors, we are all users of the marine environment and as such we are all witnessing changes occurring. Maintaining our sporting environment is essential for us to continue to enjoy spending time on the water, and to help slow climate change.

It is important to note:

- All of our actions have implications for others.
- As university students we are in a prime (and many feel underutilised) position to change the way we act, to alter social norms, this applies politically, socially and environmentally.
- As a BUSA member club we hope that you will embrace our efforts to encourage sustainability.
- Not only is it doing good, but it can also save you money and is great for promotion of your university club.
- Environmental sustainability is already a necessity, and soon will become a requirement so why not be part of leading that change?

This guide is specifically aimed at university run events. We hope to help decrease the barriers that you may face in working out where to begin when planning and running your events. Many items are also part of The University Sustainability Challenge tasks, meaning you can hit two birds with one stone. We've tried to keep this guide as simple as possible, starting with some guiding principles, then focusing on team racing and yachting events.

We recommend starting small with your efforts. Like a fishing hook, use bait to draw attention to what you are doing and any small changes you are making. Then, when more of your club is interested, start catching bigger and bigger fish increasing your efforts! To make a small change is relatively easy however to make a sustained long-term impact; to change views and norms around environmental awareness is a marathon.

Why should you consider making your events sustainable?

There are many reasons, it not only benefits you, sustainability efforts can benefit everyone around the globe. Please note not all the reasons are listed here - that probably would have taken a year!

- We are all in **one race together** - the race against plastic pollution and climate change
 - By the end of 2050 there could be **more plastic than fish** in the sea! (If current trends continue)
 - **8 million tonnes** of plastic enter the ocean each year, most of this comes from the land. Events at inshore venues still have significant impact on our oceans.
- **The Single Use Plastic Problem**
 - Plastic was designed to last, not degrade.
 - Society has a **consumer and convenience attitude**- this needs to change.
 - An estimated 75% of plastic made has never been recycled.
 - Plastics entering the ocean and currents are washed offshore and eventually form part of the 5 largest **ocean garbage patches** (aka. gyres). It takes **hundreds of years** for these to break down.
 - Plastic is **toxic** to our environment.
 - Burning/incineration → toxic gases
 - Landfill → leaching poisons
 - Ocean → ingestion, strangulation and entanglement of sea life.
- We are part of a **younger generation**; we have the **opportunity** to make a change. **Climate change will affect us** later in life (it is hard to argue it is not already)!
- It is affecting **our health**.
 - Microplastics - these can be found in our soil and compost, in our water, and in the sea. These are ingested by marine life, ascending the food chain, to our mouths. It is now assumed that **nobody lives without microplastics in their body**.
- **Save money.** (We are students after all)
 - Often being aware of your environmental impact, and acting to reduce it results in saving you money.
 - For example: heating bills, electricity bills, fuel.
 - This may also improve your relationship with your host club!
- **It looks good.** Advertising your environmentally sustainable actions and promoting yourself as a club that cares is difficult to be perceived negatively. It can aid with partnerships or sponsorship, and may even lead to more members. Personally, leading an initiative or change can be used on your CV.



Where and how to start?

Communications

- Clear communication will be vital in determining the success of your efforts.
- These can be broken down simply into pre-event, during event, and post-event communication.

Pre-event the key is involvement

- Of **competitors**
 - o Let them know they need to bring their water bottle or will have to buy one!
 - o Let boat hire clubs know that there will be a check, clean, dry policy.
 - o Tell your competitors that you aim to reduce waste, so that they can be prepared with the snacks that they may bring.
- Of **volunteers**
 - o Your key policies, and where they can help in supporting and upholding them
 - o Your umpires may want to bring extra clothing, or a ginormous flask!
 - o You may want to dedicate a volunteer to checking boats as they enter and leave the site having followed Check, clean, dry precautions.
- Your **host venue**
 - o They will hopefully be keen to get involved and be able to help in ways that you may not have considered. Make it a point on your meeting agendas!
 - o Educate them on the benefits of providing extra bins for recycling, or changing suppliers to use less plastic packaging (e.g. toilet roll), or replacing broken light bulbs with more energy efficient ones.
- Increasing involvement can be done formally through Sailing Instructions and Notices of Race or more informally through social media platforms and event information updates.

During the event key opportunities are:

- The briefing.
- Signage - directing people towards the water refill point, or recycling, or even where to purchase a water bottle should they forget theirs!
- Don't forget the debrief and prizegiving - thanking everyone for their support.

After the event:

- Use social media to promote what you have achieved.
- If you've separated the recycling further than standard, take it to the nearest recycling points.
- Thank your volunteers, competitors, umpires and host club - without them your efforts will have been impossible.

Don't forget that every small change you make is a step in the right direction, in the words of Tesco - every little helps. We all have to start somewhere.

General Event Preparations

The Volvo Ocean Race sustainable sports event guide has provided some useful **guiding principles** well worth considering:



1. Rethink

...your relationship with single-use plastic.
Does your sporting event really need it?



2. Refuse

...to accept avoidable single-use plastic in any of your event's plans and question excuses of cost and convenience.



3. Reduce

... the plastic volume, the size, thickness, grade, and variety. Less is more!



4. Replace

...single-use plastic with sustainable alternatives - think of re-usable, natural, compostable and creative options.



5. Recover

... unavoidable plastic and send for re-purposing, recycling or energy recovery.



STOP! Every piece of plastic you throw away, you have at one point bought. Don't bin your money!

The Volvo Ocean Race Sustainable Sporting Event Guide can be found [here](#), it provides an informative view on sustainable events (accessed 13/12/2020).

Before you start

Discuss your aims with others - what should be your goals for the event? This will give you something to focus towards, and something to help you review your success at the end!

Your aims will be specific to your club, your event, your host and your location, below are a couple of questions to get you started.

- Where have you previously used **single use** plastic? (Many are hidden, for ideas see checklist below)



- Its not all about the plastic - can you **apply clean check, dry principles** to any **visiting dinghies and kit**? Tell attendees there is an expectation to have clean and dry kit!
- How far are competitors/volunteers travelling - can you suggest car sharing or use of public transport?
- Can you adjust the heating in the club house? Are there areas which won't be used in which it can be turned off? If bulbs need replacing can they be replaced with low-energy bulbs?

- Is there a water refill point? Is it possible to prevent competitors purchasing drinks in plastic containers on site?
- How are condiments offered? **Sachets = NO!** Get that HUGE big mayonnaise bottle and refill smaller ones! (& shout about it on social media)
- If you've found a biodegradable or compostable alternative let the world know!
- Could you encourage attendees to sign a pledge?



INVASIVE SPECIES

Aquatic invasive plants & animals can harm kit and our local environment. Check, Clean and Dry your craft, equipment and clothing to remove visible and hidden biofouling.

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Team Racing Events

Suggestions to consider:

Action	Suggestion for improvement
Towing	How many trips are needed? How can these be minimised? Do boats need to arrive before the event starts or can they be brought on the morning of the event with competitors? Towing with a snug fitting cover increases fuel efficiency.
Visiting Boats	In your loaning/hiring agreement is there an environmental awareness clause RE clean check dry before towing to the venue, and before returning to the owner? Is there a washing down area ready? Does the hose have a spray nozzle fitted?
Dinghy Kit	Encourage competitors to arrive with kit that they have checked is clean and dry! Whilst bin bags are often an easy solution for wet kit, encourage sailors to bring a more reusable bag to take their kit home in.
Ordering Spares	Ask the supplier if these can be packed with reduced plastic. Check spares are readily accessible and unpacked, to reduce waste blowing into the water/around club
Reusable Water Bottles	Is there a water refill point? Remove the ability to purchase single use plastic bottles on site. Sell your own stash (and make a small profit).
Catering - Food Survey	A pre-event survey will reduce waste food. Gaining numbers for dietary options is sensible. It also enables bulk buying which often has less packaging. You could also try to source local food, from local suppliers to prevent food miles.
Catering - Plates and Cutlery	Avoid single use plastic cutlery and plates! If required, there are some compostable alternatives available. Alternatively, an extra volunteer to help wash up metal cutlery and plates isn't a bad idea.
Catering - Hot Drinks	The simplest solution is to use mugs and wash them up, however this isn't always possible-encouraging use of reusable coffee/tea mugs or charging for the purchase of a reusable mug could be a solution! Thermos flasks for umpires can be reused annually. An alternative to many small tea bags and kettles is to use urns, for coffee and tea.

Electric tape	A sailor's favourite - use of plastic covers on shroud plates is an alternative. Just think when putting it on, is it really needed?
Schedules	Is a paper or hard version of a schedule required? In this day and age can it be made available online/on competitors phones? You could also pin some up in pre-determined points in the club house.
Transport	Encourage the use of car shares - leaving a car overnight at the sailing club may be a possibility and would save a journey from the sailing venue to accommodation and back. Consider filling a bus of volunteers and competitors.
Socials	Discourage the use of single use plastic cups! Avoid the use of wrist bands if you can - a stamp is a sensible alternative and can be used year after year. Fancy dress may be essential - try to avoid buying props specifically and losing it! Have fun and make your own - cardboard can be utilised easily.
Wash Down Area	Reduce water usage - can recycled water be used e.g. rain water from a water butt? Ensure the drainage system at the club is adequate.
Mark Laying	This of course is dependent on your venue but laying marks can be a big cause of damage to the biosphere at the bottom of lakes. Can you lift rather than drag them when course moves are required?
Recycling	Increase recycling points and options, if a single trip to a recycling centre is required afterwards to enable you to recycle more, then work out a way to do it! Identify compostable waste separately!
Cleaning	Use biologically friendly cleaning products - avoid chlorine, bleach, microbeads or phosphate. Buying in bulk reduces prices.
Oil Spill Kit	Ensure that its location is well signed and clear, and also that it is maintained.

Keelboat Events

Suggestions to consider:

Action/Item	Suggestion for improvement
Bow stickers	Instead of plastic stickers, could you use flags (cotton), water bottles, or advertising at header/footer of emails, and event documents. Alternatively, spend slightly more getting compostable/biodegradable stickers.
Electrical Tape	On the bow, use reusable clips with elastic instead of tape - encourage this before the event starts so competitors have time to prepare.
Cable Ties	Avoid where possible.
Sunglasses/Hats	Tie them on! Attach them to yourself! (This is also a BIG money saver!)
Catering - Onboard	Encourage crews to bring lunch in reusable containers and to avoid purchasing food wrapped in single use plastic. Using a loaf and cheese/ham to make sandwiches is often also cheaper.
A Rubbish vs Recycling Challenge	Get crews to stow rubbish over the event or record each day's product usage/waste to increase awareness of levels of waste, and of recycling opportunities. Celebrate efforts made.
Paperwork & Documents	Reduce multiple copies by letting teams know what documents will be provided in hard copy. Similar to team racing, encourage electronic copy use.
Wristbands	Consider their need and use only if essential. Consider use of stamps instead.
Mark Laying	This of course is dependent on your venue but laying marks can be a big cause of damage to the biosphere. Can you lift rather than drag them when course moves are required?
Anchoring	Avoid anchoring in areas of sea bed conservation as it causes damage to the sea bed, similar to that of dredging. Locations are found here or follow the link https://thegreenblue.org.uk/you-your-boat/info-advice/wildlife-habitats/anchoring-with-care/
Clean Kit	Encourage competitors to arrive with clean dry kit, this prevents the spread of invasive species.

Summary

Neither of the above lists are exhaustive, but hopefully provide a base from where you, your club event organiser and your host club can start.

Remember the guiding principles and promote or celebrate any effort or achievement you have made. Document changes you have made and aim to improve year on year.

Good luck and make sure to enjoy it!

Further Resources & References

There are a number of guides to running a sustainable event to be found on the internet, they are not directed towards university events but you may find them useful. These can be found at:

1. https://d10n410n1bycop.cloudfront.net/files/m120720_volvo-ocean-race-turn-the-tide-on-plastic-at-sporting-events-user-guide-lr.pdf (Volvo Ocean Race, accessed 13/12/2020) - This focuses mainly on reducing plastic use.
2. <https://thegreenblue.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Sustainable-Events-Toolkit-online.pdf> (The Green Blue, RYA, accessed 13/12/2020) - focuses on all aspects of sustainability

