

## A Message from PYC Race Committee

Early season racing is underway at PYC. Last week we had some cold wet sailing with water temperature around 49 degrees and **had one race boat experience a crewmember overboard on downwind leg with spinnaker set in choppy conditions.** The remaining shorthanded crew successfully retrieved swimmer after approximately 5+ minutes, the skipper is very thankful his throwable cushion was immediately available and that they had a rope to help pull MOB back to the boat.

The PYC Race Committee wants to remind all skippers and crewmembers that taking an accidental swim while wearing lots of clothing and foul weather gear can be very dangerous to the swimmer and much more so if they are not wearing a PFD. In 2017 the US Coast Guard reported 76% of known boating fatalities were caused by drowning and 85% of drowning victims were not wearing a PFD.

Sudden immersion in cold water causes an involuntary deep gasp followed by very rapid breathing and possible hyperventilation. If your airway is not clear, like it would be if you are struggling to stay afloat, you quickly run the risk of drowning because of inhaling cold seawater. The best way to keep your airway above water and help prevent drowning is by wearing a PFD; this will help keep your head at least six inches above water.

All sailors should look online at Cold Water Boot Camp to help gain an understanding about what happens if you fall overboard in cold water.

<http://www.coldwaterbootcamp.com/pages/home.html>

Skippers need to have a MOB Plan to quickly recover a person overboard, and crew need to be familiar with the procedure. US Sailing recommends using the Quick Stop Procedure. There is information available online describing this while under various sail configurations. This procedure is currently being taught at US Sailing Safety at Sea Seminars. Remember, safety is ultimately the responsibility of the skipper for each boat including when to have crew wear PFDs, when to continue or cease racing, and how to effectively handle life threatening situations.