Best Practices for Retrieving Capsized Racers
11/12/19 by RYC RC

DEPLOYMENT:

With three Chase/Mark boats the Start/Finish Pin Boat should shadow the fleet as they move through the start, middle of the course, and finish. The Windward Mark Boat should generally stay at that end of the course, particularly keeping an eye out for sailors that are struggling as they approach and round the mark. Likewise, the Leeward Mark Boat should do the same thing at their end of the course.

With four boats, the fourth boat should shadow the fleet up and down on the opposite side of the course from the Start/Finish Pin Boat.

When one or more capsizes occur, the closest boat(s) should go to the rescue.

The remaining boats should look around and reposition themselves to provide coverage to the rest of the fleet that is still racing.

THE RESCUE:

The Chase/Mark-boat drivers should be conscious of their velocity as they approach a swimmer. Approach from the downwind side of the swimmer and boat. Twenty feet from the swimmer STOP the boat and then approach at a very slow speed. When the swimmer can easily reach the boat STOP again, put the throttle in neutral AND TURN OFF THE ENGINE. Quickly assist the swimmer and get them into the boat. Ask your passenger how they are feeling, and observe them for any signs of injury or duress.

When possible, skippers should uncleat their main halyard and vang after a capsize, and gather any loose gear before climbing into the boat. If conditions don't allow this, don't do it.

THE RETURN:

The Chase/Mark-boat is expected to retrieve the sailor from the water and deliver them to the gas dock where they can wait for their recovered dinghy. The -boat is then expected to return to the race course. This transfer is expected to happen quickly, so skippers should not attempt to self-right on the race course, ask to be dropped off elsewhere in dock complex, or in other ways require extra time and attention, keeping the crash boat from re deploying and doing their job covering the rest of the fleet.