

Docking letter to skippers, June 2014

Dear competitors,

Finishing at Mackinac is always a highlight of the Race. We have a small group of volunteers to help your arrival be as easy as possible. We pack a lot of boats into a small space and it takes cooperation from everyone to make it happen without damage or injury to already tired sailors.

When you are ready to dock (engine on, fenders out of the bilge, sails down) you will contact docking control on the radio. We use boat names, but if your name is like another boat, tell us the type of boat.

If you are headed to St. Ignace or Mackinac City, you will be directed to a “touch and go” dock or to an inspection slip. A volunteer will accept your finish card and your transponder. These slips are on the main harbor dock, right in the middle by the dock master’s building. Touch and Go means that you have only about 10 minutes to complete your business and get out of there. Then you will head for the designated harbor. We will attempt to get a pre-assignment for your slip, but you should check with the harbor master upon arrival.

When you contact docking control, you will be directed to dock in a specific place, pointed in a specific direction. At this point, you might also be invited to the inspection slip to have a few things checked. Most inspections will be done on the main harbor dock, right in the middle by the dock master’s building. Nothing leaves or is added to the boat, including people, until the inspection is complete.

At Registration before the race, you will receive a rough assignment to a docking zone or one of the few slips on the island before the race starts. You may or may not end up there, but it gives up a starting point. The final positioning depends on the order that the boats arrive, as well as the dimensions of the boat.

Please bring and use appropriate docklines and fenders. All the areas will have ferry wakes. We are able to provide some equipment on the Arnold Dock, which is high, but having good fenders, long dock lines and fender boards will make your stay on the island more comfortable.

Everyone says they know about spring lines and how to tie up, but every year we find one or more boats where it was forgotten and raft of boats gets out of control. Please use spring lines in each direction

After you have rafted and are enjoying other parts of the island, we may call you if the raft seems to be at risk. Please be sure the cell phone number you give the dock squad at registration is a useful one.

“Crunches”

When many boats finish together, it is difficult to get boats placed quickly. In most cases, you will be aware of this happening because you will be sailing to the finish line with lots of traffic.

We call this a “crunch” and when we are in a crunch, you will see many boats milling around the docking area and it will be very busy on the radio. If you are part of a crunch, please tune to the docking channel, but listen for a minute before you try to report in. The process we try to use in a crunch is to collect the names of the boats without giving docking instructions to any. We will then read the list of boats so that you will know you are on the list. Then we will start giving directions of where to go. Your patience is appreciated during these times. Boats taking a docking spot that have not been directed there will be scorned by the dock squad and other sailors.

At any time you may be directed to an alternate docking channel. We may have our volunteers on the Arnold and Coal docks direct you on that channel.