

Club 500 Racing

Overview

The DSMBC are in the throes of setting up fun electric boat racing, which will take place at Lakeside in between yacht races. The boat chosen for this is the Club 500, manufactured and sold by Club 500 Slipway: <http://www.club500slipway.com>

Many of you may already be aware that this is a simple-to-build electric boat that uses a standard low-cost 550 brushed motor and basic radio control. The kit has been around for many years and is already raced by many model boat clubs. The Club 500 design requires a degree of skill (and luck) to win races, rather than just deep pockets – a great leveller that gives all participants an equal chance of success.

More information about the boat

You'll find a couple of kit reviews on the Club 500 Slipway website. Alan Gregory also found this pictorial build which gives more information:

https://www.modelboatmayhem.co.uk/My_models/Club500/index.html

In addition to the basic kit, you'll need:

- a) 2-channel (minimum) radio with 1 standard servo, and a brushed Electronic Speed Controller. Club 500 Slipway sell Mtroniks controllers, but any 25Amp-plus brushed ESC can be used. A quick tour of Ebay (other outlets are available) will yield suitable model car ESCs in the sub-£10 bracket that will work admirably. Club 500 racing pre-dates many modern speed controllers and early boats were raced using only a servo-operated microswitch (only for the brave), so really anything goes. Pay as much or as little as you like – it'll make no difference to the overall performance of the boat.
- b) Battery packs. The standard option is a 6-cell 7.2v NiMh model car battery. These are gradually being phased out of competitive car racing, so we propose to also allow 2-cell car-type LiPo batteries. These days LiPos are no more expensive than good NiMh packs and are easier to handle, with the ability to store their peak charge for several days rather than several hours.
- c) Bow bumper. Alan Gregory has been in touch with Dave Brumstead (one of the original reviewers). His suggestion was to add a foam/rubber bumper to the bow of each boat, as it is apparently entirely possible to puncture a hull during a collision(!).
- d) Sealing the hull. Club 500 boats can and do roll over during races and the superstructure can apparently become detached. It therefore makes sense to be able to seal the hull against this type of accident. The manufacturer sells a laser-cut hatch cover as an accessory but other methods can be adopted, so the decision is left to individuals' discretion and ingenuity. We'll soon see what works!
- e) Flotation. Thanks to Graham Povey we now have a Club safety boat, so we'll be able to pick up the sick and wounded after each session – but they do need to stay afloat, so airbags or polystyrene buoyancy in the hull and superstructure should be installed.
- f) Boat colours. The following colours are available: red, yellow, green, blue, purple, white, orange, black, cream, silver-grey and bright silver. You can choose hull, deck and window colours separately, so it should be possible for all Club participants to have their own uniquely coloured boat. To this end, I am compiling a table of colour choice by member and will distribute this list to

everyone who wishes to take part. At the time of writing, I already have colour combinations from 7 members. Please don't order a kit until you've registered your boat colour with me.

How to purchase a boat

I have been in touch with Malcolm Griffett (club500@hotmail.co.uk) of Club 500 Slipway and established the following ordering options:

- 1) An individual order - delivered. If you want to order a single boat, the best and most secure method is to use the website. Simply select the hull, superstructure and window colours, and pay using Paypal. If you want to add accessories to the order, phone or email Malcolm and he will confirm overall postage and packing and send you a Paypal invoice by email. You can pay using Paypal or send him a cheque and he'll post out your order.
- 2) Multiple orders - delivered. You can save a little postage by aggregating your orders with friends. 1 boat costs £10 P&P, 2 boats £15 P&P, and 3 boats £21 P&P, so you can save up to £3 per person by ordering in this way. However, your order must be made by email or phone and has to be paid for with a cheque. Your order won't be despatched until the cheque has cleared.
- 3) Individual or multiple orders - collected. Club 500 Slipway are based in Wolverhampton. If you fancy a day out, or wish to make a detour from a family visit to IKEA(!), then you can order your boat(s) via email or phone and arrange collection. In this scenario, Malcolm only accepts cash on collection, so if you are collecting multiple kits (and accessories) you'll need the relevant cash with you. Due to the logistics of aggregating orders, collecting cash and distributing kits, with all the inherent responsibilities involved, it has been decided that the Club will not be offering this service to members. However, there's nothing to stop individuals and friends from doing their own thing.
- 4) Mention the DSMBC. When you place your order, please tell Malcolm you are from the DSMBC. It'll make not one scrap of difference to the price, but at least he'll know that he wasn't wasting his evenings answering all my enquiries!

Rules for racing

To offer a level playing field (or should that be lake?), we propose to follow these basic Club 500 Racing Rules:

- Course and race duration will evolve once we begin racing. We will be using Lakeside as the venue due to the size of the lake, availability of course buoys, and the ability to deploy our own safety boat.
- No alterations to the model shall be allowed. It must have the original motor, coupling, etc. – no “hot” motor, different propeller, or motor alterations.
- No modifications below the water line.
- Ordinary 2-channel radio using an electronic speed control, servo-operated control, or micro-switch to motor control.
- Nickel metal hydride 7.2V battery pack or 2-cell 7.4v car-type LiPo battery pack.
- Buoyancy may be added – e.g. airbags.
- Oiling tube may be added if required.
- Keep it FUN and SIMPLE – racing can be entertaining and educational fun for all, or it can become ultra-competitive and divisive. Teddies are to remain in prams at all times, and anyone found taking the whole thing too seriously will be offered sympathy and counselling by the committee.

Next steps

If you would like to find out more, please send me an email to register your interest and I'll include you in a round-robin distribution list. I'll also send out the colour-choice table so that you can register your own unique boat livery.

Contact: Tony Draper at tony@lizdraper.co.uk