

Race Officer – Guidance Notes

Introduction

Firstly, thank you for your support. It is the task of the Race Officer to organise and control fair and enjoyable racing for all competitors. You will of course be assisted by the Timekeeper, and by the OOD if necessary. Make sure that you report to the race hut by 9.00 am on Sunday morning. You will need sufficient time to get things properly organised. The first start is at 10:30 am throughout the year. The afternoon Handicap race has been discontinued for the present.

Take heed of the club's Racing Instructions. These form the basis for club racing and they must be adhered to.

When you get to the race hut, check that all of the necessary equipment is to hand and is in working order. This includes the air horn and klaxon, the tannoy, the clocks, and the tape recorder, and also the course chart, and if necessary the portable chalkboard outside the hut. Check that the Timekeeper has put out the correct signing-on forms. Check that the starting flags are all available and get them bent on to the halyards on the mast at an early stage. Four of the halyards are rigged with shock cord and loops suitably positioned to accept the large flags so that they can be hoisted/lowered quickly with one hand. This facilitates the handling by one person of two flags simultaneously. You will have to decide in conjunction with the Timekeeper how you are going to handle the operation of flags, clocks and sound signal. The most popular method seems to be control things from inside the race hut by means of the clocks and horn, the person handling the flags hoisting/lowering on the sound signal. Don't forget however that the flag signal governs according to the rules, and therefore when using this method it is important that the person at the mast pays close attention to the person in the race hut. In reality, however, club sailors invariably take notice of the sound signal. Do not be shy of recruiting a bystander to assist either at the mast or in the race hut.

Use the portable chalkboard for any particular points that competitors need to know about.

The Course

It is your responsibility to decide upon a course and you should strive to make the first leg as true a beat as possible, or at least to include a true beat on one leg of the course. Try to make the downwind legs a combination of runs and reaches. Don't forget that the fleet has to come through the finish line (inside the black mark) on each round. Display the course on the front of the race hut in the correct sequence (port or starboard hand for each mark), and also on the chart board.

The Start Line

Be sure to allocate one of the support boats at an early stage to stand by ready to shift the two white start marks to make a proper start line. When setting the line, make sure that the inner white mark is outside the black finish mark (which should not be moved). Set up the transit with the portable barber pole, and try to get both white marks as closely as possible on the transit line between the two barber poles. That transit forms the actual start line and the white marks signify the inner and outer distance on that line.

The Starting Frame

The black starting frame is fixed on the front of the Race Hut. The top row should show the course numbers and the second row should show the start arrow and 'H' (Handicap), 'L' (Laser) & 'A' (Featured), whilst the third row should show below the appropriate letter, an estimate for the number of rounds for each fleet. If the course is shortened during a race, replace the number of rounds with 'S'. A postponement, cancellation or abandonment can also be shown on the third row.

The Start Sequence

The Sunday morning starting sequence, using the standard 5:4:1:Go system is as follows:-

1st Race:

Signal	Interval (minutes)	Flags	Sound	Planned Time
Handicap Fleet Warning	5 to Handicap start	'H' up	1 long hoot	10:25am
Handicap Preparatory	4 to Handicap start	Blue Peter 'P' up	1 hoot	10:26am
Handicap 1 minute	1 to Handicap start	Blue Peter 'P' down	1 hoot	10:29am
Handicap Start	Go for Handicap	'H' down	1 hoot	10:30am
Laser Fleet Warning	5 to Laser Fleet start	Laser up		
Laser Fleet Preparatory	4 to Laser start	'P' up	1 hoot	10:31am
Laser Fleet 1 minute	1 to Laser start	'P' down	1 hoot	10:34am
Laser Fleet start	Go for Lasers	Laser down	1 hoot	10:35am

On days when the Featured Fleet is racing (see Race Card), their start follows on from the Lasers in the same way as the Lasers follow the Handicap start.

Also note that all Lasers start together whether Standard, Radial or 4.7 rig, without handicaps, and finish in order on the water. If necessary, the Laser Captain will sort out the different fleets from the results. Elapsed times are not required for the Lasers, nor for the Featured Fleet when racing.

Recalls

Any boat over the line at the start must be recalled. If you can see one or two boats over the line and can identify them, signal an individual recall by making one sound signal after the start signal. You can inform the offending boat(s) over the tannoy. If you cannot identify boats over the line, or if too many appear to be in default, then signal a general recall by making two sound signals after the start signal (and hoist the '1st Substitute' flag). The recalled fleet should then move to the end of the starting sequence. See the instructions in the Race Hut Manual for a recalled start.

Race Duration

Do not set too few laps. The race can always be shortened (2 hoots, 'S' on blackboard). The first race should be about 45 – 60 minutes duration, and the second race a little longer so as to finish between 12:45 and 1:00pm.

Finishing

Note that the Laser fleet (and the Featured fleet when racing) do not require finish times, only the places, whether Standard, Radial or 4.7 rig. Use the klaxon for all finishing boats.

Second Morning Race

Try to get the second race away as soon as possible. If there are Handicap boats struggling to complete their last lap, it may be best to start the second Laser race separately without making them wait for the last of the handicap fleet to finish. If you need to change the course for the second race, do so and make an announcement over the PA and/or send a support boat round to tell people that a new course has been laid.

The Sailing Committee