

Timekeeper Duty: Guidance Notes

Wednesday Evening

Introduction to the duty

Thank you in advance for supporting the club. The timekeeper plays an important part in the management of the races. No specific sailing skills are required. It helps to be organised, and to keep a careful watch on how the racing is progressing on the water. The best preparation would be to read the Race card (posted to all members - there is a copy in the Race Hut) in advance before turning up.

Introduce yourself to the OOD at the Race Hut by 6:00pm on Wednesdays; the race start is at 7:00pm on the first three and last three Wednesdays of the Summer, and at 7:30pm on all other Wednesdays. There is no Race Officer on Wednesdays so the OOD will discuss with you how you can help. The key tasks are explained below: agree with the OOD who is to do what.

It is a great opportunity to learn about racing, and to get to know other club members. Have fun, and thank you.

The timekeeper is responsible for:

- Generally helping the OOD with organising the racing
- Recording the race results, including recording finish times and numbers of laps
- Raising and lowering the flags, if requested by the OOD

Setting out the signing on forms

Set up a single signing on sheet for the Saturday Handicap series. Head it up with the series name for the race, the race number, the fleet and the planned start time. All the details you need are set out in the Race Card, or on the logbook page for the day.

Setting up the clocks for recording race times

There are two dedicated race clocks in the Hut. They have several functions. Have a play with them to familiarise yourself with them before racing begins. Agree with the OOD how you will use them, and who will do what. The more usual set-up is to start one clock on a 5 minute countdown and let it continue to count up after the start.

Raising and lowering flags

The Club uses the standard 5:4:1:Go start sequence. All races are started using the large flags kept inside the hut. They are to be displayed at the flagstaff on the parapet, so bring a coat as you may have to stand outside for 15 minutes or so. The Class flag ('warning') goes up 5 minutes before the start; the Blue Peter or 'P' flag ('preparatory') goes up 4 minutes before the start, and comes down 1 minute before the start; the Class flag comes down at the start. There is a card in the Race Hut. There is a card in the manual in the Race Hut showing the flag sequences for all races. Here is the sequence for Wednesday evenings, when the Class flag is 'H':

Signal	Interval (minutes)	Flags	Sound	Planned Time
Warning signal	5 to start	Yellow 'H' up	1 long hoot	2:10 pm
Preparatory Signal	4 to start	Blue Peter 'P' up	1 hoot	2:11 pm
One Minute Signal	1 to start	Blue Peter 'P' down	1 hoot	2:14 pm
Start	Go	Yellow 'H' down	1 hoot	2:15pm

Recording finish times

There are various ways of recording the results for the handicap fleet - discuss your preferred method with the Race Officer. There are only two things needed for each competitor:

- Length of time racing (minutes and seconds) & the number of laps

It is essential to record clearly the number of laps completed by each boat in the Handicap fleet. The method for working out corrected times and finish positions is shown on the race results sheet.

If the finish line gets hectic, don't try and record the results directly onto the signing-on sheet. Just watch very carefully which boats are about to cross the finish line, and record on a separate sheet the number of the boat, the time, and the class (not essential, but useful). Also make use of the tape recorder. The tricky bit is to be careful to allow the faster boats to complete more laps than the slower boats. If you make a habit of timing each lap for each boat, you will be able to decide in advance how many laps each boat is likely to complete within the allotted race time of 60 – 90 minutes.

Race results

The computation of the race results for the handicap fleets is simply a case of following the column headings and calculations given on the sign-on sheet. You will record the total length of time racing for each boat. Some dinghies are faster than others, and all are rated using the 'Portsmouth Yardstick' (PY). The corrected finish time is the total racing time in seconds, divided by the PY. If some boats have completed more laps than others in the race, then that result for each boat is divided by the number of laps completed to give the average lap time as a result. You then need to sort out the finish positions by ranking those results.

Thank you in advance for your help.

The Sailing Committee