

THE BROADS RADIO YACHT CLUB - GUIDANCE NOTES FOR RACE OFFICERS.

INTRODUCTION.

Competitors taking part in any event are entitled to expect good quality racing and a well organised and enjoyable day- especially when they have travelled a long distance in order to participate. The conduct and efficiency of the Race Officer (RO) largely governs this. Unfortunately for him or her the job of RO is rarely straight forward and often difficult because wind and weather often seem to conspire to cause problems and frustrate competitors. However with a thoughtful approach and some imagination these problems can often be eliminated or at least reduced to a minimum. The RO is in overall control of the event but can't do everything and should ask for help and delegate as required. Once a specific task is delegated to another person the RO should leave that person to get on with the job and not interfere. However the RO shall make the decisions concerning boats on the course side (OCS), moving the start line, changing the course and so on.

In the case of 'Club' only events the designated RO shall run the event alone - unless he/she can persuade someone to help. For 'Open' events there shall be at least 2 people forming a Race Committee (RC); the designated RO who must take charge and make all the decisions and an assistant who will help with scoring, observing and any other tasks the RO requires him/her to perform. For larger open events, when there is fleet racing, a RC of at least 3 people will be needed; Race Officer, Scorer, Line Judge, Boatman and Observer Marshal for example. Some of these jobs can be amalgamated or shared.

Club members shall be designated as Race Officer from time to time in accordance with Club Rule 26.

The Race Officer shall be on site by 09.00am latest - in accordance with Club Rule 27.

Any member unable to fulfil his/her responsibility on any designated day shall be responsible for finding a suitable substitute and advising the Race Secretary in accordance with Club Rule 28.

Any decision to cancel an event shall be done only in accordance with Club Rule 29.

GENERAL.

Anyone designated as Race Officer shall be responsible, either personally or by delegation, for:-

- a) Setting out all the necessary equipment such as; course board, table, starter box, posts and ropes, audible sound signal (whistle/air horn).
- b) Welcoming competitors, checking certificates and other details such as frequencies (open events only).
- c) Collecting entry fees (open events only).
- d) Setting the race course and laying the marks.
- e) Preparing the course board and - where appropriate - the fleet board.
- f) Judging the start and finish lines.
- g) Calling clearly the number of each boat as it crosses the finish line and recording the scores.
- h) Observing the fleet whilst it is racing.
- i) Operating a recovery/rescue boat.
- j) Competitors briefing.

RULES

The rules governing the days event are; The Racing Rules of Sailing, The Standard Sailing Instructions and the Notice of Race.

THE COURSE.

To ensure good quality competition the RO must aspire to;

- a) set fair and unbiased start and finish lines.
- b) have mark rounding consistently the same way.
- c) always have port rounding at the windward mark.
- d) always have marks placed at such a distance that the numbers on the sails of boats are clearly legible.

Of course, as mentioned earlier, the vagaries of wind and weather together with such factors as the limitations of the available control area will sometimes make some or all of the above impossible to achieve, in which case the RO must just do the best he/she can bearing in mind the aim to provide good quality and fair racing.

Start Line.

The start line should be about 1.5 times the sum of the lengths of the boats in the race - or largest heat - when applicable; e.g. a fleet of 10 x IOMs needs a start line of about 15 metres. If in doubt set a longer rather than a shorter start line.

The start line should, initially and if possible, be set with about 5 degrees of port bias to encourage the boats to spread along the line and give those starting at the leeward end a chance of arriving at the windward mark on equal terms with those that started further up the line. If during racing it becomes obvious that one end of the line is favoured, it should if possible be adjusted to encourage the fleet to spread out.

Start lines that are too short or badly biased will result in too many boat on boat contacts, boats OCS and general recalls.

Finish Line.

It has been customary to use the same line for both starting and finishing but if at all possible it is better to have a different line for each because;

- a) whilst the start line is usually set at about 85 degrees to the wind, the finish line should be at right angles to the direction of the course from the last mark, and
- b) whilst the start line should be long, the finish line should be relatively short - about 10 boat lengths is plenty long enough whatever the size of fleet.

Both the finish and start lines are always judged as being on the course side of the relevant marks - RRS E3.4(b).

The Course.

Examples of suitable race courses are; 'Triangle and Sausage', and 'Windward - Leeward' - **RRS Appendix L, Addendum A - Illustrated Courses.**

If at all possible the first leg should be a long beat to the windward mark.

If a windward/leeward' course is set it helps avoid collisions and other problems to lay an offset mark about 8 boat lengths to port of the windward mark. The leeward mark should be set to provide a true run and not a reach if at all possible and the single leeward mark can be replaced by two marks about 9 boat lengths apart, forming a gate. The gate should be at right angles to the sailing wind so that neither mark is favoured and the fleet encouraged to split 50/50 by rounding either end. A well set gate will reduce congestion at the leeward end, give easier access to either side of the course, keep boats closer together on the same leg of the course and reduce the number of boats tacking through other boats on the downwind leg. Although in ideal conditions the windward/leeward course is favoured, in shifting, flukey air they are extremely difficult to set properly and this must be considered when deciding on the course.

If it is impossible to set the first leg of the course as a beat to windward, consider the possibility of having the first leg of the course as a run to a gate, followed by a beat back to a windward mark.

Try not to lay marks in areas of very disturbed air and don't lay the leeward mark so close to a bank or other obstruction, that disturbed air turns what should be a leeward mark into a windward mark just as boats are about to round it.

The windward mark should, ideally, have both a port tack lay line and a starboard tack lay line.

Do not lay marks so far from the control area that sail numbers can't be read.

Course Changes.

As a rule of thumb the course and/or the start line should be adjusted if; boats can lay the windward mark without any need to tack, if the course becomes a 'reach' all the way round or if a permanent wind shift results in there being only one lay line to the windward mark.

THE BRIEFING.

The pre-race briefing given by the Race Officer is very important and sets the tone for the day. The briefing should be businesslike and take account of the fact that not all competitors will be experienced but at the same time friendly and welcoming. The briefing should follow the format below:

- a) Announce the briefing with a sound signal (whistle).
- b) Give a friendly word of welcome.
- c) Introduce yourself and other key officials; line judge, scorer, boatman, observer marshal etc.
- d) Identify main shore facilities; toilets, restaurant, protest room (open events only) etc.
- e) Advise race and lunch break timings, reminder to order food.
- f) Identify the extent of the control area.
- g) Explain the course
- h) Explain the importance of observing and how to do it correctly.
- i) Remind competitors of the finishing time as stated in the NOR.
- j) Remind competitors that Arbitration and Protests can be conducted.

DURING RACING.

- a) Ensure (if applicable) that line judges and observers are in position.
- b) Sound signal (whistle) and call 'Boats on the Water'.
- c) After an appropriate interval start the count down.

- d) The line judge should use a straight edge such as a clip board, ruler or piece of card to sight the start line in the last few seconds of the count down to help in identifying boats that are on the course side of the line (OCS). Boats that are even only slightly over the line at the start must be identified and recalled to restart by hailing loudly - for example, "Recall 99, 41 and 76. It is essential to use the word 'Recall' and repeat the hail as appropriate (**RRS Appendix E3.5**). If a sail number can't be identified use other identifying features such as hull colour. This should be followed up with 'Recall' and the sail number as soon as possible. Boats identified as OCS have to return completely behind the line and restart. The line judge must remain in place to be able to judge this because competitors may not be in a position to do so for themselves, and it is good practice to help them by hailing "Clear 99, clear 41" and so on. If there are so many boats OCS that they can't be identified use a double sound signal (whistle) and hail, "General recall" repeated as appropriate (**RRS Appendix E3.6**). This means that the race is abandoned and another start initiated from the preparatory signal (1 minute).
- e) Observe during racing as necessary.
- f) At the finish of the first boat, sound signal (air horn blast or whistle) so that other competitors have a time reference, and call loudly and clearly the sail number. Call loudly and clearly the sail number of each subsequent boat as it crosses the finishing line (if there is a designated Line Judge this will be done by him/her). Finishing positions shall be recorded by the Secretary to the Finish Line Judge or other appropriate person. Record the sail number of each boat **each time** it crosses the finishing line. It is necessary to do this because a boat may have to complete an exonerating penalty turn before recrossing the finish line a second or even third time. ***The last time a boat crosses the finish line is likely to be the correct one.***
- g) If there are 4 boats or fewer still racing 5 minutes after the finishing time of the first boat, immediately record their places on the water as if they had finished at that point. If there are more than 4 still racing the 'time-out' limit is extended until only 4 remain on the water still racing. At that point record their places on the water. **SSI's 2017 2.07, 2.08 and 2.09.**

SCORING.

- a) For club racing use the club score sheets to record the finishing position of each boat. For open events the MYA Heat Record Sheet should be used so that finishing times are recorded.
- b) During club racing it isn't normally necessary to add anything up, just make sure that the finishing position of each boat is recorded. At open events it is necessary to total scores so that the results can be announced at the end of racing. When there is more than one fleet HMS shall be used and there should be a designated person to input the finishing positions into the computer.
- c) Any boat which fails to start or fails to finish must be recorded on the score sheet in the appropriate place, DNC, DNS, DNF and so on (**RRS Appendix A11**).
- d) Discards - these shall be taken into account when deciding the final results and are awarded as follows; 4 races = 1 discard, 8 races = 2 discards, 16 races = 3 discards with a further discard each 8 races thereafter. If HMS is being used this will automatically be done.
- e) The R.O. may apply a scoring penalty - (c) above - in the case of a boat that did not start, did not finish, failed to comply with RRS 30.1 (I Flag or 'round the ends rule), RRS 30.4 (black flag rule) or retired - **RRS Appendix A, E3.7**. The RO may **not** give redress, disqualify a boat or take any other action that worsens a boats score. This can only be done following an arbitration or full protest hearing.

OBSERVING.

- a) Good observing is extremely important and has a great bearing on the enjoyment of everyone involved.

- b) For open events each observer shall be issued with a note pad and pencil. The note pad shall designate the part of the fleet each observer is responsible for; front of the fleet, middle of the fleet, back of the fleet. Three observers should be enough. Each observer shall follow the fleet around the entire course, observing that area of the fleet he/she is designated as being responsible for. Where fleets are being raced observers can be appointed from those competitors not racing at that time.
- c) An observer shall hail and only hail; boat to boat contacts and boat to mark contacts. eg 'Contact 99 and 41, Contact 99 and 41' or, 'On the mark 99, on the mark 99'. A hail such as either of these should result in a boat **promptly** sailing clear of the fleet and completing a penalty turn. If this doesn't happen the observer should repeat the hail. If there is still no turn the observer should note; the incident, where on the course it occurred and the sail number of the boat or boats involved and advise the RO accordingly at the completion of the race.
- d) A full explanation of Observer Duties and how they should be carried out can be found in the official MYA document - 'Guidance Notes for Race Observers' which is downloadable from the MYA website.

PROTESTS AND ARBITRATION.

In the event of an incident on the water for which no penalty has been taken the competitors involved should first be offered the chance to go to arbitration conducted in accordance with the RYA Rules Dispute Procedure. Should arbitration not be acceptable to the competitors involved then a full protest hearing must be conducted and the RO must be prepared for this by ensuring that the following items have been identified and are readily available for use:-

- a) Protest forms.
- b) Check List for use by the PC.
- c) Table, pencil, paper and model boats for use, if required, during a hearing.

Before racing begins, the RO shall identify a suitable, private place to conduct such a hearing and decide from those present who will make up the PC. The RO and other members of the RC shall **not** be part of the PC although they and observers may be called as witnesses if required.

DISQUALIFICATION AND REDRESS

The Race Officer cannot give redress, or disqualify a boat, only a protest hearing can make this decision. However the R.O. may apply a scoring penalty in the case of a boat that; did not start, did not finish, failed to comply with RRS 30.1, 30.4 or retired - **RRS Appendix A, E3.7.**

AFTER RACING.

The RO shall;

- a) call racing to a close in accordance with the Standard Sailing Instructions and NOR or as agreed.
- b) Ensure the score sheets are totalled up - open meetings only - and passed to the person responsible for putting them on the club website - currently Geoff Josey.
- c) Announce the final positions and award any prizes or trophies - open events.
- d) In the case of open events the results shall also be sent to the ED Race Secretary (Henry Farley) and webmaster John Newton - together with a brief report and photographs if available. **N.B. John Newton likes to have the full HMS print out where possible.**
- e) Ensure all equipment is brought in and stowed safely and securely in the club sheds.