

# Race Officer Duties

(These should be read in conjunction with 2022-23 Sailing Instructions.)

**Aim** — to provide you with sufficient knowledge to run Club racing competently.

## Courses and course setting

- There are four fixed marks in the main lake:
  - Peninsula (P)
  - Mountain (M)
  - East (E)
  - Town (T)
- There are two fixed marks inshore, south of the islands (likely only used during Twilight racing and in the event of unsuitable weather):
  - Club (C)
  - Quarry (Q).
- The overriding principle in our course setting philosophy is that the Start Line should be laid dead down wind of the first (windward) mark such that the first leg of the course is always a true beat/work to windward.<sup>1</sup>
- The RHIB will lay a large orange inflatable mark on the Start Boat's port side, under the direction of the RO, that then forms the Start Line at right angles to the wind direction. This mark not only becomes the pin end of the Start Line but also doubles as the leeward mark.
- The course should then be notified to competing boats before the first warning signal.
- This will be done by placing two boards in a frame on the starboard quarter of the Start Boat. These will carry the following information (on both sides of the board):
  - a letter signifying the first mark (one of the six outlined above)
  - a notation of "TRI" or "WR" signifying a triangular or windward return course.
- The default setting for the number of laps is three. The RO will shorten if necessary.  
**NB. A triangular course lap is a triangle *and* a sausage; a windward return lap is just a sausage (up to the windward mark and back to the leeward mark).**
- The course direction is given by either a red flag (all marks to port) or green flag (all marks to starboard). **This is particularly important if a triangular course is set since the wing mark will be determined by the direction of travel.** For example, if the windward mark is East and the red flag is flying (indicating all marks to port) then the wing mark will be

---

<sup>1</sup> This is the ideal and we should always strive for this when setting a course in the main lake. However, during twilight racing, the RO will be constrained by time and space, and courses are likely to be set using the inshore marks where (depending on wind direction) it may not be possible to set a start line that provides a true windward first leg.

Mountain; conversely if the green flag is flying (all marks to starboard) then the wing mark will be Town.

- It is normal practice in most racing to set port-handed courses. However, given that we have fixed marks, the RO must also consider whether a port or starboard-hand course is likely to make the most of the prevailing wind direction. **This is only an issue when a triangular course is being considered. If a windward return course is selected, then it should always be port-handed.**

## ● Pre-race actions (ashore and afloat)

- Go to Bureau of Meteorology web site or other weather site and determine general weather, wind strength and direction.
- Fill in the weather forecast sheet and place it with the sign-on sheet on the table outside the Clubhouse.
- Discuss course options with the Club Captain.
- Copy the sign-on sheet and transfer names and sail numbers to the Race Sheet. It is likely that it won't be complete; additional competitors will have to be recorded once out on the water. Alternatively, photocopy the sign on sheet or take a photo of it with your phone.
- Liaise with the RHIB crew, check both boats are sufficiently fueled. Check that the Race Box is on board (contains race sheets, timers, anemometer, pens pencils etc.)
- Do a radio check before leaving shore (Channel 69). Ensure the RHIB embarks one of the large orange inflatable buoys before launching. Recommend leaving shore NO LATER THAN 40 mins before first warning signal (Sundays) and 20 mins (Wednesdays).
- Motor out to the proposed start location based on the likely course option. Check that wind strength and direction support the selected option. If not, make the change based on the advice in course setting given above. If the Club Captain is on the water, it is OK to consult with him/her regarding a course change.

## Setting the Start (and Finish) Line

- Depending on wind strength, the Start Boat should be anchored a suitable distance downwind from the first mark such that competing boats have a reasonable chance of completing the course within the time limit (this is different for Twilight and Sunday racing).
- Once anchored, instruct the RHIB crew to lay the pin end/leeward mark to port and adjust its position until the Start Line is at right angles to the wind direction. The Start Boat should always be at the starboard end of the line.
- As a 'rule of thumb' the line should be a length and half of the longest boat multiplied by the number of boats starting in any Division e.g., if a 6m cat is the longest boat and there are maximum of 10 boats starting then the line should be approximately 90m long. No need (or time) to reset for different Divisional starts.

- Once the RHIB crew have laid the mark, one of the crew should transfer to the Start Boat to help the RO with the Start (unless an additional volunteer is on board the Start Boat). The RHIB should then stand off until all Divisional starts are complete.
- Before the first Warning Signal, ensure that the Start Boat 'on station' flag is flown (orange), course boards are loaded into the frame, the course direction flag is flown (either red or green), the starting flags are ready (warning and preparatory) and the stopwatches/timers are set.
- As mentioned above, it is likely that the list of boats competing is incomplete and it will be necessary to reassess the number of boats and record their sail numbers prior to the Start.
- Everything should now be set to commence the starting sequence (see below). Once all boats have started correctly, the orange Start Boat 'on-station' flag should be lowered 4 minutes after the last start signal. If a member of the RHIB crew member transferred to the Start Boat, he/she can then transfer back to the RHIB and the Start Boat can weigh anchor.
- Judging **when and where** to finish a race is perhaps the most difficult skill an RO can acquire – and it can only be gained through experience. Not only must the RO take account of changing wind strength during the race, but also the rate of progress of the two Divisions around the course. In order to make recording finish times manageable, a common Finish Line will need to be set for all Divisions.
  - **When.** As a rough guide, a race should last approximately 1 hour (+ or – 15 mins). This will probably involve shortening the course (see below). Bear in mind that depending on wind strength, and the type of course set, the cats might sail more laps than the monohulls.
  - **Where.** Unless otherwise specified, the Finish Line must always be **between a mark of the course and the Finish Boat**, which must be anchored on the **outside** of the course (this will mean at the starboard end of the line for port-hand courses and at the port end for starboard-hand courses). The Finish Line need not be as long as the Start Line but long enough to allow up to three of the largest boats to finish simultaneously. **Once on station, the Finish Boat must fly the blue 'on-station' flag.**

## Conduct of the Race

- **The Start**
  - The starting sequence for all Divisions is 5, 4, 1, 0 (see RRS Part 3 Conduct of a Race paragraph 26 - Starting Races). Flags and sound signals go hand in hand (again see Race Signals in RRS). The most important are the Divisional flags (numeral pennants 1 & 2 [and 3, 4 etc. if there are more Divisions] – the Warning Signals for respective Divisions) and the Blue Peter (Flag P – the Preparatory Signal – blue flag with centre white square).
  - For our Club races, the Warning Signal is Pennant 2 (for the cats), Pennant 1 (for the monohulls), and Pennant 3 for the Green fleet should they be racing. In a typical start sequence (when two Divisions are starting), at the appointed hour Pennant 2 is raised

with one sound signal, one minute later the Blue Peter is raised accompanied by another sound signal. Three minutes later, the Blue Peter is lowered with one drawn out sound signal; one minute later, Pennant 2 is lowered and Pennant 1 is raised - again with one sound signal. This signifies the Div 2 Start and Div 1 Warning Signal. The process above is then repeated until the Div 1 start (and repeated again for subsequent starts).

- **Postponements.** For a variety of reasons, it is sometimes necessary to postpone a Start (RRS Part Conduct of a Race paragraph 27.3). The Answering Pennant (AP) can be raised accompanied by two sound signals right up to the starting signal of a Division, but usually is done much before that. This allows the RO time to make changes if something is not right (usually wind shifts or a lack of breeze). Once the RO is satisfied that suitable adjustments have been made, the AP is lowered accompanied by one sound signal. One minute later, the starting sequence commences or recommences with the first Warning Signal.
- **Recalls.** Occasionally one or more boats are over the line at the Start. If the boats can be identified, then the RO signals an **Individual Recall** – Flag X (blue cross white background) is raised with a sound signal. The RO must note the sail numbers of the infringing boats and keep Flag X flying until those boats have started correctly. If the boats over the line cannot be identified, then the RO has no recourse other than to sound a **General Recall** – the 1<sup>st</sup> Substitute (blue triangular flag with yellow triangular insert) is raised with two sound signals. All boats in that Division must restart irrespective of whether they were over the line or not. Once the RO is satisfied that all boats are back on the correct side of the starting line, the Flag is lowered, accompanied by one sound signal, and the starting sequence recommences after a further minute.
- **During a Race.** It is important to keep track of the progress of all competing boats as they sail around the Course. The Race Sheet allows the RO to record the number of laps completed for each boat. This is important since some boats (within Divisions) are much faster than others. (HINT – it can be beneficial to record a rough finishing order of the boats on the Result Sheet. To do this, position the start boat at the mark at the end of the first lap and record the sail numbers in the order the boats round the mark. The boats will, mostly, approach the finish line in that order. This will make recording the finishing times a LOT easier.)
- **The Finish**
  - **Shorten Course.** The default setting for all races at LJSC is three laps. More often than not, the course will need to be shortened to achieve the target race length of approximately 1 hour. A course may be shortened at any time during a race providing that the leading boat (in either Division) has not completed the required number of laps and finished. If the RO decides to shorten the course, he/she must first decide where the race is to finish (see above) and set the Finish Line accordingly. Once on station, the ‘shorten course’ can be signaled. This involves raising Flag S (white flag with centre blue square) accompanied by two sound signals. Since the Finish Line will be common to both Divisions, it is preferable to signal the shorten course separately

for each Division. The best way to do this is to wait until the leading boat in each Division is within 200m of the Finish Line and raise both Flag S and the respective Divisional flag (Pennant 1 or 2) - accompanied by two sound signals.

- **Recording finish times.** As each boat crosses the line to finish, she should receive a sound signal. The RO should record the Elapsed Time for each boat on the Race Sheet. Once all competing boats have finished and been accounted for, the Finish Boat can lower the blue 'on station' flag, weigh anchor and return to shore.

## Post-race admin

- Once ashore, race sheets should be handed in to the Race Office where the Elapsed Times will be entered into the Sailwave software, which calculates Corrected Times (based on yardstick and individual handicaps) and hence the race results.
- Organise the recovery of the Start Boat back into the Boat Shed. Check that the RHIB has recovered the orange inflatable mark.
- MOST IMPORTANT – MAKE SURE THAT EVERYTHING IS POWERED OFF IN BOTH BOATS.