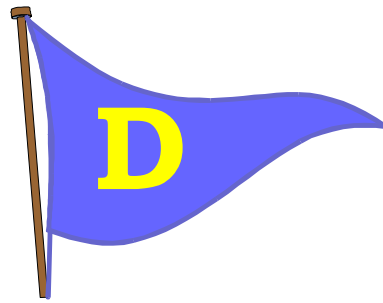
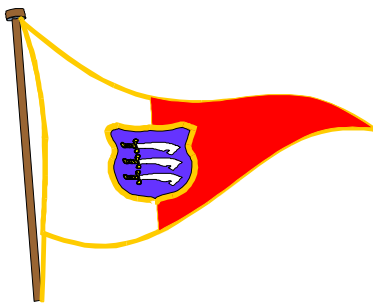


WEST MERSEA YACHT CLUB

&

DABCHICKS SAILING CLUB



JOINT RACE OFFICER NOTES

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2 Introduction and Aims of the Race Officers Notes

- 2.1. Many people who have been involved in race management find it provides an enjoyable and an alternative involvement in our great sport of yacht racing.
- 2.2. These notes are not comprehensive but hopefully give some simplified help.
- 2.3. The sailing instructions and racing rules are the definitive instructions. You should make yourself familiar with these before attempting to control a race.
- 2.4. The guidance given here is for standard racing using a fixed line start.
- 2.5. There is no expectation, but hopefully these notes will prepare you to assist with start party duties. The next step in wanting to help is to assist an experienced start party. Try not to get "*dumped in at the deep end*".

3 The role of the Race Committee

- 3.1. "To provide quality racing for the competitors".
- 3.2. To choose a good course of appropriate length for the event considering the weather forecast, wind direction and tidal situation.
- 3.3. To provide efficient starting and finishing procedures.
- 3.4. To provide accurate timings and processing of results.

4 The Race Committee members

This list is an example of people needed but obviously it will vary depending on the type of racing and size of the fleet. For the local racing a number of these jobs will be carried out by the same person. eg the race officer may also do the sound signals and radio. The minimum number of people for a 20 boat fleet is 4, but this could be a struggle if recalls happen.

- 4.1. Race officer
- 4.2. Timekeeper
- 4.3. Flag and visual signal operators
- 4.4. Sound signaler
- 4.5. Spotters and recorders
- 4.6. Radio officer
- 4.7. Boat Skipper

5 Reference Documents

- 5.1. Sailing instructions & amendments – copies in the start
- 5.2. Course lists – laminated copies are in the start bag
- 5.3. Racing rules – a book is in the Start Bag.

6 Communication with competitors

6.1 Notices/Amendments

These normally deal with changes to the sailing instructions and are posted on the official notice board. This must be undertaken as specified in the sailing instructions/racing rules using visual and sound signals as required.

6.2 Visual signals

6.2.1 Course Board, Start Line board and Blackboard

These are in the Blue Bag for the E/W start line, Course indication and Blackboard. The S start line “board” is a banner in the start bag with strings to tie to the rail.

Normally for information such as:

- 6.2.1.1. Course to be sailed
- 6.2.1.2. Starting line to be used
- 6.2.1.3. Number of rounds to be sailed
- 6.2.1.4. Compass bearing to a mark
- 6.2.1.5. Club Venue for the Post Race Hospitality and Results

6.3 Flags

For giving information regarding status and progress of the racing situation – See **7**.

6.4 Sound signals

Guns / Hooters - Drawing attention to visual signals and yachts finishing.

6.5 Radio communications

Used to pass information to competitors as detailed in the sailing instructions. Call sign for racing is ‘Molliette’ on VHF 77.

7 Phases of the Race Committee tasks

7.1 Producing notice of race and sailing instructions and amendments

- 7.1.1. These are produced by the Club sailing committees for the joint club races and other organizations for their own races. E.g. EAORA, Mersea Week etc.
- 7.1.2. Any amendments will normally be made by the sailing committee. These will be posted on the club notice board in line with sailing instructions and visual and sound signals made if required. It is usual practice for the Race Officer to have a copy to ensure the race fleet are aware.

7.2 Preparing for the start

- 7.2.1. Before the day, the Race Officer should check committee boat and party are organized and know where and when to meet, allowing sufficient time to get to the start line. For a 10.30 start it is advisable to be on the hammerhead by 0900 at the latest.
- 7.2.2. The start bag, chronometer and sound signaling equipment needs to be collected from the respective Club before going out to the committee boat. For WMYC the flag hoist is kept in the boatshed, please ask the Launchman to deliver it to the Committee Boat during the week. For the DSC the hoist is in the Start Box.
- 7.2.3. A well organized team will need at least an hour from leaving the causeway to be ready to start the race on time if weather and every other condition is favorable. Give yourself TIME !
- 7.2.4. Considering the prevailing conditions and the nature of the race decide which course to use from the list. Unless you are very experienced do not attempt to make a course up (Course 77 on the list).

- 7.2.5. Prepare the flag hoist and bend on the flags that you may well need to use for starting. The following are the minimum: Class Flags (Numeral 1 for IRC & 5 for local handicap); Preparatory Flag (P); Postponement Flag (AP); General Recall (First Sub.); Individual Recall (X). It is advisable to arrange the flags in such a way as to ensure one does not blank out another.
- 7.2.6. Whilst preparing the flag hoist and flags don't forget the Club banners WMYC and DSC. These banners denote which Club will be providing hospitality and announcing results after the race and should be fastened to the Committee boat rail in a prominent position. Don't forget to change this during the race if the committee boat swings with the tide/wind. A list of races for the current season with the designated Club is enclosed with the OOD information. If circumstances allow it would be helpful if the OOD would announce on VHF 77 which Club will host when announcing the course.
- 7.2.7. Confirm duties for each of the start party members and the start sequences and times.
- 7.2.8. Display the course to be sailed as required but as early as possible and indicate which start line is being used. It is vital that this is displayed in accordance with the timings given in the sailing instructions.
- 7.2.9. Use radio confirmation wherever possible.
- 7.2.10. Write down start times for all classes and any time limits.
- 7.2.11. Spotters should be identifying the yachts competing and recording their numbers or other identifying marks. They should also note whether the appropriate Class Flag is flown.
- 7.2.12. Once you are satisfied with the preparations and sure you are ready to start get everyone into position and listen to the timekeeper.

7.3 Starting the race(s)

Ten minutes before the first start hoist the Committee Boat flag, a large Orange, this indicates to the fleet that the committee boat is ready to start the race.

The 5 minute system for starting races will be used as per RRS part 3 Rule 26 for all races started under the Joint WMYC/DSC Sailing Instructions. MERSEA WEEK races may adopt a different start sequence, please refer to the Mersea Week Sailing Instructions.

7.3.1 Assuming that everything goes to plan on time and all yachts start correctly:

5 mins. before start	Warning Signal - Class flag hoisted	1 sound signal
4 mins. before start	Preparatory flag code flag P hoisted	1 sound signal
1 min. before start	Preparatory flag removed	1 long sound signal
0 min before start	Start – Class flag removed	1 sound signal

Sequence is repeated 5 minutes before start of next class

NOTE: Joint Sailing Instructions state that the course to be sailed shall be displayed at the Warning Signal ie. 5 minutes from the start. As we will not be starting subsequent classes closer than 10 minute intervals the course board can be displayed until the start of the class but should then be removed.

7.4 Individual Recalls

7.4.1 If one or more yachts are over the line at the start and all offenders are identified:

- 7.4.1.1. Remove the Class flag.
- 7.4.1.2. X flag hoisted with 1 additional sound signal
- 7.4.1.3. X flag remains hoisted until all offenders return completely to the correct side of the line OR 4 minutes whichever is earlier
- 7.4.1.4. Write down numbers/names of those who fail to return and start correctly.
- 7.4.1.5. You are encouraged to use the radio to give information to the fleet to ensure everyone is aware of the line infringement.
- 7.4.1.6. If there is another class starting after this start you should continue with the next start preparations.

7.5 General Recalls

7.5.1 If one or more yachts offend at the start and cannot be identified:

- 7.4.2.1. 1st Sub hoisted with 2 additional sound signals
- 7.4.2.2. Remove Class flag
- 7.4.2.3. Do not hoist next class flag

7.5.2 Restart after General recall

Decide on new start time, as soon as sensibly possible but choose an easily recognized time (eg after a 10.30 start you could choose 10.45 or 10.50). Do not rush into lowering the 1st Sub and find yourself on an odd start time. Write down revised times including limits if any for all affected classes.

6 minutes before new start	Lower 1 st Sub. with	1 sound signal
5 minutes before start	Class flag hoisted with	1 sound signal
4 minutes before start	P flag hoisted with	1 sound signal
1 minute before start	P flag lowered	1 long sound signal
Start	Lower Class flag	1 sound signal

If there are further recalls follow either Individual or General recall procedures above, as appropriate.

Next start (if any) will start 10 minutes on.

On Race days when there are two starts, with the Local Handicap Series starting at 10.40 hours and IRC fleet starting at 10.30 hours, a General Recall in IRC fleet could use more than 5 minutes. Allowing 10 minutes between fleets, it would thus not be possible to start LH at 10.40 and a short delay would be necessary. Make sure you inform the LH Fleet using VHF 77 of the situation and the intended start time.

7.6 Monitoring the racing

Track the yachts and be aware of how they are proceeding while they are within sight. You will need to be ready to finish them. You should note down any incident that you may see in case you have to protest a yacht or provide evidence. You may need to consider shortening course if the race is taking significantly longer than expected.

Therefore you should be prepared to leave station at the Nass and motor to a mark of the course that you think could be used as a finishing mark to ensure all competitors are able

to finish within the time limits prescribed by the Joint Sailing Instructions. BUT make sure you can be on station ready to finish the first boat well before it arrives.

7.7 Finishing the competitors

- 7.6.1. OOD should be in position to properly sight the line and be in communication with the race committee. Sounds easy but with a force 5 blowing and rain it is not always that easy to be heard.
- 7.6.2. Count down each boats approach and give a sound signal to acknowledge each finisher as they touch the line.
- 7.6.3. Time keeper gives finish time for each yacht.
- 7.6.4. Spotter(s) write down each yacht's number and finish time in finishing order.
- 7.6.5. If a yacht did not start correctly write down finishing time for reference with appropriate comment. No sound signal as the yacht did not start.

7.8 Notifying protest committee chairman if required

You will need to arrange a protest committee if the race committee is protesting a yacht (they should be notified as soon as possible) or if a yacht informs you that they are protesting another yacht. Contact the Sailing Secretary, Vice-Commodore or a member of the Sailing Committee for assistance with this if required.

7.9 Processing results

For normal club racing these should be processed using the Sail100 programme in the office at WMYC or the finish times passed to a committee member at the DSC. There is a race results "how to do" instruction in the office, if in any doubt seek help from a member of the sailing committee.

8 Postponements, abandonment's and course shortening

Before the starting signal, the race committee may postpone or abandon the race for any reason. After the start the race may be shortened or abandoned.

8.1 When to postpone a race

The postponement may be made ashore in good time to save competitors going afloat unnecessarily or while afloat in the race area.

8.2 Conditions that may not enable a race to start

- 8.2.1. Too much wind
- 8.2.2. Too little wind.
- 8.2.3. Insufficient depth of water
- 8.2.4. Poor visibility (you can't see the outer distance mark)

8.3 Race committee problems that may not enable a race to start

- 8.3.1. Problems laying race marks
- 8.3.2. Equipment failure
- 8.3.3. Not ready to start the race
- 8.3.4. Error in the starting sequence
- 8.3.5. The race officer considers that an action of the race committee causes insufficient time for competitors to reach the start area.

N.B. If competitors are late for the start through their own tardiness, there is no reason to postpone.

8.4 Postponement Procedures

- 8.4.1. Hoist code flag AP (Answering pennant) with two sound signals.
- 8.4.2. Lower all starting flags
- 8.4.3. The AP on its own indicates an unspecified postponement or can be flown with a numeral pennant indicating the number of hours.
- 8.4.4. BUT, once signaled with a time pennant, the race cannot be restarted earlier.

8.5 Postponement period considerations

During the postponement period it is helpful to keep competitors informed so that they are aware of the reasons of likely future actions. Remember that a five minute start sequence does not give people much warning to get sails up and onto the start line, so advise them in advance when you intend the start sequence to begin.

8.6 Restarting after a postponement

- 8.5.1. Select an appropriate start time.
- 8.5.2. Six minutes before that start time (i.e. One-minute before the Warning Signal)
- 8.5.3. Lower the postponement flag(s) with one sound signal.
- 8.5.4. The normal start procedure is then implemented 1 minute later.

8.7 When to abandon a race

The obvious reason is when there is no prospect of starting or continuing to race.

- 8.6.1. You can abandon after the starting signal if there was an error in the starting procedure.
- 8.6.2. Weather conditions become too severe.
- 8.6.3. Insufficient wind making it likely that no boats will finish within the time limit.
- 8.6.4. A mark is missing or wrongly positioned.
- 8.6.5. The time limit expires and no finishers.
- 8.6.6. Other reasons that directly relate to safety or fairness.

When a race has been abandoned the race becomes void. The race may be re-sailed. If any one finishes within the time limit, the race officer should think long and hard before abandoning.

8.8 How to abandon a race

- 8.7.1. Hoist code flag N with three sound signals.
- 8.7.2. Any starting flags down

Competitors should return to the starting area. The N flag may be accompanied with flag H or A as follows:

- 8.7.3. "H" - Further signals will be made ashore.
- 8.7.4. "A" - No more racing today.

8.9 Restarting after an abandonment

Six minutes before the start (i.e. One-minute before the Warning Signal)

- 8.8.1. Lower the N flag - Accompany with one sound signal.
- 8.8.2. The normal start procedure is then implemented 1 minute later.

8.10 Shortening a course

The sailing instructions may give special arrangements for shortening courses. However standard procedures are specified for shortening during a race. The race committee will

consider the conditions before making the decision and the likelihood of yachts being able to finish within the time limit.

8.10.1 During the race

The committee boat will need to anchor on the correct side of a selected mark of the course that has been chosen for a finishing mark. This establishes the finish line for the race between the committee boat and the mark. The position should ensure that the yacht will pass the mark on its required side when finishing. The position should be so that the boat's course from the previous mark will be approximately at right angles to the new finish line on a free leg. If the new finishing leg is a beat to windward, the committee boat should anchor so that the line is approximately at right angles to the wind.

8.10.1.1 Hoist code flag S accompanied with two sound signals

It is a good idea to give the signal as the yachts approach the mark so that they can hear the sound signal. However competitors do appreciate sufficient planning time to sail for a finish rather than a rounding so a general announcement on VHF77 will be helpful.

9 Changes to the sailing instructions

In the sailing instructions the official notice board is defined. This is where results and notices for competitors will be placed. If a change is required to the sailing instructions a notice must be posted and the following signal is made ashore.

9.1. Hoist code flag L accompanied with one sound signal

The signal may also be given afloat and then means that yachts should come within hailing distance or that they should follow the boat. At championships, competitors may be lead to a different starting area.

10 Choosing courses

10.1. The courses for our yacht club events are generally taken from a ready made list. The length of course will depend on the type of race. Shakedown and ordinary points races will normally be shorter than Cup races. Check with the Vice Commodore, the Sailing Secretary or a member of the sailing committee for advice before the event.

10.2. The course should ideally give a significant distance to windward during the race. A 'follow my leader' procession race is not normally well received.

10.3. The ideal start line is set at right angles to a windward leg. However our fixed lines at the Nass beacon do not always accommodate this. If the line is heavily biased, everybody wants to be at one extreme end to start. This can lead to some potentially dangerous situations. In these instances it may be safer to start with a free-wind first leg when there could be less pressure to be at the same place when the start signal is made.

10.4. If a free-wind first leg is given again make sure that the course will provide adequate work to windward.

10.5. If the situation in 10.3 is likely to occur and you select a free-wind starting leg, be aware that if this also coincides with the tide going the same way be prepared for a recall situation.

11 Queries

If there are any issues or aspects of the race management you are unsure about please check with the Vice Commodore, Sailing Secretary or any member of the joint sailing committees.