

WEST WITTERING SAILING CLUB

Operating Instructions for Race Officers

Thank you for volunteering to be part of the Race Team. These notes have been designed to help the Race Officer (RO) and Assistant Race Officer (ARO) run enjoyable and stress free club events.

- 1. Preparation** – Make sure that you're familiar with the Club Sailing Instructions which can be found at the back of the club programme and on our web site. You should also know who the other race officer is plus the Coxswain(s) and Safety Officer(s). The programme displayed on the clubhouse notice board is the master and should contain the changes that people have agreed with each other, but it is also worth checking the club's Dutyman site.
- 2. Reporting** – All members of the race team should be at the Club House at least one and a half hours before the start of the race. Don't forget to bring your personal buoyancy. This is a mandatory requirement for the race team and competitors alike. It is good practice for Race Officers to hold a short pre-race briefing with the safety team providing an opportunity to clarify roles for the day and highlight any specific issues which are likely to arise. Where two boats are rostered consider how they may be deployed to optimise coverage of the fleet. Also take the opportunity to consider any particular risks associated with the proposed course and specific competitors taking part in the event. On occasions, perhaps as a result of members swapping duties, there may be an imbalance of experience within the safety team. If so consider whether this needs to be redressed. Suitably qualified junior members aged 16 or 17 may undertake duties provided that they are accompanied by an adult.
- 3. Safety and the decision to race** - The Race Officer and his/her team are responsible for racing on their day of duty. He/she is acting with the delegated authority of the Committee and on behalf of the Club. The RO will consult when practicable with others but decisions on whether and where to race, and race management on the day in question is theirs and theirs alone. The decision of the RO is final and must be respected by members. This is not a 'one off' decision and should be kept under review in the light of prevailing conditions and the availability of adequate safety cover. Access to cambermet and other real time weather reports and forecasts are available through the club's computer. The following are particularly important:
 - ✓ Wind speed in relation to the competency of those taking part and the temperature of both the air and water. Winds that are consistently in excess of 20 knots are usually considered to be too much, especially earlier in the season when it's cold. The clubhouse computer should be used to obtain the latest reports from Cambermet and an up to date forecast. If the weather is from the west, Bramblemet may also give an indication of what is to come
 - ✓ Visibility – will the crew of the patrol boats be able to see far enough?

No racing should take place without adequate safety cover. No rigid rule is practical for defining what is "adequate" however the following points should be considered:

- ✓ Do you have the number of support boat teams indicated in the programme?
- ✓ Is the number of actual support boats available adequate? In some instances (such as where there is an unexpectedly high turn out of dinghies) this may be inadequate. You might have to find an additional support boat, or postpone or cancel part of the racing programme.
- ✓ Does each support boat have a competent crew of two?

If you are short of adequate or suitable crew for the prevailing conditions, consider seeking replacement or additional personnel. Announce to members intending to race that a volunteer is required so that the remainder may race.. If it is not possible to obtain this cover, some or all of the racing must be cancelled.

WEST WITTERING SAILING CLUB

Once a decision has been made, raise the appropriate flags on the club flagstaff as indicated below

Committee boat start	Club Pennant above Flag C
Club line start (pursuit races and other special events)	Club Pennant only
Race postponed/cancelled	Club Pennant above Flag A + Answering Pennant

4. **Radios** – are provided for use on the Committee Boat and the Patrol Boat(s). Radios are kept on charge in the clubhouse. The call signs used are:

Patrol Boat 1 (RIB):	Wittering Yellow
Patrol Boat 2 (Pioneer Multi):	Wittering Red
Committee Boat:	Wittering White
Patrol Boat 3 (Janneau Rigiflex)	Wittering Orange

Please see the Instructions for Using ICOM-M31 Handheld Radios and ensure that correct radio procedure is used at all times.

5. **Race Officer Equipment** – Most of the equipment you require will be stored on the Committee Boat. The table below sets out what you'll need.

From the club house	Whiteboard and pens for course/instructions Sign on and Declaration Forms (with pens) Committee boat key Radios Inflatable marks (if required)
On the Committee Boat	Flags Timers Megaphone Fixed hooter (plus spares and whistle) Mooring tackle for inflatable marks Pin end mark
Additional items which may be needed for club line starts e.g. pursuit races	Relevant large sized flags suitable for East Head flagstaff Manual hooters

6. **Entry Forms/Class Lists** – Blank entry and sign off sheets are to be found in the stationery box. These need to be completed and made available, at the Hard (Committee Boat Start) or on East Head (Club Start Line). If separate races are to be run for fast and slower boats separate forms should be used. Ensure that the forms are set up in triplicate in the clipboards so that there is a copy for the Race Officers and each of the Patrol Boats. Junior helms entering club events unaccompanied by a responsible adult, must be signed in (on the entry form) by an adult acting in *loco parentis*. For a committee boat start a Patrol Boat should return to the hard to collect the entry forms 30 minutes before the start of the first race distributing the copies to the Race Officers and any other Patrol Boat(s)

WEST WITTERING SAILING CLUB

- 7. Setting a course** –Your choice of course should reflect the nature of the event, weather conditions and capability of competitors and patrol boat crew. The clubhouse Chichester Harbour chart displays all the harbour racing marks together with a compass rose to plot wind direction. Plotting your proposed course on the chart is a useful way of avoiding errors in the course which may spoil the race. Key points to check are that:
- ✓ The course respects the ‘handedness’ of marks used (most harbour racing marks as designated as port or starboard handed)
 - ✓ If necessary, turning marks are identified and ‘looped marks’ are avoided
 - ✓ On busy summer weekends aim to avoid setting courses which send the fleet through the middle of the East Head anchorage.
- 8. Club Marks** – The tall narrow orange PIN mark should be used as the outer distance mark for Committee Boat starts. The Club buoy, “HUT” can be used but time will need to be allowed for the Patrol Boat to lay it in the desired position.
- 9. Starting Races** – Races shall be started by using the following signals (as per Rule 25 of the Racing Rules of Sailing). Times shall be taken from the visual signals; the absence of a sound signal shall be disregarded. In practice of course the sound signal is what competitors will be listening out for and the committee boat is now fitted with an electric horn which should be clearly audible. In case of problems a number of back up manual hooters are aboard as well as a whistle,

Signal	Flag	Sound	Minutes before starting signal
Warning	Class Flag	1 sound	5
Preparatory	Flag P	1 sound	4
One-minute	Preparatory Flag removed	1 long sound	1
Starting	Class Flag removed	1 sound	0

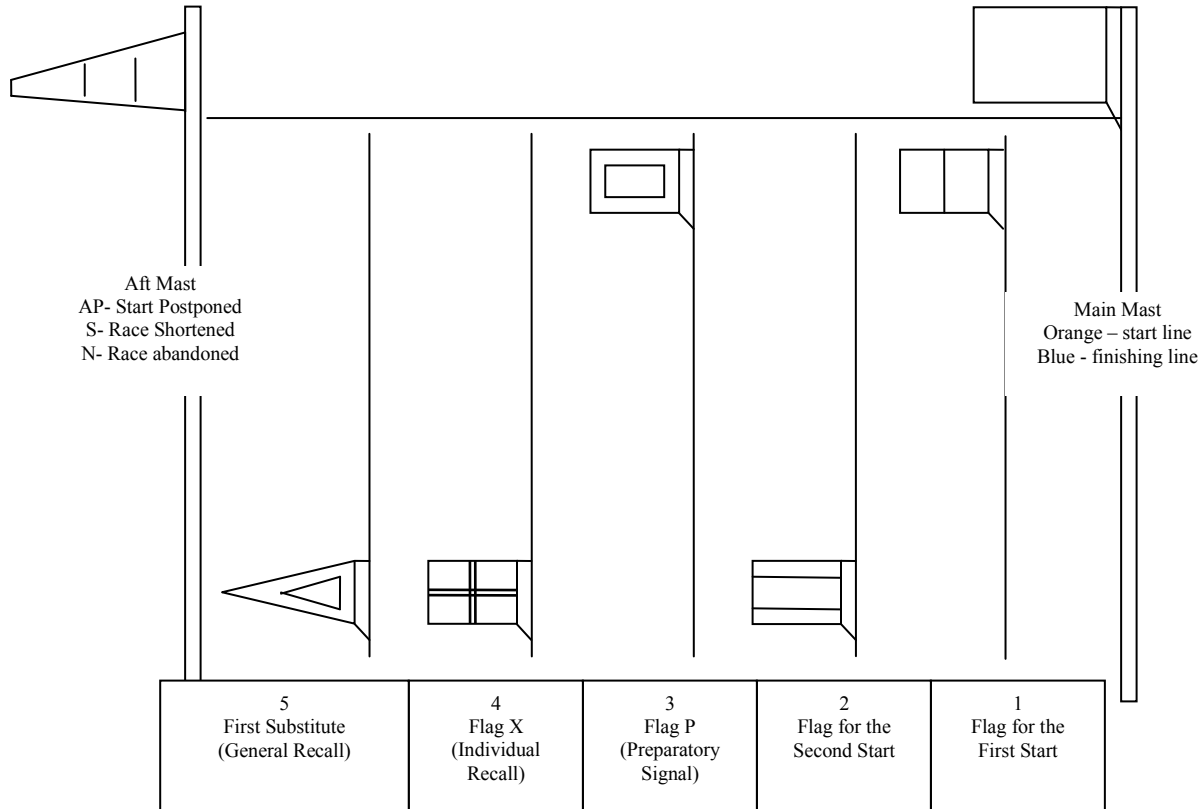
The warning signal for each succeeding class shall be made with the starting signal of the proceeding class. Where a large number of entries are anticipated, consideration should be given to running a separate start for Devon Yawls and any other heavy displacement boats. This should be 5 minutes before the fast handicap start using Flag D. The Class Flags specified in the Sailing Instructions are as follows.

Event/Class	Flag
Fast Handicap	Flag F (red diamond on white square)
Devon Yawls	Flag D (2 horizontal yellow stripes above and below blue stripe)
Slow Handicap	Flag G (yellow and blue vertical stripes)
Juniors	Flag H (vertical white and red halves)
Pursuit Race	Flag U (red and white check)

- 10. Committee Boat starts** –. the start line will be the notional line between the fore mast on the committee boat and the pin end mark. This is stored on the committee boat with its mooring tackle. The start line must be set at a perpendicular angle to wind so that the first leg of the course is a beat.. Only bias the line if you are confident that you can get it right. It is recommended that the line should be 1.5 times the length of all the starters (e.g. assuming an average boat length of 5 meter for 12 boats gives a line length of around 100 meters). The start line must not be across the main fairway, nor too near other racing marks For consistency we suggest the seven halyards are used as illustrated below. Longer pennants, such as the Answering Pennant, will fly best from the aft mast. The halyard boom may need to be raised by using the red halyard on each mast. The orange and blue flags (for start/finish) should be flown from the foremast
- 11. Club line starts** –. For pursuit races and other special events the club line may be used. This is the notional line between the Club Flagstaff on East Head and the Fenner beacon. A set of large

WEST WITTERING SAILING CLUB

nautical flags are available in the club house for use on the club flag staff. The National Trust flag may be temporarily lowered. Though not essential, ROs are advised to use the committee boat to run the starting procedure when using the club line. One clear advantage of this is the opportunity this offers to use the megaphone to hail boats at the start of a pursuit race. At the same time it is also useful to avoid being distracted during the starting season which can happen all too easily when you are on the beach.



- 12. Recalls** the procedure for **individual recall** must be followed if one or more boats are 'on course side' (OCS) at the start, this **requires one blast of the horn within 4 seconds of the starting signal** accompanied by Flag X which should be raised, having previously been attached to a halyard. It is helpful, though by no means essential, to identify OCS boats using the megaphone. The X flag should be lowered once all OCS boats have returned to the pre-course side of the line. A **general recall** should be considered where several boats are OCS, and particularly if some of these are unidentifiable. A general recall is indicated by two blasts of the horn accompanied by First Substitute. A general recall should also be used if there has been an error in the starting procedure. Following a general recall restart the sequence by lowering First Substitute accompanied by one blast of the horn. One minute later Flag P and the relevant class Flag should be raised to signal the 4 minute 'preparatory signal'.
- 13. Postponement** – before the starting signal the race officer may, for any reason, postpone the race. This is done by displaying the Answering Pennant and giving two blasts on the horn. Starting procedures are resumed by breaking out the Class Flag one minute after lowering the Answering Pennant. One blast of the horn should accompany the lowering of the Answering Pennant.
- 14. Shortening Course** - if the Race Officer decides to shorten the course Flag S should be broken out as the leading boat approaches the mark of the course at which the race is to be shortened and two blasts made on the horn. The course is then completed when the leading boat crosses

WEST WITTERING SAILING CLUB

the line between the mark and the staff displaying Flag S. The class flag(s) for the races to be shortened should be displayed below Flag S if only some of the races are to be shortened.

- 15. Finishing Races** - All boats must be timed across the finishing line and their times noted to the nearest second on the Entry Form under the heading "Finishing Times". Sound the horn as each boat crosses the line. Note: When a large number of boats finish together, it is often easier to view the fleet from the flag mast and to take down sail numbers and times on a blank sheet of paper filling in the Entry Form later. Record the actual finishing time, not the elapsed time.
- 16. Declaration Forms** – declaration forms should be made available at East Head (or the Hard) so that each helmsman can comply with section 16.3 of the Club Sailing Instructions.
- 17. Protests** - Protests must be made in accordance with section 14 of the Sailing Instructions. Protest forms are kept in the Race Box. The Race Officer should notify the Sailing Secretaries who will organise the Protest Committee that will hear the protest.
- 18. ACCOUNTING FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS** - IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT EVERY STARTER IS ACCOUNTED FOR AT THE END OF EVERY RACE. DO NOT ALLOW THE SAFETY OFFICER TO RETURN THE PATROL BOAT TO THE SNOWHILL CREEK MOORING UNTIL IT IS CONFIRMED THAT EVERY PARTICIPANT HAS RETURNED SAFELY TO EAST HEAD OR SNOWHILL CREEK.
- 19. After Racing Completed** - After racing has ended and upon return to Snowhill, the Race Officer should check that the Race Officer box is complete and tidy. Race results should be calculated using the HAL's Racing Programme and posted on the notice board. Finally take down the Club Flag and congratulate yourself for having organised a successful day's racing!