

ROYAL FORTH YACHT CLUB



Race Management Handbook

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Introduction

The club relies on its members to assist with the successful running of our racing events. It is important that we provide enjoyable and fair racing for all those that want it, whatever their level of experience.

Within the club, the Sailing Committee is responsible for Race Management and appointing Race Officers for our events. The names of the current members of the Sailing Committee can be found in the Club Handbook.

On race day, the Race Officer has the ultimate responsibility for the Race Management of the event.

Pre-race preparation

Go out with someone experienced to help you become familiar with the signals and sequences.

Learn the signals (flags and sounds)

Be familiar with equipment provided by the club. Know what you have to provide for yourself.

Organise assistants for the various tasks during the race. A driver for Royal Forth will have been allocated. Check with him that he is available. Re-read the sailing instructions.

Check the weather conditions for the day of the race.

Arrive at the club on the day with time to spare and check the wind speed and direction. At RFYC the clubhouse wind and direction indications are now badly affected by the new buildings. Prepare to postpone or cancel if there is too little / too much wind.

Pre-start preparation

Once you have decided that racing may start on time the race management team must be ready to go. The committee boat, Royal Forth in the majority of cases, accompanied by any rescue boats, should proceed to the start area no later than 30 minutes before the scheduled start time.

The timekeeper should have his watches ready, the recorder should have paper, pencils and clipboard ready and the signaller should be ready with sound making equipment and flags. There is a clock on Royal Forth that displays the correct time, controlled electronically, this should be used for timing whenever possible. The flags required for normal club racing will be the class flags, flags P, X, First Substitute, AP, S, N, A, H, and, if used, the orange flag to indicate the start line.

Consider whether or not to postpone or cancel. Races have a set start time. The Warning Signal must be made 5 minutes before the scheduled start time. It must be made on time or a postponement signalled. Before the Warning Signal is made the Race Officer must set and designate the intended course.

Setting a course

Taking into consideration the current weather and the forecast, (remember the wind often dies in the evening), choose a course that all the fleet can be expected to complete within the time limit (including any extensions). Be sure that all the racing marks for the intended course are on station.

Racing sailors are looking for as true a beat as can be achieved and a decent run as well. A windward start is preferred but reaching and running starts are acceptable if a better beat is available later in the race. Off-wind starts are more taxing for the Race Officer.

Apart from designated dinghy courses (see dinghy instructions), three types of courses are employed at RFYC: Mid-firth Courses, Breakwater Courses and Passage Race Courses.

The type of course appropriate for each race is designated in the Sailing Instructions. Mid-firth courses are described in the Sailing Instructions, Appendices A and B and Breakwater Courses are described in Appendix C. In each case the course is designated by a colour and/or a number board.

The number and/or colour boards are inserted in the holders at each side of the committee boat (Royal Forth).

The starting sequence

The starting sequence is the

Warning Signal=Class Flag (five minutes to go) plus one sound signal.

Preparatory Signal=Blue Peter* (four minutes to go) plus one sound signal.

One Minute Signal plus one sound signal.

Starting Signal. plus one sound signal.

All timings are taken from the visual signals and not from the sound signals to the extent that the signal is still valid even if the sound signal fails to operate. However, in local racing it would be good practice to postpone and start again if the sound signal equipment failed.

At any time during the sequence, the rules state that race may be postponed or abandoned for any reason. This protects the Race Officer against claims for redress if he postpones because of a mistake in the sequence or he decides to alter course if the wind shifts or for any other reason.

*Or other Preparatory Flags – see RRS.

Warning Signal

The Warning Signal (Class Flag) is made either five minutes before the due start or one minute after a prior postponement has been lowered and is made by displaying the Class Flag and making one sound signal. **Do not start before the advertised time.**

Preparatory Signal

The Preparatory Signal (Blue Peter) is made one minute after the Warning Signal and is made by displaying the Preparatory Signal and making one sound signal.

One Minute Signal

The One Minute Signal is made three minutes after the Preparatory Signal and is displayed by removing the Preparatory Signal and making one sound signal.

Starting Signal

The Starting Signal is made one minute after the Preparatory Signal has been removed and is displayed by removing the Warning Signal

Where more than one start is required the following start is signalled by the displaying of the Warning Signal for the next start.

On the course-side at the start (OCS)

If one or more boats are over the start line before the start signal, and can be identified, an Individual Recall should be signalled. This is done by displaying Flag X with one sound signal. This should be displayed until all such boats are completely on the pre-start side of the starting line, but not later than four minutes after the starting signal. The Race Officer is under no obligation to advise OCS boats that they have crossed the line early.

General Recalls

If one or more boats are over the start line before the start, but cannot be identified, a General Recall should be signalled. This is done by displaying the First Substitute flag with two sound signals. The First Substitute should be removed, with one sound signal, one minute before the Warning Signal for the new start.

Postponements

The Race Officer may postpone the start of a race at any time before the Start Signal. This is done by displaying Flag AP (Answering Pennant) with two sound signals. The AP should be removed, with one sound signal, one minute before the Warning Signal for the next start.

NB. In the case of starts that do not follow immediately after one another (e.g. 30 minutes between classes), each race is postponed the corresponding amount of time. For example, the first start is 1500 and the second 1530. The first start is delayed until 1510, therefore the second start will be 1540. The reason for this is that AP means 'all races not started are postponed'.

Control at, and after the Start

Having previously noted the names and sail numbers of all boats taking part, it is important to make sure that they have all started (it is not uncommon for boats to return to the harbour without you noticing). The easiest way to do this is count the number of boats on the course, or still to cross the line. There is normally a time limit that boats must start a race within – see the Sailing Instructions.

Once all the starters are clear of the start area proceed to pick up the start mark. You are then free to either set your finish line or move up the course to one of the marks to observe the boats rounding. It is always worthwhile recording times at a rounding mark, in case there is a protest or the race has to be abandoned for any reason.

It is important to keep a close eye on all the boats during the race to ascertain whether they will all manage to complete the race within the time limit or extensions. It is the Race Officer's job to ensure that as many boats as possible get a finish. This may mean shortening the course.

Shortening the course

If you decide that the course needs to be shortened, you need to decide where. Once you have done this the race can be shortened by displaying Flag S with two sound signals. It is normal to wait until the leading boat is within earshot before making the sound signals. If you are shortening for all classes only Flag S is required. If there is more than one class sailing and you decide to shorten for only one class, the class flag for that class needs to be displayed with Flag S.

For shortened courses the normal finishing line is between the chosen mark of the course and the mast of the committee boat. If you are able to anchor it is better to do so. However if this is not possible, select a point on shore so that you can maintain a transit, thus keeping the line constant. Alternatively you can lay a buoy between yourself and the finish mark and use this as your point of reference.

Abandonment

If you decide to abandon the race for any reason, this is done by displaying Flag N with three sound signals. See the Racing Rules of Sailing for other flags that can accompany Flag N, and their meanings.

It is important that all boats that cross the finish line have their times recorded, even if you have previously noted that they have infringed a rule. For example they may have been OCS and not returned, or they may have missed a mark. Any such incidents should be noted. The reason for taking the time is that a protest may be lodged and redress given. It is the Protest Committee who will decide if the boat is entitled to a result.

The Finish

Ensure that the finish line is set in plenty of time and that you are on station to take the finish times. As each boat crosses the line their time should be recorded and they are given one sound signal.

Protests

Any boat displaying a protest flag should be noted at the time. The Sailing Instructions advise all skippers that they must let the Race Officer know of their intention to protest, however failure to do so does not invalidate a protest as far as the Race Officer is concerned.

Protests must be submitted as per the Sailing Instructions. Any protests received should be noted with the time of receipt, there is a space for this at the top of form. It is unlikely that a protest hearing will be held on the day of the race, so it is important that when the results are published they include the phrase 'subject to protest', even if the protest may not affect the result.

After the Finish

As soon as all boats are finished or have exceeded the time limit, you should recover the finish mark and return to the harbour as soon as possible. On the way back to the harbour, all equipment used should be checked and tidied away. Any breakages or missing equipment should be reported to a member of the Sailing Committee.

Results

It is part of the Race Officer's duties to complete the result sheet immediately after the race. If you are unsure of how to do this, please speak to one of the Sailing Committee.

Once completed the results sheet should be posted on the notice board in the club lounge. Please make a duplicate copy of the results. This can be done in the office if there is someone about who can give you access and is able to use the copier, alternatively please copy the results by hand and leave them at the office.

Results Calculation

Handicaps are either three or four figure numbers.

In the case of a three-figure handicap, the handicap figure that should be used in calculations is preceded by a decimal point. e.g. 994 = 0.994

In the case of a four-figure handicap, the handicap figure that should be used in calculations is the number with a decimal point after the first figure. e.g. 1025 = 1.025

The following is an example of how to calculate the results, there are other methods, but this is found to be one of the easiest. We will assume that the boats finish together having sailed for exactly one hour.

1. Convert the **Elapsed Time** to Seconds

2. Divide the **Seconds** by the **Handicap** (e.g. 1.025 or 0.994 or 1.000) and then round the result to the nearest full second. (e.g. $3512 \cdot 19 = 3512$ & $3621 \cdot 73 = 3622$).

Elapsed Time (Seconds) Handicap Corrected Time (Seconds) Place

3600	1.025	3512	1
3600	0.994	3622	3
3600	1.000	3600	2