

MINIMA YACHT CLUB

RACE OFFICERS MANUAL

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1. DUTIES OF RACE OFFICER





1. The duties of the Race Officer are primarily to conduct races for the enjoyment of sailors, consistent with safety.
2. The Race Officer should be familiar with the Notice of Race and the Sailing Instructions issued for Minima Races or the particular Open Meeting as appropriate. These are kept in a file in the race box.
3. The Race Officer's role is to manage the race acting as the Race Committee as set out in The Racing Rules of Sailing such as: Rule 27 - Setting the course; Rule 29 – Recalls; Rules 32 and 33 – Shortening, Abandoning, and Changing the Course.
4. Race Officers who want help may invite any experienced Race Officer, not a competitor in that race if one is available, to give guidance on procedure or making any decision..
5. A sailor cannot Protest against a Race Officer for breaking a Rule but may request redress from a Protest Committee from an error by a Race Officer.
6. Sailors cannot be penalised without a hearing of a Protest Committee. Enforcement of the Rules is primarily the responsibility of sailors. A Race Officer may Protest a sailor for a hearing by a Protest Committee, subject to informing that sailor as soon as possible.
7. Protestors are required to hand to the Race Office a completed Protest Form within one hour of the last boat completing the race. On receiving a Protest Form the Race Office should arrange for a Protest Committee to be formed or request a member of the Sailing Committee to do so.
8. If possible the Race Officer should be present one hour before racing starts in order to give the launch crew adequate time for laying marks for the course before ferrying is required.
9. Valuables may be left in the locked box in the Race Box which should be left locked when the Race Officer is not present

2 PREPARING FOR THE RACE

1. Identify the race or races to be conducted during under your control.
2. Establish contact with the Bosun
3. You must note in the Race Book the sail numbers of competing boats and record lap and finishing times of boats completing their laps. Most Race Officers find it easier initially to enter these details on scrap paper:

Flag Pole

4. Raise the Commodore, Vice-Commodore, Rear-Commodore Flag or Club burgee according to the most senior member in attendance

	Commodore		Rear Commodore
	Vice-Commodore		Minima Club Burgee

Equipment

5. Check that the following items are available ready for use: Race book, class boards, buoy boards and lap number boards, timer, pencils, scrap paper, hand bell, megaphone.
6. The Declaration Book, headed and dated should be placed in the lobby (by the kitchen), with a pen. Sailors are required to certify that they have sailed the course in accordance with the Sailing Instructions for their results to count.

Flag signals

Compulsory buoyancy aids Flag letter Y		Postponement Flag AP	
Solo class Flag number 1		Handicap class Flag letter Z	
Enterprise class Flag letter E		Topper class Flag letter T	
Merlin class Flag letter O		Thames Rater class Flag letter A	
Mass Start Races Handicap flag Flag letter Z		Class Races starting as Mass Start Flag G	
Preparatory flag Flag P			
Individual Recall Flag X		General Recall One minute to restart sequence	
Shorten Course Flag S		Abandon Race Flag N	
Change Course Flag C			

Races are controlled by the visual signals: flags and boards above. Times are taken from the visual signals which take priority over sound signals.

Flags are to be displayed by flags or boards which ever are available in the Race Box.

3 SAFETY

1. Race Officers should have read already the Safety Guidance notes for Race Officers, Sailors and Launch Crews and MYC Emergency Procedures.
2. Display the Compulsory Buoyancy Flag Y as early as possible in adverse weather or strong stream conditions. This flag must be displayed before any flag that is part of the starting sequence. Ring the hand bell once when displaying this flag.
3. Competitors are entirely responsible for their decision to race, except that special consideration should be given to minors (under the age of 16) having regard to safety coverage.
4. While it is not necessary to compel a minor to stop sailing just because he or she has capsized, minors should be instructed to return to shore if the Race Officer considers that it is unsafe for them to continue sailing: for example due to inexperience, strong stream or overtiredness in strong winds or cold weather.
5. Give the launch crew guidance on action in possible emergencies including the location of the launch during the race. It is best practice to have at least two people in the launch in the event of capsizes. A delay of a minute or two is acceptable in order to pick up an additional helper when only one person is manning the launch.
6. Any serious incident should be recorded as soon as possible in the club's Accident Book which is to be found in the kitchen.
7. The First Aid Kit is in the Kitchen
8. In a real emergency you can call on the RNLi who say they can reach Kingston in their RIB from above Teddington lock in 10 minutes and Hampton Court in 15 minutes. Call 999.

4 SETTING THE COURSE

1. The objective when setting the course is to facilitate an enjoyable race for the Sailors.
2. Examples of courses are shown in the following pages but there is no limitation on other courses. Inexperienced Race Officers are advised to set the course and number of laps in consultation with an experienced sailor, except that the number of laps is not set for pursuit races.
3. Mark C should be below the start line, and if both A and B are used then B should be the furthest upstream.
4. With limiting the scope of Race Offices, usually courses should be set with marks to be passed on the port side, exceptions being zig-zag courses or to help boats to pass the upstream marks when there is a strong stream.
5. Races should be planned for the leading boat in each class to finish in one and a half hours except when shorter finishing times are needed to facilitate more than one race, light, or weather or river conditions.
6. If a course is set with laps entirely upstream of the Race Box finishing line, the Race Officers must arrange for the number of completed laps and lap times to be recorded in the Race Book.
7. Instruct the bosun where to lay the marks in plenty of time to avoid delaying ferrying sailors to the dinghy park
8. Use of a variety of courses over time will make best use of the water available to the Club. Avoid downwind starts which may cause overcrowding at the leeward mark. The exception being when there is a strong stream when all starts should be upstream.

Light winds:

9. The marks should be set to try to avoid dead wind areas close to trees or other obstructions, such as moored launches.
10. The open water between Church and Ravens Ait may be the only area where there is a reasonable wind. In this area a number of circuits may be made and the race may be started or finished up there from the launch or the bank.
11. When the wind conditions are uncertain then if both Marks A and B are placed initially then the Race Officer can choose which one to use nearer the start time.
12. Whilst the normal duration of the race is 90 minutes, when there is a failing wind pay attention to the stragglers. The race may be shortened for the leader to less than 90 minutes.

Strong winds

13. Strong winds open up the possibility of longer courses but you may only be able to set these when both launches are in operation.

Strong Stream

14. With a very strong stream: set a short course.

5 SAMPLE COURSES

<p>Course 1 A simple north windward-leeward course: port rounding – 2 laps.</p>	<p>Course 2 Strong stream course: starboard rounding – 2 laps.</p> <p>Marks close to bank to avoid strong stream</p> <p>Mark C close to start line to avoid difficult sailing area down stream</p> <p>Wind in any direction.</p>	<p>Course 3 Windward-leeward course: port rounding - 3 laps round B & A</p> <p>Better winds between Church & Ravens Ait</p>
<p>Kingston Bridge</p>	<p>Kingston Bridge</p>	<p>Kingston Bridge</p>
<p>Flags displayed:</p>		
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 10px auto; text-align: center; line-height: 40px;">2</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 10px auto; text-align: center; line-height: 40px;">2</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 10px auto; text-align: center; line-height: 40px;">3</div>

6 STARTING PROCEDURE (All Races)

1. As early as practicable before the start, display on the front of the Race Box:

The letters indicating the marks for the course: red (leave to port) or green (leave to starboard) to indicate the rounding direction, and the number of laps.

2. Sort the class flags needed for the race into order. See Note 'a' below.

3. Check that the main power switch is on in the Clubhouse

4. Switch on the power at the isolator to start the Race Clock:

On/Off Switch	ON
Reverse/Forward Switch	REVERSE
Class/Pursuit Switch	CLASS (Class or Handicap)
.....	PURSUIT (Pursuit)
Bell Switch.....	ON

5. Note the sail numbers of the boats about to race.

Notes

a. There is only a thirty second gap between switching on the start timer and the bell for displaying the first flag. Therefore, have the first flag ready in the frame to slide across.

b. Before the start, make sure that the Individual and General Recall flags are to hand as they must be displayed promptly if needed.

c. The purpose of ringing the bell is to draw sailors' attention to flags displayed or removed. Official times are taken from the display or removal of flags. **Official times are taken from the display or removal of flags**

d. For open meetings, check the Sailing Instructions/Notice of Race.

e. To postpone a race, display the AP (postponement) flag and ring the hand bell twice. To cancel the postponement remove the AP flag and ring the bell. Display the class flag for the next start one minute afterwards. Signals are heard more clearly if the hand bell is rung continuously for two or three seconds. When two or more rings are specified, the process is repeated.

f. If you do forget to start the timer, the easiest way out is to start the timer 17 minutes after the start (i.e 1000 seconds) then record lap times as the timer on rough paper. It is easy to add 1000 when transferring the lap times into the Race Book. If it seems likely that the first boat will complete her first lap in less than 17 minutes, consider starting the clock after 10 minutes (600 seconds) and add 600 when transferring to the Race Book.

7 COUNTDOWN TO THE START (CLASS AND HANDICAP)

1. **Five and a half minutes** before the start of the race, switch the Starting Clock FORWARD/REVERSE switch to FORWARD.
2. **Five minutes** before the start, when the bell sounds after the buzzer:

Display the first Class Flag, or the Mass Start or Handicap Flag
Ring the hand bell once
3. **Four minutes** before the start, when the second bell rings:

Add the Preparatory Flag P
Ring the hand bell once
4. **One minute** before the start, when the third bell rings:

Remove the Preparatory Flag P
Ring the hand bell once
5. **The Start** when the fourth bell rings:

Remove the Class Flag (so there are no flags left showing)
Ring the hand bell once
START THE TIMER
6. Five minutes after the **Start**, repeat the starting sequence 2–5 above for the next class. You will be prompted by the buzzer and bell. Repeat the process again until all classes have started.
7. If a mistake in the starting procedure has been made, the start may be abandoned by displaying the abandon race flag N and ringing the hand bell twice. This means return to start area for the start procedure to be restarted at the next start indicated by the start clock.
8. Note After all the boats have started, switch the FORWARD/REVERSE switch to REVERSE to wind the clock back ready for the next race officer
9. If any boats are over the line at the start, display the individual recall flag X and sound the hand bell once. Continue to display the Individual Recall flag until all boats have started correctly.
10. A boat that has been recalled cannot be penalised for not re-crossing the line unless the sound signal is made as well as the Recall Flag is displayed. If possible the boat(s) that has not started properly should be informed by using the megaphone but a hail in lieu of sounding the hand bell is not sufficient for a Protest Committee to impose a penalty.
11. If too many boats are on the wrong side of the line and cannot be identified then display the General Recall signal and sound the hand bell twice. When you are ready to restart the race for the recalled class, the warning signal for a new start shall be made after the General Recall is removed.
12. After the new start, the next start will follow by displaying the next class flag, five minutes later, as indicated by the starting clock.

8 COUNTDOWN TO THE START (PURSUIT)

1. **Five and three-quarter minutes** before the start of the race, switch the Starting Clock FORWARD/REVERSE switch to FORWARD.
2. **Five minutes** before the start, when the bell sounds after the buzzer:
 - Display the Group 0 Flag '0'
 - Ring the hand bell once
3. **Four minutes** before the start, when the second bell rings:
 - Display the Preparatory Flag P
 - Ring the hand bell once
4. **One minute before the start**, when the third bell rings:
 - Remove the Preparatory Flag P
 - Ring the hand bell once
5. **The Start** when the fourth bell rings:
 - Replace the Class 0 number with a 1
 - Ring the hand bell once
 - START THE TIMER**
6. **Three minutes** after the Group 0 Start,
 - Prompted by the buzzer and bell, ring the hand bell once, and replace the 1 with a 2. Three minutes later repeat this, replacing the 2 with a 2, until Group 8. The preparatory flag is not used again.
 - If any boats are in Groups higher than 8, switch off the starting clock because the bell will sound at the wrong time. For higher groups start them at three minute intervals when the timer reads: Group 9: 1620secs; Group 10: 1800secs; Group 11: 1980secs; Group 12 2160secs.
7. After the last group has started, switch off the bell, leaving the starting clock running.
8. Have ready a note on a piece of paper each boat that is ready to race with the group in which it is required to start. If any boats are over the line at their group start, display the individual recall flag X and sound the hand bell once. If possible, warn the relevant boat(s) that they have not started properly. Note any boats that have not re-crossed the line or started in the wrong group. You will need the schedule of the individual Pursuit Race Groups to hand. Boats that have started in an earlier group than their own and have not re-crossed the line, cannot be penalised except by a Protest Committee.
9. After the boats have started or when Group 8 has started, switch the FORWARD/REVERSE switch to REVERSE to wind the clock back ready for the next race officer.

10. In any Pursuit Series, if only one boat enters the race she shall be scored as having competed in that race provided that she has completed at least one lap. The Race Officer should follow the Shorten Course procedure when satisfied that there is no other competitor.

Notes

- a) There is only a thirty second gap between switching on the start timer and the bell for displaying the first flag. Therefore, have the first flag ready in the frame to slide across.
- b) The purpose of ringing the bell is to draw sailors' attention to flags displayed or removed. Official times are taken from the display or removal of flags.
- c) To postpone a race, display the AP (postponement) flag and ring the hand bell twice.
- d) Sound signals are heard more clearly if the hand bell is rung continuously for two or three seconds. When two or more rings are specified, the process is repeated.

9 PROCEDURE DURING THE RACE

1. During racing: note the completed lap times as each boat completes a lap through the start line.

To Abandon racing

2. In case of an emergency, MYC Emergency procedures provide for the display of Flag N (Abandon Race)
3. The Race Officer may abandon the race, if the race has started and a mistake has occurred, by displaying Flag N (Abandon Race) and ringing the handbell twice. In dangerous weather or stream conditions the race should be abandoned if the launch is out of action or cannot cope due to the number of capsizes.

To Change the next leg of the course

4. The Race Officer may change a leg of the course that begins at a mark by changing the position of the next mark (or the finishing line)
5. If the next leg will be changed, the Flag C shall be displayed and all boats shall be informed before starting the leg by vigorously ringing the bell and or loud hailer or by the launch crew. The C Flag is in the canvas roll of flags under the bench in the Race Box.

Note

For example: in an unanticipated falling wind strength, shorten subsequent legs to mark A instead of B, or to move a mark or marks to move the race into a more windy area..

10 FINISHING

Duration of Races

1. Target times for Sunday afternoon single races are 90 minutes and for the back to back Summer Series 45 minutes for each race. Pursuit races 90 minutes
2. The recommended times for finishing Wednesday evening races are April 20:00; May 20:15; June and July 20:30; August 20:15. Finish the race earlier in failing wind or light conditions, but if conditions are good let it go as long as you can.
3. Normally boats should be finished as they pass the finishing line in the same direction as the Start having completing whole laps. An exception might be when the course has been set with circuits near Raven's Ait or failing wind conditions.

Procedure

4. Ring the handbell once as each finishing boat crosses the line and record as accurately as possible their finishing time in the Race Book.
5. If boats finish very close together, then their order of finishing should be recorded.
6. For Pursuit Races, boats that have been lapped do not finish until they have completed the same number of laps as the leader.

To shorten the course

7. This is necessary if the fleet is not going to complete the set number of laps within the target time. The Race Officer may shorten the course by displaying Flag S after the lead boat has rounded the final mark. If the shortened course is to apply to only one class then the appropriate class flag should also be displayed.
8. The Race Officer may shorten the course by establishing a new finish line between the launch or the bank and any mark, provided that sailors are informed by displaying Flag S and ringing the hand bell before they have started the final leg of the course.

The Stragglers Rule

9. This rule operates at the discretion of the Race Officer if there is a boat or boats, which are a long way behind the fleet and unlikely to finish the course. He or she may finish these before they have completed the course or may ask the Bosun to inform the boats on the water that they have finished.
10. The rule also operates automatically for boats that have not completed the course (same number of laps as the leading boat) by the time of the expiry of the Finishing Window. These boats should also be informed that they have finished.
11. The Scorer will calculate the result(s) from their completed laps.

12. This Rule does not apply to Open Races or Pursuit Races.
13. Boats that qualify for application of the of the Stragglers Rule has been operated the either by the Race Officer or by the expiry of the Finishing Window should not be marked DNF in the Race Book

Time Limits

14. The Time Limits and Finishing Windows are as set out in the Notice of Race or as decided by the Race Officer according to the conditions on the day.
15. For pursuit races the target is 90 minutes for the leading boat and all boats must complete the same number of laps. The Race Officer may finish the race up to ten minutes early if sending the leading boat round for another lap would result in an extremely late finish by the last boats,
16. If only one boat starts in a Pursuit Race then she only has to complete one lap to score as having finished in that race. The Race Officer should shorten the race after one lap if satisfied that no other sailor intends to compete”.

11 AFTER THE RACE

1. On request, issue Protest forms. Protests must be returned to the Race Officer, Flag Officer or a member of the Sailing Committee within one hour of the last boat finishing the race. The time at which the completed form is returned should be recorded. If the Protest Form is returned to you, arrange for a Protest Committee to hear the protest.
2. The Race book should be fully completed immediately after the race with the following details: date, races sailed, weather conditions, names of race officer and bosun, boats competing, laps and finishing times, and the course including if shortened.
3. Boats that did not start should be marked DNS, premature starters OCS (On Course Side at Start), or did not finish DNF (those boats that did not complete the same number of laps as the leading boat or qualify under the Stragglers Rule to be scored on the average of completed laps).
4. If you had any difficulties or arguments with competitors, you can note them briefly in the race book but please tell the commodore or vice commodore, so among other things we can improve this book.
5. After racing, return the flags to the locker, switch of the isolator switch, tidy up and lock the race box. Return the keys to the hook in the lobby.

12 LONG DISTANCE RACES

1. Long distance races may be held either as Class races or Mass Start Handicaps. The procedures are the same as described for other races except as follows.

The Marks

The "C" buoy is laid downstream of the Race Box
The "D" buoy is laid at Hampton Court
The "S" buoy is laid at Thames Ditton Island
The "A" buoy is downstream of Ravens Ait Island.

Setting the course

2. A course which has been previously successful is one lap to Hampton Court or Thames Ditton depending on the prevailing conditions followed by several short laps to Ravens Ait. Other options are any combination of the following assuming an upstream start.

DC to Hampton Court and back,
SC to Thames Ditton Island and back,
AC Ravens Ait and back,
and if necessary shorten the course at the Race Box, or shorten the course by finishing the race from the launch, when the Race Officer should note the order and times of boats and displaying Flag S.

3. For Class Races longer or shorter courses should be considered for the faster and slower classes
4. As soon as the leading boat of each class is approaching the completion of the first lap, the Race Officer should review (in the light of the prevailing wind conditions) the likely time to be taken to complete the remainder of the course that has been set.
5. The above guidance provides for the circumstances when the boats complete the first lap slowly, but adverse weather conditions or other circumstances such as a launch out of action may be considered to be grounds for shortening the race.
6. The overall time limit for any boat should be set in Notice of Race but may be changed by the Race Officer to allow at least one hour before the Prize Giving

Launches

7. Instruct the bosun where to lay the marks in plenty of time to avoid delaying ferrying of sailors to the dinghy park. Usually the most distant marks will be laid from the launch after the race has started.
8. It is recommended that the Race Officer and launch crews carry mobile phones or the Walkey Talkies kept in the Race Box.