

# Hunts Sailing Club

## RACE OFFICER DETAILED GUIDELINES

### Introduction

These procedures are intended to guide you through the role of Race Officer from course setting to posting the race results. You are in charge and racers expect a consistent standard of race management, so it is important to understand them and to apply them. If you have any doubts the Duty Officer is there to help and advise.

### SAFETY

More important than the race itself, the Race Officer is responsible along with the Duty Officer, for managing safety for the duration of the race. In general this is delegated to the Safety Boat crew but you may need to direct the Safety Boat to specific emergencies, direct individuals to stop sailing, postpone or even cancel a race.

### Standard Race Timetable & Order of Race Starts

|                       | Summer |   | Winter |           |
|-----------------------|--------|---|--------|-----------|
| <b>1st race start</b> | 11:30  | Fast handicap<br>Slow handicap  | 11:30  | Allcomers |
| <b>2nd race start</b> | 1:30   | Laser class<br>Solo class<br>General handicap<br><i>+ Cadet handicap on Junior Super Sundays (new for 2018)</i> | 1:15   | Allcomers |
| <b>3rd race start</b> | 3:15   | Laser class<br>Solo class<br>General handicap<br><i>+ Cadet handicap on Junior Super Sundays (new for 2018)</i> |        |           |

n.b. Aim to arrive at 9:30 for an 11:30 race, and by 10:00 at the very latest.

Slow handicap includes all boats with handicaps of 1100 or higher.  
See the sailing program for the races to be run on special race days.

## Start Sequence:

|          | If 1 start                       | If 2 starts   | If 3 starts   | If 4 starts (!)   |
|----------|----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| -15 mins |                                  |   |   | Class 1 <input type="checkbox"/>                                  |
| -12 mins |                                  |   | Class 1 <input type="checkbox"/>                                  | Prep <input type="checkbox"/><br>Class 2 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -9 mins  |                                  | Class 1 <input type="checkbox"/>                                  | Prep <input type="checkbox"/><br>Class 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 1st Start<br>Class 1 ▼<br>Class 3 <input type="checkbox"/>        |
| -6 mins  | Class 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | Prep <input type="checkbox"/><br>Class 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 1st Start<br>Class 1<br>Class 3 <input type="checkbox"/>          | 2nd Start<br>Class 2 ▼<br>Class 4 <input type="checkbox"/>        |
| -3 mins  | Prep <input type="checkbox"/>    | 1st Start<br>Class 1  | 2nd Start<br>Class 2  | 3rd Start<br>Class 3 ▼  |
| 0 mins   | 1st Start<br>All flags           | 2nd Start<br>All flags  | 3rd Start<br>All flags  | 4th Start<br>All flags ▼  |

## Main Race Control flags:

COMMITTEE BOAT  
ON STATION



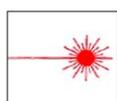
ON STATION  
AT START



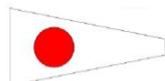
ON STATION  
AT FINISH

START SEQUENCE

CLASS FLAGS



LASER



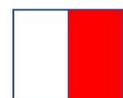
SOLO



FAST HANDICAP



SLOW HANDICAP



HANDICAP



PREPARATORY



ALLCOMERS

RECALLS

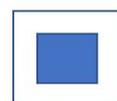


GENERAL  
RECALL



INDIVIDUAL  
RECALL

COURSE

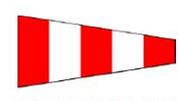


SHORTEN  
COURSE



CHANGED  
COURSE

OTHER FLAGS



POSTPONEMENT



ABANDONED

## What to do when you arrive

- 1) Find the Duty Officer and let him or her know you have arrived.
- 2) Unlock the Race Box and hoist the Club Burgee (The Duty Officer may already have done this).
- 3) Find the Safety Boat crew, make sure they are getting the Safety Boat prepared, and that both helm and assistant have arrived. In strong winds (> Force 4), depending on the number of boats sailing, you may feel the need for more than one Safety Boat. If this is the case, discuss with the Duty Officer. Ensure the safety assistant knows how to use the radio and carry out a radio check. Keep radio transmission short and to the point - other people may be listening.
- 4) Prepare and check that you have the necessary equipment in the Race Box, or on the Committee Boat (CB) if you plan to have a CB start:
  - a) Working radio
  - b) Class Flags: Laser, Solo, Handicap (for AM Handicap Series – Fast and Slow fleets), Junior, All Comers, as appropriate
  - c) General Flags: Preparatory (Blue Peter), Individual Recall (X Flag), General Recall (1st Substitute), Shorten Course (S Flag), Orange Flag (CB On Station), Postponement (Answering Pennant)
  - d) Calculator, pencils, clipboard, binoculars (all should be in the Race Box)
  - e) AcuSail race timer, plus suitable watch as backup.
- 5) If you plan a CB start, you will need a buoyancy aid and appropriate clothing, a cover for the lap time papers (if wet), and a backup manual horn or whistle; you will also need to get the flag mast from the jetty and fit it to the launch.
- 6) Normally there will be an Assistant Race Officer (ARO) who will find you on arrival. You will need to agree a division of responsibilities with the ARO. Typically, these may be:

| <b>Race Officer</b>                                  | <b>Assistant</b>  |
|--|---|
| Setting the course                                   | Assisting with setting course/Putting out the race sign on sheets |
| Organising the Safety Boat                           | Preparing the Race Box/Committee Boat                             |
| Checking that buoys are put in the correct locations | Preparing flags on the halyards                                   |
| Starting the timing sequence                         | Hoisting/lowering flags   |

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Maintaining the back-up timing device | Checking for premature starters                       |
| Recording the finishing times         | Collecting signing on sheets after the start          |
| Calculating results                   | Calling sail numbers after each lap and at the finish |
| Writing out the result sheets         | Sound signal for finishing boats.                     |
| Posting the results in the clubhouse  | Packing up the Race Box                               |

## Setting the course

First decision – whether to start from the Race Box or the Committee Boat. It is usual but not essential to start to windward with the first leg a beat. If it is not possible to achieve this from the Race Box, you will need to use the CB. You might also wish to use the CB to get a longer/fairer beat – it is your decision.

It is preferable to round the first mark to Port, and have the second leg as a reach rather than a run – particularly with a large number of boats racing this minimises congestion while the boats are still close together.

Generally the course should include at least one good beat, one reach and one run. The course should if possible be long enough so that the start sequence for all classes can be completed before the first class completes its first lap. It is also wise to have a good gap between the last mark and the finish line, otherwise finishes can be a frenetic.

A course with too much crossing of legs can cause confusion both for competitors and the Race Officer – it needs to be clear which leg a boat is on so that laps can be counted correctly.

Having decided the course, the selected buoys need moving to the correct locations and their flags setting. The safety boat will do this for you, or either you or the ARO you can go with them to double check wind directions with a burgee.

The course needs writing on the board in the Clubhouse, along with the start time, number of laps and list of each mark with their direction of rounding (P or S).

Show clearly the position of the starting and finishing lines. (Ideally for handicap/allcomers fleets these should be the same line – starting and finishing at different points of the course creates complications calculating average lap times if slower boats are lapped by the leaders). If you want boats to cross the start line each round (it can help recording positions at each lap) put O (outer distance mark) at the end of the mark list. You can change a course at any time up to the time of the warning signal, but if you do so it is good practice to make sure all competitors are aware of any changes. You can also change the positions of marks after the start (for example if there is a major wind shift) but there are rules covering this and you are advised to consult the appropriate Racing Rule (Rule 33).

Set a high number of laps - you can shorten course to meet a reasonable time, but you cannot increase the number of laps.

In light wind conditions make the laps shorter to help you control the race duration.

The start line is an imaginary line between the flagpole (either Race Box or CB – whichever is being used to start) and the Outer Distance Mark. Ideally the line should be almost at right angles to the wind, with a port bias of 5–10 degrees to reduce bunching at the starboard end. Also ensure that there is sufficient room behind and at the ends of the line to allow pre-start manoeuvring of the boats. You do not need an Inner Distance Mark but if you use one it need not be on the line, and ideally should be 1m to 2m behind the line to discourage premature starts. If you place it in front of the line there will almost certainly be early starters, requiring individual or general recalls.

The length of the line should be sufficient for the number of boats starting – allow at least 6m per boat in the largest fleet – but not so long that you cannot read sail numbers of boats at the far end of the line.

## Starting the race

If using the CB to start, position the boat in good time for the race, and hoist the orange flag (“On Station”).

The race programme will show the races scheduled; the standard timetable is shown on page 1.

For morning fast/slow handicap races, all boats with a handicap of 1100 or more are in the slow handicap race. Laser Radials and Laser 4.7's are allowed to compete in Laser Class races if they so wish, or join the handicap race as they prefer. If there are insufficient numbers in any fleet, you can choose to start two or more fleets simultaneously.

Pages 2 & 3 include the main flags and a chart showing the flag sequences to use at the start. Remember that it is the flags that are important – the horn is only there to draw attention to the flag starting to move. Do not start to raise or lower the flag until the actual time.

Refer to the notes in the Race Box and the instructions on using the AcuSail timer. But please note, the timer is a piece of equipment that needs treating with finesse. You will need to unplug the charger (don't forget to re-plug back in at the end of the day) and plug in both the battery lead and if on the CB the hooter. The plug sockets have a key-way: the pins are delicate, please treat with care.

Before starting the race countdown check that the safety crew are available, that the course has been set and consider the conditions. If you are concerned about their readiness or the conditions, postpone by raising the postponement flag. Remember that launching a boat and starting a race in the midst of a squall is particularly difficult for less experienced sailors.

At between 7 and 6 minutes before the scheduled race start time, the AcuSail race timer should be started. The race timer will start its sequence at the next round minute on its clock.

Pages 2 & 3 above include a summary chart of the start sequence; further explanation is below.

**Start 1 less 6 minutes** – the horn will automatically sound (a buzzer will give you 10 seconds warning of this and each subsequent starting signal). Fleet 1 class flag should be raised. It is also suggested that you start your backup timing device now.

**Start 1 less 3 minutes** – the horn will automatically sound; the preparatory flag (Blue Peter) and Fleet 2 class flag should be raised. (If there is a second fleet)

**Start 1** – the horn will automatically sound. Fleet 1 class flag should be lowered, and if there is no other fleet, the Preparatory Flag should also be lowered Fleet 3 class flag should be raised (if there is a third fleet).

And so on until all fleets have started.

Note that the timer on the race timer starts counting up from the last start in the sequence; so time 'zero' is the start of the last race.

## Premature Starters

It is very important to use recalls whenever boats are over the line to ensure a fair race and prevent protests. If one or more boats are over the line early and you can readily identify them, you need to signal an Individual Recall; if there are many boats over, or you cannot identify all premature starters, you need to have a general recall.

- **Individual Recall** - Immediately give one sound of the horn and raise the 'X' flag.

Make a note of the sail numbers of all offending boats. When all early boats have restarted, or after 2 minutes, whichever is earlier, the X flag should be lowered.

Boats that have not returned should continue to be recorded as normal, including finishing time, but marked as OCS (On Course Side) on the results

- **General Recall** - Immediately sound the horn twice and hoist the General Recall flag, while leaving the offending fleet class flag raised.

The new start for the recalled fleet will normally take place after all other fleets have started but you have discretion to adjust this.

See the AcuSail instructions on how to either initiate another start at the end of the planned starts, how to cancel the remaining starts, or how to restart the entire sequence from scratch. **If a fleet has already started it is very important not to restart the entire sequence and not to switch the race timer off otherwise their timings will be lost.**

The recall and class flag should be lowered and the horn sounded when you start that class's new sequence. In practice though you may want to do this as soon as all the competitors have stopped racing and are returning to the start to reduce the number of flags being flown at once.

## Monitoring progress

Pick up the signing on sheets from the Clubhouse and check that all boats have signed on.

If a competitor has not signed on you should normally add them; we do not penalise racers for not signing on unless deliberate or frequently repeated, this is not the Olympics! There is no requirement for competitors to sign off, so you may keep these sheets with you.

Use lap recording sheets (kept in the Race Box) to record boats through each lap. Record the sail number, the class of each boat and the time since the final start. This should be done at the same point each lap (preferably as they pass the finish line) so that you know accurately how many laps each boat has completed.

## Shortening course

Races should normally last about 45 minutes for the leading boat and the slower boats should not need to sail for more than about 70 minutes. If the full course does not look like being completed close to this time, then you will have to shorten course.

You can shorten course at any point on the racecourse (in front of the lead boat). After the signal has been given, the finish line is formed by a line between the mast of the Race Box or CB and the next mark of the course (which will often be the normal finish line). Bear in mind the advice earlier about the difficulty of calculating average lap times for handicap fleets where the start and finish lines differ, so don't make them different if any handicap boat has been lapped. Note that the inner distance mark does not apply when boats are finishing.

**THE COURSE CAN ONLY BE SHORTENED ON THE LEADING BOAT (ON THE WATER) IN A FLEET\***. As the leading boat rounds the mark immediately before the finish, give two sound signals and hoist flag S. (If all fleets have shortened course, then no other flags are needed; however if only some have shortened course, then the class flag needs hoisting and two sound signals given as the leading boat in each fleet rounds the last mark).

\*Occasionally, it is OK for a RO to use their discretion to shorten the course on a few tail-enders that have become separated from the rest of the fleet, so that they don't have to do another lap. This should be in a natural gap and shouldn't include anyone actively competing for a good result in the race. If in doubt, don't do this.

The race finishes when the leading boat then crosses the line. (Boats that have sailed fewer laps and which cross the finishing line after the shortened course signal but before the leading boat finishes have to complete one further lap). All boats after the leading boat finish when they cross the line.

## Finishing

This can be hectic! The RO and ARO need to work as a team, making sure that they have identified all finishing boats, and recorded their class, sail number and finishing time on the lap recording sheet. Note that we now record the times of Lasers and Solo's in their class racing, so that they can post-process the times and award additional prizes later.

As each boat crosses the line, a sound signal should be given. A boat is deemed to have finished when any part of the boat, crew or equipment in normal position crosses the line. Pushing the button on the extension lead of the race timer sounds the horn and temporarily freezes the displayed time on the AcuSail box, allowing you to record the time. When the next boat crosses the line, pushing the button sounds the horn again and shows the time that boat crosses the line; and so on. Try to make sure your writing is legible and that sail numbers and times are accurately recorded.

If many competitors finish in a bunch concentrate on just recording their sail numbers in the right sequence and sounding the horn as they pass the line. Then 'scroll back' through the times recorded by the AcuSail box when there is a natural pause - see the Acusail instructions on how to do this.

*Record all times from the AcuSail box on the results sheet, but after finishing, extra minutes will need to be added to the times of all races who did not start on the final start. For example 3 minutes will need to be added to all Fast Handicap race times, before adjustment for PY/laps.*

Except in handicap/allcomers races, all boats finishing more than 30 minutes after the leading boat will be deemed to have retired.

If one lap of the race has not been completed within 1 hour, the race is considered to be abandoned.

## Calculating and recording results

For class races, record the order of finishing on the signing on sheet.

For handicap and allcomers fleets, you will have to calculate adjusted times. This can be done by using the figures in the blue ring binders (kept in the Race Box) which show, for any finishing time, the adjusted time for most boats sailed at Hunts SC.

To encourage racing of older boats, Hunts SC recognises the adjusted PY handicaps proposed by the CVRDA for boats designed before 1965 and built before 1985, and other official class association published adjustments for older boats. Details will be in the blue ring binders.

Alternatively, the adjusted time can be calculated according to the formula:

*Corrected Time secs (C) = (Elapsed Time secs (E) divided by Portsmouth Number (N)) x 1000*

If boats have completed different numbers of laps, then the times need altering accordingly. The easiest way to do this is to calculate Average Lap Times – either the adjusted time from the ring binder, or the adjusted time from the formula above, divided by the actual number of laps completed.

Make sure that calculations are shown on the lap recording sheet.

Enter the finishing order, based on these adjusted times, on the signing on sheet. Make sure that all signing on sheets and lap recording sheets have the date, race time, and fleet written on them. Take them to the Clubhouse, and leave them on the race desk.

## And now – you've finished

At the end of the day make sure that all race control flags are hung back up on the correct hook in the Race Box and all pens, pencils etc are brought back to the box.

Put the race timer back on charge, turn off all VHF radios and return all handheld radios to their charging stands in the race box. Turn off lights and heaters. Lock up.

Check that the safety crew has brought the mark flags ashore and placed them rolled up in the orange tub in the boat shed to dry off.

## Remember

If at any stage you are unsure of what to do, or need assistance of any kind, speak to the Duty Officer, the Sailing Secretary, Commodore or any other Committee member. They will be happy to help.