

Race Committee Guidance Document

The purpose of this guidance document is to prepare the RC for performing committee boat duty. It contains the recommended procedure for managing Wednesday Night and Fall Racing on the Magothy.

The RC Handbook that travels with the RC Gear includes the following documents that are also available at MRSA's website: www.magothysailing.org.

- Race Committee Guidance Document
- Suggested Courses
- Check-in Sheet
- Wednesday Night Notice of Race, Sailing Instructions, and Starting Script
- Hallie Rice Fall Series Notice of Race, Sailing Instructions, and Starting Script
- Order of Finish Sheets
- MRSA Emergency Card
- RC Gear Guidelines, Gear List, and Shotgun Guidelines

PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE READ AND FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES PROVIDED (read them once now and then review again before heading out).

PRINT THEM OUT AND TAKE THEM WITH YOU (review them with your RC crew on the way out).

PRIOR TO WEDNESDAY NIGHT

If you haven't already done so please contact the previous RC boat to arrange for gear to be picked up. After you receive the gear please review the RC gear list to make sure you have all of the gear.

Once you confirmed you have all of the gear please make sure the VHF and camera (if using) are fully charged. If you find anything missing, need additional supplies please send a note to racegear@magothysailing.org.

WEATHER PROTCOL

The Rear Commodore and / or Race Committee Chair will be monitoring the weather during the week and particularly during the day before racing. If there is a chance of severe weather (heavy winds, thunderstorms, etc.) that evening for racing we will contact you before racing to discuss racing decisions.

It's also important to understand the difference between watches and warnings:

A **warning** is issued when dangerous conditions are imminent or occurring.

A **watch** is issued when conditions are favorable for a specific hazardous weather event to occur.

The Rear Commodore / Race Committee Chair, in conjunction with the RC boat will make the call by 5pm whether to send the RC boat out on Station, postpone or cancel the racing for that night.

After the RC boat has been released to go out on Station any future race decisions are up to the RC boat but it still important for the RC boat to monitor the weather via internet sites (particularly radar) and VHF Weather channels.

If at any time you (the RC on duty) feel that conditions warrant cancellation, postponement or abandonment, YOU, THE RC ON DUTY, HAS THE ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY TO DO SO WITHOUT ANY PRIOR OR ADDITIONAL APPROVAL. You have the full backing of the MRSA Race Management to make those decisions!

Abandon Race: "N" Flag with 3 Sounds (preferably gun sounds), 1 sound when lowered.

Postpone Race: "AP" Flag with 2 Sounds, 1 sound when lowered.

Please refer to the last page of the 'Starting Sequence Script' as well as the first page of the RRS's for postponement and abandonment signals.

Race Management does have access to the robo-call Race Information System, so if communication with them is possible, it will facilitate getting the word out to the fleet if the race is postponed or cancelled.

CREW ASSIGNMENTS and PREP WORK

To make it easy, you'll want at least 5 (if not more) people to help with RC duty.

Prior to the Start

Entry Logger - Before the race, it's best to try to record boats as they arrive. Boats in later starting fleets will show up in the middle of the other starts ... so it's best to have someone just focused on ID'ing boats as they show up and checking them off until all the boats are started. Also some sailors switch between spinnaker and non-spinnaker fleets so have them look at the flags and note if there's a change.

Print-out and bring the Race Entry Check List which is sorted by sail # to make finding them in the list easy This person usually is the time recorder during finishing.

SELECTING AND SETTING THE COURSE

Please refer to the new attached preferred course chart which lists preferred courses and starting marks based on wind direction and speed.

A, C or D are the primary preferred starting marks, but for some wind directions F or J make more sense and are indicated on the preferred course chart. Please choose a "Red" course (port roundings) if at all possible.

Our SI's require:

- i. "The Committee Boat will post the finishing mark of the course, regardless of the number of laps posted"
- ii "A change in course after the start will be limited to 'shorten course'"

Be mindful of the requirements of the "string rule". MRSA SI's define all marks as "rounding" marks as we do not have the ability to designate a mark as a "passing" or "boundary" mark. The courses in the Preferred Courses sheet have all been checked to satisfy the "string rule" if the indicated colors (rounding direction) are followed.

Prior to setting the line wind readings should be done. The RC boat should arrive and settle in neutral gear with no forward momentum and take wind readings for at least 20 minutes as typical oscillations cycles are 5 to 10 minutes. Wind readings can be taken with the wind stick and hand bearing compass and then plotted on the wind log.

Please MAKE THE LINE LONG!! (The line should be a minimum of 1.5 X the total overall length of the largest fleet starting that night). Typically, this is 450 to 600-feet-long. Too long is better (safer) than too short. Here is a great trick to set the line distance. While still under power and motoring at 4 kts, pass by the pin in the direction of your intended anchor location with the wind off your beam. Continue to motor for at least 1 minute to 1 minute and 30 seconds and then stop and set anchor upwind of this location. At least 60 seconds but preferably 90 seconds of motoring at 4 knots will give you an approximately 400 to 600 feet starting line.

Please set a LONG, GENEROUS LINE, SQUARED TO THE WIND ... NOT THE 1st MARK. _

Picking a course that is either 2x or 3x is always nice as it is easy to shorten (flag and 2 guns well before the 1st shortened fleet's finish and fly the shortened fleet's flags).

Try to let the fleets go twice if there is wind and daylight. The time limit is 2hrs for the 1st boat in each class and then 2.5hrs if one boat in the fleet crosses in less than 2hrs. So if the 1st laps in a fleet are crossing at 30 min's or less, then it's probably a safe bet to let them go twice unless the wind is really dying.

VHF COMMUNICATIONS GUIDANCE

- VHF 71 will be used for all radio communications.
- Please use the VHF to communicate as it helps boats that don't have as many folks on board keep track of the course, starting sequence, etc. It also allows boat to stay out of the starting area if they can get race information via radio.
- RC Actions, example – “The RC is on station and setting up a course which we expect to post in a few minutes”.
- Pre-Start: Announce Course (ex. JGA, all Red) by Radio AND by posting on course side of committee boat.
- Start: Call pre-start countdown via radio at the one-minute marks, after any sound signal (“That was the 1 minute signal for spin boats”). Then at the 10 second marks in the last minute. Then the last 10 seconds to a class start.
- Shorten course should be announced and in particular which classes have been shortened.
- RC and Boat communications
 - Notify the RC of crew overboard situations, injuries, severe weather, and if they retire before finishing. They can also notify the RC about protests after they finish.

START

For the start, it works well if you have one person assigned to the following tasks:

1. Timer (GPS time is preferable) / Script Runner– they call out times and do count downs to flag and sound events. The timer can also be the one communicating to the fleet via the VHF on Channel 71
2. Gun signal – on the bow with the gun. For safety reasons, don't double duty this person.
3. Horn and over-early flag (** see note) – they are responsible for the “horn sound signals” and are prepared with the over-early flags if needed (individual and general recall flags are mounted on the opposite ends of the same stick).
4. Class & prep flags – the class flags and prep flags are mounted on handles .. locate the stick – mounted A, B, NS1, C, NS2 flags and lay them on the deck in order. The flag-bearer will raise the prep flag at the 4 min mark and lower it at the 1 min mark for each start with one hand .. while holding the class flag in the other.
5. Lineman on the bull horn for calling “all clear” or declaring “over early” (** see note) and ID'ing the boats by number. They also typically call “over” during the finish.

**** "Over Early" Note:**

Both a "sound" and a flag are required when calling a boat over early and "hailing" a boat over-early does not constitute a "sound" under the rules. This is why it is useful to have the person on the horn also on the over-early flag and ready to signal at the starts (from Case 71, 2005-2008 ISF Casebook .. *'A hail is not a 'sound signal'*

After all the boats have started, you should make sure to square the line to the last rounding mark for the finish (as opposed to square-to-the-wind for the start). This is usually necessary when setting triangle courses other than W/L . Also, if the last letter in the course was green, it is less confusing for competitors if you move to the port side of the line for the finish (but not necessary under the rules).

POSTPONING THE START

If there is no or little wind, don't be in a hurry to pick a course or anchor. Wait to see what the wind is going to do. If the published start time approaches and there is still no wind, consider a postponement. If you choose to postpone, hoist the "AP" flag and fire two guns at the listed start time.

When conditions change and you are ready to start the sequence, fire one gun and lower the "AP" flag . The normal start sequence will begin one minute after the "AP" flag is lowered.

CHANGING THE COURSE PRIOR TO STARTING BUT AFTER POSTING

If you find it necessary to change the course prior to the start, but after it has already been posted (because of a dramatic last-minute wind change or to fix an improperly posted course), what you need to do will depend on where in the starting sequence you are. This is because our SI's state:

"If the Committee Boat makes a change to the course after posting it, the RC shall display a code flag 'L' (come within hail) at least ten minutes before the next start and continue to display it for the duration of the starting sequence."

Case #1: Prior to the "Attention Signal" (which is 10 minutes prior to the first start).

If you change the posted course prior to the "Attention Signal" (usually 6:05 pm on Wed nights which is 10 minutes before the first start), all you need to do is make the change and fly the 'Lima' flag through the remainder of the starting sequences. It's that easy.

Case #2: After the “Attention Signal”

If you need to change the posted course after the “Attention Signal” then you will need to signal a postponement (“AP” flag + 2 sounds) and delay the starting sequence by at least 5 minutes (4 minute delay + 1 minute to next warning signal) to provide the total of 10 minutes required before the next start (5 minute total delay + 5 minute class sequence). The AP flag is lowered (w/1 sound) 1 minute prior to the next class’s warning signal (raising of its class flag).

So, assuming that you intend to have the minimum 5 minute delay for the course change, do the following:

1. Raise the “Lima” (L) flag (keep this flying throughout the remaining starts)
2. Raise the “AP” flag with 2 sounds
3. Make the course change
4. After 4 min’s, drop the “AP” flag with 1 sound
5. 1 minute later (5 minute mark), raise the class flag for the next start w/ 1 sound (this restarts the starting sequence where you left off .. the next step is raising the “P” flag 1 min later and so on).
- 6.

ABANDONMENT

Once a race is started you may abandon a race because of lack of wind and no boats can make it to the finish within the time limit. If at all possible, try moving the finish to another mark but only if no boats have rounded that mark.

Another reason to abandon a race is because of severe weather, use your judgement but if you are uncertain about the intensity of a storm or you a special marine weather warning is issued for our area then consider abandoning the race.

FINISHING

At the finish, you have the lineman calling “over”, the timer calling out times, and the other people are recording sail numbers and times. Typically the timer will call out the HRS and MINS and then count-up the seconds out-loud until the lineman called “over”.

If you can see a multiple boat, close finish about to occur, separate the tasks and get the times down first and accurately and have others dedicated to just keeping the order of finish straight and assign the boats to the times after the fact.

You just record them as they finish (don't worry about breaking them up into fleets).

MRSA has a digital video camera that can be attached to a short PVC pipe with the provided clamp in the camera bag. Attach PVC pipe to shroud with the Q Flag and/or pipe. It records and takes video. You can also use your phone to record the finishing times being called out by the timer.

SCORING INFORMATION

After the race is over send a legible photo of the results over to scorer@magothysailing.org. The sooner the results are sent over the sooner they can be entered and posted.

Thanks again for volunteering.

Sincerely,

MRSA Race Management

PS – Thanks for many individuals over the years that help put this manual together, I'm sure we missed a few but Wolfgang Harbauer, Bruce Mitchell, Jon Anthony and Angelo Guarino