

RACE OFFICER TRAINING

The aim of this guide is to demystify the OD role it's not complicated. It's a case of process and following simple steps

Most of us are not qualified Race Officers. What we do is all voluntary so we can all sail & hopefully have good racing. Occasionally we make mistakes but these are minimal & can be rectified. Do not panic if things go wrong. If you miss a boat out it can easily be resolved later.

- 7-10 days before your duty contact your race team (AOD, Cox & RA) to confirm attendance. I usually do it by text. You will then be confident that your race team will turn up, rather than moaning about it on the day if someone doesn't turn up!
- On the day look at the wind forecast on XC weather or Windguru to see if the direction & strength are likely to change
- Remember to bring your reading glasses if you require them!
- Key is at the top of the stairs on a hook to the right of the door
- Switch for electrics is behind the computer monitor
- Open up top cupboard & take out radio. Switch on to ch 72
- Get out Race log sheet & show AOD how to record
- Set up Race Timer instructions are in folder. One or 2 starts depending on day (Sundays have 2 starts 1st Asymmetrics & 2nd handicap ready to press start 15 minutes before designated race start
- Start to think about a course. If wind is light or forecast to drop (particularly Wed evening) set a short course. Think about which mark would make sense to be a windward mark & then decide which end of the line to use. We now have the facility of a dan boy to give a more even line. Too much bias for a line will potentially create chaos at one end and a greater chance of a recall. A nice even line helps for clean starts & fairness for all competitors.
- If the wind is blowing down the lake pretty much either Westerly or Easterly we can set a windward leeward course for the Asymmetrics using the A flag board to indicate that. The first & last marks listed will be their 2 marks.
- Unless it is windy do not set too long a course as it can make it too long for slow handicap boats and it also helps with average lap times
- There is a sample of courses in the white folder for different wind strengths & directions which is a useful tool
- Use M if you struggle to read the numbers. L means go through the club line which means all boats have to sail between I & O each lap. No need to set the number of laps as we are using average lap times based on a 40-50 minute race
- So set the course before the 15 minute rig signal – you should not change the course after that unless you decide to abandon & postpone the race
- If no wind & want to postpone, make announcement over the PA hoist the red & white postponement flag & press POSTPONE on the timer which will be for 30 minutes to see what the wind does. 3 hoots will sound.
- All going to plan announce rigging signal about to happen over PA then press START twice you will then hear the 2 hoot rigging signal & the clock starts counting automatically.
- Once the Rib has launched do a radio check. Don't worry about following VHF protocol suffice to say "OD to Safety, OD to Safety over" (Remember to press the button on the left hand side of the hand set to talk & release it to hear the reply. Once you receive a reply just confirm its radio check & finish with "out"
- If its not the usual club line for the start & you have set a dan buoy it might be helpful to have the safety boat at one end sighting the line for people being over the line. This will hopefully be sufficient to put people off from pushing the line!!
- If most boats are pretty much on the line or just over let them go – it's a club race and no one has a real advantage. If one or 2 boats are definitely over press individual recall button & press it again once they have gone back & recrossed the line. If lots of boats are over & difficult to identify & then press general recall. The signals & lights are all done automatically. On pressing the general recall 2 hoots will sound. 1 minute later a

warning signal is given. 1 minute after that the 5 minute sequence starts. This will be 7 minutes after the original start gun and 12 minutes after the timer started note +12 minutes down as the start of that fleet

- Once the boats have started follow the lead boat around the course but also keep an eye on late starting beginners (make a separate note of those as its not always clear they are racing)
- As the first boats start to turn round the last mark & head up back to the line keep a close eye on the order & start to write down the sail numbers roughly in the order they go through the line if possible in the column marked Lap 1. Do not write down the class or finish time. It is useful to make a note of the time for the first boat (to see how long the fastest boats take to do a lap). It means you can see how many laps are likely to be required for a 40 – 45 minute race. Also worth writing the times down for very slow boats/ juniors as they are likely to do fewer laps. Again this gives you an idea of how many laps they are likely to do.
- Keep logging down sail numbers as each boat completes the first lap
- As the fast boats go through the second lap note down their sail numbers in the lap 2 column. Keep noting down numbers in the column as they go through. The order doesn't have to be completely accurate at this point
- Keep an eye open for boats retiring and note them down
- Some boats may go through for a 3rd & 4th lap again note down the sail numbers in the correct column
- Some boats may have done more laps than others but as long as you write down the sail numbers in the correct column each time they go through you will know for example that an Oppie has done 2 laps & an Rs 400 4 laps for calculating the results
- At 30 to 35 minutes after the race start look to see if there is a suitable finish point. It maybe that the fast Rs400's are rounding the leeward mark so it might be a good time to finish them. But you then have to finish all boats heading towards the finish. This could be a Solo who started the handicap race 5 minutes later & so you would want them to do another lap. So it might be best to send the Rs 400's round again & maybe shorten when the Lasers reach the leeward mark. Deciding when to shorten is probably one of the most difficult things to do. Don't dither, if you are thinking of shortening then do it. If some boats have a slightly shorter race don't worry in other races theirs will be longer. Its really a case of finding a nice gap & trying not to split a fleet of the same class. But don't worry if you do have to split a class, it happens sometimes, particularly novice Lasers
- To shorten the course try and do it as the lead boat goes around the leeward mark. Press the buzzer twice & switch on the shorten course light
- Keep a close eye on all boats heading for the finish & try and write the sail numbers down in the Finish column in the order they are likely to finish before they go through the line if a few boats are likely to finish very close together. You can then write down the finish time against the correct sail number without getting into a dither. Press the finish button each time a boat goes through. The right hand side of the timer will give the time for each time this is pressed & you can go back up to check the time as well by pressing REVIEW and using the arrows. Can still finish boat while reviewing times. Write down the 4 digit number for the finish time no decimal point needed.
- Don't worry if you miss a boat out & didn't get a time if you know where it finished give it an approximate time
- Once all the boats have finished switch off the shorten course light and press STOP on the timer
- You can now work out the number of laps sailed for each boat & write them in the final column
- Entering the times on the computer. Date should set automatically in the Race calc spread sheet. Type in race number. The time is set automatically but enter the later time if a general recall. Then start to enter the sail number. It should bring up the sailor & class automatically but for Lasers you may need to confirm whether Radial, full or 4.7 rig as some sailors interchange. Then type in the finish time - no digital point & use the drop down menu for laps completed.
- Finally enter race team sail numbers so they can get their average points if wanted & use the laps drop down menu & click OD
- Once you have entered everyone click SORT
- Check results, most of the time you will probably have a good idea of who was likely to win & come last if it looks ok press PRINT choose 1 copy which goes on the notice board downstairs

- Race 2 & 3 same procedure. The computer allows you to reuse the boats from the previous race which prevents re entering again.
- If you wish to reload a race to correct any results press RELOAD & re enter the sailors again
- End of day. Log off computer. Take down course boards, switch off sockets, turn radio off & put on charge. Lock up leaving hut as you found it, removing any coffee cups etc.

Useful video now available on the website www.llsc.org.uk/race-timer-and-od-guide/