

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR OODs (2013)

References: Notice of Race & Sailing Instructions (NOR & SI)
HHYC Standard Sailing Instructions (SSI) May 2013
The Racing Rules of Sailing **2013-2016** by HKSF (RRS)

Introduction

These notes are intended as an aide memoire for OODs and do not claim to be either complete or authoritative.

Before the Day

Ensure you have at least one assistant – two are better

On the Day

You need to be out on the course at least 45 minutes before the first starting sequence begins to establish a feel for the weather and to have enough time to set the marks.

Before leaving the dock

- Get a list of entrants from the office if possible(although be aware that many boats will enter at the Committee Boat);
- Check the Race Notice Board for L Notices which may affect the organization of the race.
- Remember you are entitled to reasonable amounts of food and drink from the bar chargeable to “OOD” (with your name).
- Check the contents of the OOD bag (essential items include 2 synchronized stopwatches, compass, correct NOR & SI, current HHYC SSI, current Racing Rules of Sailing, pens/pencils and clipboard with blank results sheets, spare division streamers, list of courses for different wind directions. A tape recorder to help note situations in times of high activity, i.e. starts and finishes, is also available.
- Obtain a weather forecast from the Hong Kong Observatory (tel. 187 8200, or visit www.weather.gov.hk or www.weather.org.hk).
- Check the VHF radios are charged up (the marine staff will normally do this, but it does no harm to check).

Picking the start area

The usual start area is somewhere between Shelter Island and the entrance to Hebe Haven but can be as far out as Trio Island. The ideal conditions for the start area are steady wind and an unobstructed beat to windward of at least half a mile. Be wary of setting the start too close to the entrance to Hebe Haven as this may cause conflict with traffic using the channel. If winds are very light or non-existent you will have to decide whether to sit and wait for wind or go looking for it (usually to the east or southeast). This can be a difficult decision. Factors to consider are:

On still sunny mornings a sea breeze usually fills in from the southeast sometime between 0900 and 1200, and it is often possible to see a wind line coming in.

Think carefully before moving the start a big distance to the south-east, as by the time you have done this and waited for yachts to catch up the breeze may well have reached the original start line area.

There is often better wind coming up/down the channel leading to Sai Kung town, and relocating to the east can take advantage of this.

RHKYC occasionally run races in the same area at the same time. If you need to liaise, try calling them on VHF Ch 72. Try and ensure adequate separation between HHYC & RHKYC courses. It is quite feasible to have both clubs running racing in Port Shelter at the same time without undue interference.

When you are happy with the start area, drop the anchor. Hoist the blue flag to say you are on station.

Choosing and setting a course – all-day races

Island Course

The Island Courses (Courses 8 to 97) are grouped in sets of three, eg. Courses 8, 9, 10, Course 11, 12, 13, etc. Each group contains a long, medium and a short course. Each course in a group is designed for the same wind direction and has the last three or four marks in common. This gives the OOD the opportunity to shorten course with only one committee boat. Consequently once a course has been chosen for one division, the courses for the other divisions should be chosen from within the same group. Courses for suggested wind directions are in a separate document.

(The grouping has been designed with the Typhoon Series in mind. Div A yachts on the long course, Div B and Sports Boats on the medium course and Div C on the short course. However the consensus among Div A yachts, in October 2001, is that they would prefer to sail medium length courses. The OOD will have to make his/her own mind up on the day.)

Some courses require a seamark (known as the Port Shelter Mark) to be laid halfway between North Ninepin and Bluff. Be careful not to choose one of these courses unless you are sure that the mark has been laid.

There is also an option to lay marks at Steep Island and/or Bay Island with a view to avoiding the notorious wind holes behind these islands. Certain flags must be flown if these marks are being used. The SSI give details.

The ideal course has two or three beats and two or three runs. If you achieve this, well done.

Aim to have all yachts finish within about 5 hours maximum for an all-day race. Some guidelines on suitable maximum course lengths for Div B + Sports Boats follow:

Strong wind	(F5-6)	Avg. boat speed 6 knots	30 nm
Moderate wind	(F3-4)	Avg. boat speed 4.5 knots	22.5 nm
Light wind	(F2)	Avg. boat speed 3 knots	15 nm

Courses for Div C and HKPN boats should be shorter. Courses for Div A boats can be longer, but it is usually best to keep them on the same course as Div B + sports boats. To assess whether you will have strong, moderate or light wind during the day you obviously need a weather forecast and some judgment. If the wind is forecast to drop assume a lighter wind than you have at the start. Be wary of forecast wind increases, as they do not always materialize inshore. Be aware that a sea breeze, which fills in from the southeast during the morning often, dies at 1500/1600 in the afternoon.

All the Island Courses have provision for a club mark. The purpose of the club mark is to make the first leg a dead beat to windward, which makes for good starting and interesting tactics. If you are setting a start/course combination so that the first island mark is already dead to windward, there is no need for a club mark. As soon as you have the committee boat anchored in the start area, and are happy the wind is steady(ish) the club mark can be laid dead upwind (minimum of half a mile, a mile is better). If the club mark is to be left to PORT (which is normal and preferable) you fly a RED flag, if to STARBOARD a GREEN flag. An absence of green or red flags means that there is no club mark. The bearing to the windward mark can be displayed on the blackboard if it is a long way away.

When you have decided the courses, work out where you can shorten the race if necessary and note the position of the finish line.

Course to be sailed for each Division indicated by flying appropriate pennants at or before the Warning Signal for that Division.

Windward/Leeward

Refer to the SSI concerning the various marks.

If there are a large number of entrants (usually only at Typhoon Series and Port Shelter Regatta) it is advisable to lay an offset mark. The intention of this is to separate yachts beating up from yachts rounding the mark.

If you have to run two races on any day, you are recommended to run a shorter course in the morning, preferably all yachts to be finished by 13:00 so you can shift the marks if necessary. It is useful to finish the morning race at the leeward mark so that the committee boat and the competitors are in the vicinity of the next start. The afternoon race can be longer and you can shorten if the wind is becoming very light. It is preferable to end this race at the windward mark to give a beat to the finish.

Geometric courses

If setting a gybe mark as part of a triangle it is important to get it in the right place, especially in high-profile events like the Typhoon Series or the Port Shelter Regatta. The only way to get the two legs at the same angle is to go with the mark-laying boat and to take compass bearings back to the windward and leeward marks.

Rather than a 60/60/60 triangle, try a 70/70/40. This gives more of a true beam reach on each leg. I always draw a diagram and work out the angles and compass bearings.

Choosing and setting a course – half-day races

These are usually Saturday afternoon windward / leeward or geometrics. The above remarks apply, but obviously the races should be shorter, especially if two are scheduled. There is normally no need for **offset** marks. If dinghies are involved as well as cruisers, refer to the following :

Dinghies

Before leaving the dock check with Marine / Sailing that there will be a safety boat with at least two approved personnel on board. Agree VHF channel and / or mobile number. Keep a look out to ensure dinghies are sailing safely. Keep in touch with the safety boat. If winds are higher than 15 knots and / or dinghies are obviously struggling, consider canceling dinghy racing. Liaise with safety boat. Remember that many of the dinghy sailors are under 18, and you have an enhanced duty & care towards them.

Dinghy marks are smaller than those used for cruisers and should be set out at about half the distance to the cruiser marks. It is the RO's job to set (choose location of) the dinghy marks, not the safety boat.

It is recommended to remind dinghy sailors to keep clear of the start area during the cruiser starts. This is for their own safety. Also for dinghy races with separate fleet starts, to remind sailors waiting for subsequent starts to keep clear of the start line.

Record details of dinghy starts and finish times just as for cruisers. Dinghies are identified by a sail number.

Recording Entrants

All yachts must have streamers if required by **NOR & SI**. Keep some spare on board.

Yachts without a streamer can be penalized so keep a note of whoever does not have one (but offer them one of your spares). Boats already entered (on your list from the office) are not required to acknowledge the committee boat. Late entries (and there are many) must come up to the committee boat and indicate they are entering and in which Division. Many boats just wave (you must wave back to acknowledge them). If in doubt which Division a yacht is entering, ask them (loudly). Record all entrants (sail number and name

if possible) on the proforma provided. Any yacht which enters but does not start should be recorded as 'DNS' (Did Not Start). Consider using separate forms for the each Divisions (it makes checking the results easier). Yacht will be coming up to the committee boat and entering long before the start, probably when you are setting the start line/windward marks. This is where your assistants begin to work.

Setting the Start Line

Use the POLE and PENNANT buoy for the IDM (Inner Distance Mark) and the inflatable buoy for the ODM (Outer Distance Mark).

These define the ends of the starting line.

You need to decide the LENGTH and ORIENTATION of the start line. Length obviously depends on the number of yachts. The longer the line the less congested it will be. If uncertain, set on the long side. The RYA recommends 1.1 times the combined length of all yachts at any one start. The Outer Distance Mark (buoy) forms the left hand end. If you set the line dead square to the wind, no-one will complain. If you can set it so that the ODM is a little further upwind than the committee boat (perhaps 5 degrees) you will be congratulated as this tends to stop boats bunching at the committee boat end.

It is recommended that an Inner Distance Mark be set at least 20m inside the committee boat (to make sure there is sufficient distance between the IDM and the committee boat for two or three yachts to pass through, otherwise it will not help). Remember that the start line is actually oriented between the ODM and the ORANGE DISC on the committee boat (not the IDM).

Pre-Start

If the wind shifts a bit before the start, remember that it is quite easy to change the orientation of the line slightly by letting out/pulling in the anchor of the Committee Boat – much easier than fiddling about with the buoy. But don't pull in too much chain or you will drag. The start line can be adjusted at any time up until the preparatory signal for a class.

For big fleets it is worth stationing one of the support boats with handheld VHF just beyond the pin end of the line. It may be better positioned than the committee boat to see yachts over the line if there is bunching at the pin end. The very presence of such a boat will discourage yachts from pushing their luck.

Starting

Start times: as per **NOR & SI**

We use the system described in RRS 26 except that the warning signal for the first division to start is 5 minutes before the starting signal for that division. Any yacht starting more than 15 minutes (usually, check the SI) after its assigned start is recorded DNC (but continue taking its time just in case). **The following is for example only: Check NOR & SI for Class Flags etc.** (With any luck the Sailing Committee will have produced specific guidance notes for each event with multiple starts.)

Time	Minutes Before Start	Sound Signal	Flag Signal	Comment
10:55:00 am	5	1 Gun	Flag U Up	Div A Warning Signal
10:56:00 am	4	1 Gun	Flag P Up	Div A Preparatory Signal
10:59:00 am	1	1 Horn	Flag P Down	Div A One Minutes
11:00:00 am	0	1 Gun	Flag U Down Flag V and W Up	Div A Start Div B & SBR Warning Signal
11:01:00 am	4	1 Gun	Flag P Up	Div B & SBR Preparatory Signal
11:04:00 am	1	1 Horn	Flag P Down	Div B & SBR One Minutes
11:05:00 am	0	1 Gun	Flag V and W Down Flag Z Up	Div B & SBR Start Div C Warning
11:06:00 am	4	1 Gun	Flag P Up	Div C Preparatory Signal
11:09:00 am	1	1 Horn	Flag P Down	Div C One Minute
11:10:00 am	0	1 Gun	Flag Z Down	Div C Start
xx:xx:00 am	Cut off for Div A starts, 30 min. after the second boat has finished			
xx:xx:00 am	Cut off for Div B and SBR starts, 30 min. after the second boat has finished			
xx:xx:00 am	Cut off for Div C starts. 30 min. after the second boat has finished. Blue flag down. Retrieve IDM and, if appropriate, the ODM.			

The times refer to when the flags break out at the top of the hoist – the sound signals are merely to bring attention to the flags. Be sure your assistants are aware of this. If a gun fails it does not invalidate the starting procedure.

Don't forget to record the start time on the proformas.

Use of VHF

If you wish you can announce courses, time signal, yachts OCS (early starters, see below) etc on Ch 72. If you do this, make sure you get it absolutely correct. Any conflict between what you say and the flag signals could lead to horrible confusion.

Postponement

Racing Postponed (Answering Pennant, AP) may be displayed at any time before or during the starting sequence and means that races NOT STARTED are postponed.

Postponement may be necessary if there is no wind, or if you want to move a buoy, etc.
The procedure for postponement is as follows:

- AP flag UP
- Two guns as it goes up
- Any starting flags down

When you want to end the postponement:

- Fire one gun as the AP is lowered
- EXACTLY ONE MINUTE LATER restart the appropriate sequence
(i.e. Warning Signal, flag up, one gun)

Over the line

The line is between the ODM + the orange disc on the Committee Boat.

Look along it at the gun.

Note any boats over.

Write them down (job for your assistant)

Individual Recalls

If identifiable yachts are OVER the line at the start (OCS – On the Course Side), hoist Flag X and fire one gun. There must be a sound signal for the recall to be valid (exception to the usual rule). You are permitted to advise the offending yachts by VHF Ch 72, but it is not mandatory. Display Flag X until all the offending yachts have returned to the pre-start side of the line, or for four minutes (whichever is earlier). Any boat which does NOT return is recorded OCS (on course side at start) – but keep recording their time anyway (just in case).

General Recalls

If yachts are OVER at the start AND you can't decide who was OCS and who wasn't, instigate a general recall:

- Raise the First Substitute flags
- Fire two guns as the First Substitute flag is raised.
- Procedure to restart is in HHYC SSI 8.2 + RRS 29.

During the Race

After you have lowered the blue flag you can cruise round with the fleet (but don't interfere with anyone's wind) or remain at/go to the finish. Your choice. But remember that some of the faster yachts are FASTER than the committee boat, so make sure you arrive at the finish in plenty of time.

Changing the Course

If you are confident enough to change the course during the race then you probably don't need these guidance notes. Details of the procedure are in the RRS.

Shortening the Course

If shortening, decide EARLY. If you leave it too late the first boats may have rounded

your shortening mark, which means you CANNOT then shorten at that point/time. Unless you are running geometric courses with gates, you can only shorten the course at a ROUNDING MARK. If you decide to shorten, position the committee boat (anchor) in an obvious position so that boats rounding the mark pass between it and you, and fly Flag S (give 2 sound signals as it goes up) and a blue flag. The finish line is between the mark and the staff flying flag S. If boats are a long way apart (as is normal on Island courses), suggest give 2 sound signals as each boat or group or boats approaches. This removes any ambiguity. As mentioned earlier, this is where you need to have selected courses which all round the same mark.

Finishing

Try to set the finish line square to the wind. With windward/leeward courses, it is important to know which boats are finishing and which boats still have another lap to do. To help in recognizing which boats are actually finishing, you should try to note the lead boat and the last boat in each division as the race progresses. It also helps to have your assistants tick off each lap for each boat as it comes round. With Island courses this is less of a problem.

If finishing at Little Palm Beach mark sure you are well in towards the mainland so that boats can see you from a long way away. Set a buoy and anchor the committee boat to starboard of it (as seen from finishing boats). Fly a blue flag.

For windward – leeward, take up appropriate position at appropriate buoy and fly a blue flag.

The first boat in each Division gets a gun. Everyone else gets a hoot, unless the boat was on the course side at the start line (OCS) and did not go back inside the line-but record their time anyway. (Yachts still get a hoot and times taken even if you know or suspect they did not sail the proper course or performed some other misdemeanor – the protest committee decides if they finished, not the OOD).

Record actual finish times to the nearest second (not elapsed times). There are two watches – if possible then two people should independently record the times and cross-check with each other. It helps to have one person record times of all finishers in order, writing them down. There is a tape recorder available which can be used if you like in addition. If lots of boats are finishing at the same time you must be very careful. If possible, on your way back to the club phone the results (start and finish times) in to the office.

- **Boats not sailing the Proper Course**

"If a boat finishes they should be given a finish regardless of the fact that they might have missed out a mark of the course or not gone through a gate. The correct procedure in this case is to inform the boat of their wrong and ask them to retire, where they will be scored RAF. If they refuse, the Race Committee should protest them. You cannot score a boat DNF if they crossed the finishing line in the right direction"

Receiving Protests

Note down if any boat is flying a protest flag (red flag prominently displayed on the backstay) and if possible obtain details as to whom the protest is against.

Back Ashore

Take all the results and notes to the office.

If there are any protests, inform the Race Committee, which in practice means the Rear Commodore Sailing or a member of the Sailing Committee. Double and triple check the calculated results before the prize giving. It is unusual for every result to be correct first time. Obvious errors are typing in times wrong, or mis-reading (or mis-hearing) times. You must check every finish time in the computer against the written record. Occasionally handicap numbers get scrambled. You can refer to the tape recorder in order to clarify times. Check start times have been entered correctly. Remember that it is the responsibility of the checker (you) as much as the calculator to get it right.

And Finally

Get yourself a **LARGE** drink.