

**SEVERN SAILING ASSOCIATION
RACE COMMITTEE HANDBOOK
2008 EDITION**

INTRODUCTION

Severn Sailing Association is justifiably proud of its national reputation for excellence in race management. As a part of SSA's Standing Race Committee's efforts to maintain and improve our capabilities, we have developed this handbook to provide guidance to regatta Principal Race Officers (PROs) and Vice-Chairs concerning their specific on and off the water responsibilities while organizing events at SSA.

This handbook is NOT intended to be comprehensive. Rather, it is designed to be used in conjunction with the U.S. Sailing Association's (USSA) Race Management Handbook which is available from USSA (www.ussailing.org, or 1-800-USA-SAIL).

Standing Race Committee

SSA's Standing Race Committee (SRC) is responsible for the organization and operation of SSA's racing activities. Committee members (see Appendix B) are drawn from the ranks of SSA's most experienced sailors, and most are graduates of USSA's Race Management program and are Certified Race Officers and/or Judges. The SRC develops and maintains lists of Qualified PRO members, and of Vice Chair members.

The SRC works closely with SSA's Sailing Committee to develop the annual racing schedule, and assigns Race Committee PROs and Vice Chairs for our events. It is also responsible for the assignment of Race Committee staff for each of our regattas and for Protest Committees as needed. The committee also prepares SSA's Sailing Instructions, and is responsible for the maintenance of our on-the-water race management equipment - boats, flags, marks, etc.

Protest Committees: The SRC has responsibility for hearing protests from Club Regattas. These are normally heard the Thursday following the event. The Fleets have responsibility for naming a Protest Committee for their Invitational events.

Members of the Standing Race Committee are available by phone or at the Club to help ensure the smooth running of the regatta.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRO AND VICE CHAIR

The Principal Race Officer (PRO) is responsible for all aspects of the on-the-water management of a regatta. This specifically includes responsibility for the Sailing Instructions and any amendments to them and ensuring that the scorer has correct information and is provided with accurate racing results. The PRO is also responsible for the development and training of the Vice Chair and the other members of the Race Committee, and for reporting the Race Committee and Protest Committee attendance to the Club.

The Vice Chair's responsibilities include any and all duties assigned by the PRO, or assumed by him/her in the absence or incapacitation of the PRO, and specifically the coordination of the Race Committee staff assigned the event.

Both the Chair and the Vice Chair should be aware that, while the quality of Race Management is their first priority, the development of Vice Chairs into qualified PROs is essential if SSA is to maintain its high standards of race management. Where possible (excluding major championships and extreme conditions), the PRO should take on a supervisory role and allow the Vice Chair to perform relatively routine tasks such as setting the line, timing, signal displays and course changes.

BEFORE THE REGATTA

PRO:

Review the Racing Rules of Sailing (2004-2008), especially Part 3, Conduct of a Race.

Carefully review the Sailing Instructions. SSA's standard Sailing Instructions should be used for all Club regattas. Many of our Invitational regattas will also use SSA's standard Sailing Instructions, but most major invitational events will require custom Sailing Instructions, to reflect special Fleet or Class requirements. Check with the participating Fleet Captains well ahead of such an event, and work with the Fleet to develop appropriate Sailing Instructions if requested. Custom Sailing Instructions need to be reviewed by the Standing Race Committee prior to the event. Remember, any last minute changes to the Sailing Instructions must be posted on the Official Notices board - discussion at the Skipper's Meeting is not adequate.

The PRO should also check with the Fleet Captains on Invitational events concerning arrangements for a Protest Committee (or other desired procedure - judges, arbitration, etc.).

Review equipment needs:

If the PRO is not experienced with the operation of SSA's Race Committee boats, especially "Favored End", make arrangements to be checked out on the equipment by the Dockmaster prior to the regatta.

Identify, from assigned RC staff, operators for Parker and Aquasport (if needed). The Dockmaster can help with identification.

Use of RIB: The new RIB is not for regular use. A list of pre-approved events for RIB use is available in the Office. All other use must be approved by the Dockmaster or the SRC. First-time operators must be checked-out by the Dockmaster. Marks, boats to be towed, etc. should not be tethered to the handles on the RIB. If tied to "Favored End" during races, fenders should be used. Care is needed with the handling of anchors, etc., to avoid puncturing the hulls.

Vice Chair:

At least two weeks prior to the event, contact the SSA office to verify the members assigned to the Race Committee for your regatta. A list of assignments by week is also available on the SSA website at www.severnsailing.org, in the "Members Only" section. Click on "Reports", and then "Duty Roster by Week". Call or email each of the people on the list at least a week in advance of the event to confirm their participation. Be sure you get a response - a call back or answer to your e-mail. If you do not, try again - it is important that contact is made, to ensure that you have adequate staff at the club on the morning of your regatta. If a member assigned to the weekend is unable to attend, let them know that it is their responsibility to find an appropriate replacement. In the event that you are sure that you will be understaffed, contact the club office as early as possible to ensure that adequate personnel will be available to staff the Race Committee.

On the Day of the Regatta

Both the Chair and the Vice Chair must arrive early! This means no later than 2-1/2 hours prior to the scheduled on-the-water warning, or by 8:30. The following tasks must be accomplished before going out on the water:

Post previously written amendments to the Sailing Instructions and other Notices on the Official Bulletin Board (east portion of Snack Bar area, under stairs).

Check in with the Dockmaster and meet with Race Committee staff and assign personnel to various RC boats and responsibilities.

Check Main Committee Boat (Favored End"), Parker and Aquasport for fuel and all required equipment, including flags (see also the enclosed lists). Obtain hand-held radios from Dockmaster, and review operation. Be sure that the "Ollie" (automatic timer) is onboard "Favored End" (if it is to be used). Note: The new RIB is to be used only with permission of the Dockmaster, (or the SRC in the absence of the Dockmaster), or in an emergency.

Registration: For Club regattas, assign a committee member to accept registration forms (and cash/checks from non-SSA members). For Invitational events, this is a responsibility of the participating Fleets. ANY SSA MEMBERS, WHO ARE DELINQUENT IN DUES, SLIP PAYMENTS AND/OR SERVICE DAY FINES WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO COMPETE UNTIL THEY PAY IN FULL. A list of delinquent members (if any) will be provided for the registration desk.

Check the inflation level of the marks to be used—do not over inflate; load them as follows: Windward and Gybe marks (and offset mark) on the Aquasport; leeward mark, starting line pin end (and offset mark if any) on the Parker. Be sure the uninflated "change mark" (tetrahedron) is on board the Aquasport.

Determine which sound signals are appropriate based on preference of the Fleets racing, and the fleet size and wind strength. Generally, the Ollie horns are better for smaller fleets and low wind conditions - if the "Ollie" is to be used, check that it is set on the appropriate sequence (5 minute or 3 minute). The propane cannon is better for larger fleets or strong wind conditions.

Review the operating procedures for the Ollie or propane cannon. Remember: The cannon fires one second after the button is pushed.

Review with the fleet captain(s) the starting system to be used. The 5-minute sequence, RRS 26, is the default starting system. If any other system is to be used, such as the 3-minute system, all participating Fleets must concur in its use. (See Appendix A)

Review with the Fleet Captains the race area and the recommended order of start in various weather conditions; minimum and maximum velocities for racing; course geometry (isosceles vs. equilateral); course shape (Olympic, Triangle, Windward-Leeward), and velocity/chop conditions governing each.

Conduct a Competitors Meeting. This is normally scheduled for 1-1/2 hours prior to the on the water warning (9:30 for Club Regattas). Say as little as possible and never, never give verbal changes to the Sailing Instructions. If there are any amendments to the Sailing Instructions, post them in writing on the Official Notices board (with code flag L Flag displayed from the club flag hoist with a horn). (The Official Notices Board is in the east side of the Snack Bar area, under the stairs.)

The following topics should be covered in the Competitors Meeting:

- Welcome competitors to SSA
- Car parking arrangements: leave keys in car if blocking someone and park car only in designated areas inside the yellow lines.
- Announcement that any amendments to the published Sailing Instructions have been posted (Note: This includes racing in other than Area A).
- Point out the Main Committee Boat, the Parker, the Aquasport and any other vessels which will be used (check-in, patrol, jury, etc.).
- Describe the marks being used
- Wish everyone good luck and good sailing.

On the Water

Try to start the first race at the scheduled time.

When disconnecting the shore power from the main committee boat always disconnect the shore end first!

Use the Port spring line to turn "Favored End" when leaving the slip.

Be sure the key on the "Favored End" is turned to the off position when the engine is shut down.

Review assignments on the main committee boat on the way to the course, and run several full-dress rehearsal starting sequences. Nothing else you can do will contribute as much to the success of your starts as this simple dress rehearsal.

Be sure that a member of the RC is assigned to keeping a race log - starting and finishing time for each Fleet in each race, signaled course, etc. Note any course changes made during race.

Send the Parker ahead to the designated Race Area to begin taking wind readings. Rendezvous with the Parker and discuss course layout, etc. Set up course, check-in competitors, and begin racing sequence. (See Appendix A)

Tips:

1. The person taking "check ins" should hail the sail number back to the competitor.
2. Lower the orange (starting line) flag one flag height down from the fully hoisted position. This will permit the competitors to see more easily other hoisted flags.
3. Have "AP" flag bent on hoist, ready to display if needed.
4. Preparatory flags ("P", "I" and "Z") should be bent on cabin-top hoists. Have RC member assigned to these signals practice hoist and drop.
5. Do not fly the Individual and General Recall signals from the stern of "Favored End", as they cannot be easily seen by competitors. If using the signals on a pole, locate the pole at the front Port-side edge of the cockpit.

At the End of the Day's Racing

These tasks must be performed at the end of each day's racing (or at the end of the regatta, in some cases):

Post the arrival time in the SSA harbor of the Main Committee Boat on the Official Notices board; hoist the B flag on the SSA flag pole with a horn signal; the flag must be lowered, with a horn signal, in one hour.

Stow all equipment (flags, anchors, horns, etc.).

Return the "Ollie" and radios to the Dockmaster

Note any equipment problems on sign-out form and give to Dockmaster.

Clean up the committee boats and marks and their tackle. Remove trash and hose down "Favored End".

Provide the scorer with the racing results and assist with clarifications as needed.

Turn in Race Committee Attendance Sheets.

Attend the Trophy Presentation.

Club Regattas: RC Chair should preside at trophy presentation. Trophies purchased by the club should be obtained from Dockmaster.

Invationals: Trophies are purchased by participating Fleets.

SSA Policy on Alcohol

Members of the Race Committee on any SSA committee boat shall consume no alcohol while on duty, including prior to and during protest hearings. No alcoholic beverages are allowed on any of the club boats when being used for racing activities.

Appendix A

SIGNALS AND STARTING PROCEDURES

SSA normally uses the following signals in starting and running races - be sure all are aboard the main Committee Boat before leaving the dock:

- Race Committee Flag: Displayed from the staff forward on the cabin top.
- Orange Starting Line Flag: Usually displayed from the aft position on the main hoist.
- Starting Sequence Board: Permanently installed on the starboard side of the main Committee boat; class boards stored in the cabin.
- Class Flags: Stored in the rolled-up canvas flag holder in the cabin; display from one of middle positions on main hoist.
- "P", "I" and "Z" Flags: Stored in flag bin in cabin; Display on cabin-top hoist.
- Course Flags: Stored in flag bin in cabin - display from one of middle positions on main hoist.
- Recall Flags: Individual and General Recall flags are stored in flag bin in cabin; display forward on poles, or on forward cabin top hoist. Have ready to display prior to beginning starting sequence.
- "I" and "Z" Flags: Stored in flag bins in cabin.
- Postponement Flag: Stored in flag bins in cabin; have on hoist ready to display.
- Sound System: Attach "Ollie" securely to stern deck when anchored and in position for starting sequence, weather permitting. Start button begins 5-minute sequence, with warning sounds.
If using propane cannon, attach securely to cabin top before leaving dock.

Normal SSA Starting Procedure:

- Display starting sequence of fleets on fleet board
- Display course flag
- Begin starting sequence with class flag and sound signal
- Hoist "P" flag or other Preparatory signal at 4 minutes to start
- Drop "P" flag or other Preparatory signal at 1 minute to start
- Drop Class flag at start

Subsequent classes are started with new sequence.

Appendix B

SSA Standing Race Committee - 2008

Peter Hale, Chair

Jack Colwell

Hugh Elliot

Carl Engel

Rosemary Foltis

Sandy Grosvenor

Mark Hasslinger

Mike Higgins

Ed Michels

Steve Podlich

John Potter

John Quay

Luke Shingledecker, Liaison to BOG