

Saturday and Summer Series – Race Officer Guidance

This document contains additional guidance for race officers operating the Saturday and Summer Series races. Refer to the [Committee Boat \(Bruce\) User Guide](#) alongside this document.

These race series have a different format to the 'normal' races operated from a club line start. Races will usually start from a committee boat (Bruce) and use a system of 'grand prix' finishes. Normally 2 races will be scheduled on a particular race day (e.g. Saturday 1 and Saturday 2). The emphasis for this type of racing is to keep the fleet together, with lots of close racing action. Our aim is to keep the racing interesting and test people's knowledge of the rules. The aim is to finish the whole fleet within a few minutes of the lead boat to ensure all competitors complete the race in similar tide / wind conditions.

The key to making this successful is good race management and constant observation.

Set up takes more time than a club line start; you will need to be on the water 45 minutes before the scheduled start if Bruce is being used from its mooring. If Bruce is to be moved, allow at least 75 minutes. You cannot be certain what the course will be until you are actually on the water.

This guidance can be used for other races following a similar format, for example the Interclub Series.

It assumes race officers are familiar with the basic guidance set out in the [Dinghy Race Officer Summary Guide](#).

Overview of short course racing, with 'grand prix' finishes

A Grand Prix finish means the lead boat completes either the total number of laps set, or whenever you wish to shorten the course to achieve a 30-45 minute race. The lead boat is the first boat to finish, then every boat thereafter needs to be rung across the line, regardless of their lap in relation to the lead boat.

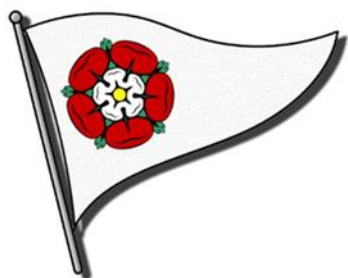
This means that you need to record the number of laps completed by each boat using a tally system then just record the finish time for each boat. The result is based on calculating the corrected average lap time for each boat. This system only works if the courses are very small; little triangle/sausage type courses that only take 10-15 minutes per lap.

Preparing the Committee Boat (Bruce): refer to separate User Guide for details

Bruce has all the flags and equipment on board to run races (except racing marks), however taking a back up clock from the race box is a sensible precaution in case of flat batteries. Bruce is on a mooring a short distance south of South Salterns.

On board is the following

- A rack for holding flags
- A display board for the mark identifiers to define the course.
- Race Clock
- VHF Radio
- Set of flags on poles



- Sounding Horn – pedal / button operated
- Set of mark indicator boards (Corrugated Plastic rectangles)
- Starboard (Green) and Port (Red) versions of the likely marks you will use
- Lap indicators – 2 up to 6

Brief the competitors

A short briefing is encouraged before you leave for the water, or at least to be available for questions. For a briefing, explain the following:

- Short triangle / sausage course in either a clockwise or anticlockwise direction – no need to write the course down.
- Course will be displayed on the side of the committee boat.
- You must pass through the start line at the end of every lap.
- Describe a 'Grand Prix' finish
- Two races of 30-45 minutes each – with possible course change between displayed on Bruce

Brief the Patrol Boat team

It is really useful to brief the Patrol Boat Helm before going on the water so they understand what they need to do.

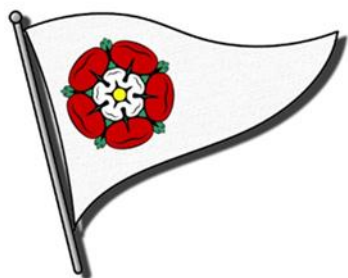
- The patrol boat will need to take at least one round and pencil buoy as a minimum. The small round buoys are easier to handle and are sufficiently visible for a small course. For a larger fleet event (i.e. InterClub) consider using the inflatable marks.
- The patrol boat crew need to ferry the race officer to the committee boat in good time before the scheduled start.
- The patrol boat should keep an eye on the fleet as they sail to the start area.
- The patrol boat crew need to lay marks carefully, with clear instruction from the race officer as to their position via the radios.

Course Setting

There are two key points to bear in mind when setting courses:

1. The first leg of the course should be to a windward mark. Usually this will have to be laid by the patrol boat, but it could be a harbour mark if the wind direction is suitable.
2. The orange pencil buoy should be laid to mark the far end of the start line. The line should be perpendicular to the wind direction, use a handheld flag to gauge this when directing the patrol boat into position. Be prepared to ask the patrol boat to lift and move this if necessary to set a fair line. The line should be long enough for all the competitors to cross at the same time.

The course will be either a simple 'sausage' (windward / leeward) or a triangle style Olympic course, using a combination of laid and harbour marks.



If you are setting multiple courses (due to different fleets) ensure each boat is directed to round the marks in the same direction as the others.

Be aware of tides and wind strength when setting the size and position of courses

Be mindful of depths when setting courses that cross banks

It is important to keep it simple; with only two – four marks and keep the total distance to be sailed short.

The course should be set for every dinghy to cross through the line on each lap.

The patrol boat will be required to lay the course – good radio communication is really important.

Fly the Orange flag on Bruce to mark the “Committee boat end” of the start line.

Display the chosen course on the side of Bruce using the course board displaying from left to right.

Give plenty of time for competitors to read and understand the course before the start.

Display the number of laps you want them to sail. Using 4-6 laps gives the most flexibility – remember, you can always shorten a course, but never extend it.

The Race

There is no need to start the race until all the competitors have arrived at the Committee Boat. It is better to take your time and get the course set correctly, rather than try to rush the start to make the published start time.

Start the race as per the normal 5-4-1-0 sequence, using the air horn. It is very important to record the exact time each race starts.

As each boat completes a lap thereafter; use a tally system to record how many laps they have sailed.

The race is finished when one of the following two circumstances occurs:

1. The lead boat completes the total number of laps.
2. You reach 30-45 minutes and you chose to shorten the course. Remember to raise the shorten course flag as the lead boat approaches the final mark for the last time and give the correct sound signal.

Once the lead boat has been finished – finish all boats when they next pass through the line, regardless of the lap they are on. Make sure you record their finish times as you would do normally.

When all competitors have finished – either pack up and return to the club, or if there is to be a second race, reassess the conditions, perhaps change the course (change direction?) and start the next race.