

OOD Duties for Club Regattas – a working guide

Before the event:

- 1 When you agree to be OOD for an event ensure that you put this commitment in your diary and that the “other half” knows about it!
- 2 Make sure that you have a competent assistant and, preferably but not always essentially, a Safety Boat driver.
- 3 One month beforehand, remind your helpers that they are helping you **and check with the safety boat person that all is ok and ready for use.**
- 4 A week beforehand, check they are still available and agree meeting times.
- 5 If the Club marquee needs to be erected, or the barbecue taken over to the site, this is best done the evening before. (It is possible for 2 people to erect the marquee but 3 or 4 will be better).
- 6 Check that all the equipment you need (flags, clock, hooter etc. are in the green box – the Mate should be able to confirm this without the need for a special trip)

On the day of the event:

- 1 Arrive in good time so that you are prepared for any eventuality!
- 2 Decide the course and get it laid. **Remember, buoys must NOT be laid, lifted or moved with only one person aboard the boat. This rule is absolute, and applies also to people using their own boat.** The course you lay will depend very much on wind strength and direction but, remember it will be difficult to alter, once laid, before the first race. It is better to lay too short a course and “lengthen it” by giving competitors several rounds than laying too long a course so that you wait hours for the first (let alone the last!) boat to appear.
- 3 The Spring Regatta & Day 2 of the Summer Regatta are “round the cans” events.
- 4 It is usual, but not essential, to lay a buoy (C) up the River Thurne towards Ludham. Depending upon wind direction, and the presence of fishermen, it is better to lay this short of the poplar trees on the left bank. These trees can leave the fleet starved of wind. River Cruiser sailors appreciate soft banks all around all buoys in case of ‘whoopsies.’

- 5 Another buoy (B) is usually laid up the Bure within the vicinity of the first pumping station (but not on the bend!). Where this buoy is laid will be very dependent upon wind strength.
- 6 A final buoy (A) is laid towards Acle, usually within hailing distance of the black mill.
- 7 It is worth bearing in mind that if the buoys are too far apart you will have a lonely time on the moorings. However, if the sun is shining and the company is pleasant
- 8 Once the course has been laid you need to get out the (coarse?) board. You should indicate on this the course order (eg. C, A, B) and should indicate the direction of rounding of the marks by ensuring that these letters are red for port rounding or green for starboard rounding. The course board should also indicate with the arrow, the direction of the start. The final indicator to display will be the number of rounds the competitors will be expected to complete.
- 9 The number of rounds may be left until your briefing of competitors. It is always better to indicate too many rounds and then shorten course than have a race finishing too early.
- 10 Races, ideally, should last 100 minutes, to allow the handicap to come into play but this may not be realistic for Club events. Races should be at least an hour long – preferably nearer 90 minutes. (Don't forget that slower boats can take twice as long as fast ones)
- 11 The main flagpole should be erected – possible with 2 but better with 3 or 4 people – and the Club Ensign hoisted.
- 12 The triangular outer distance marker needs placing. (preferably at an angle to counteract a windward advantage.
- 13 The hooter needs connecting to the battery & checking for polarity and operation.
- 14 The timer needs its battery inserting and the time corrected. It is prudent for the timekeeper to synchronise this timer with his/her watch.
- 15 Flags need to be prepared and run up the halyards in a bunch ready to break out.
- 16 Finally, the race record sheet needs to be prepared and competitors need to be asked to sign in and be informed of the briefing time.

The Briefing:

Short and concise. Welcome competitors, particularly any new Club members perhaps racing for the first time.

Weather forecast

What are they racing for? (Club points, cups etc.)

Course – order, direction of rounding, number of rounds

Starting times

The Start:

Some general points first.

Generally, the number of competitors for Club events is low. It is usually possible to get away with 2 starts – River Cruisers & Allcomers.

However, our stretch of river is narrow and, in the event of strong winds or a suddenly over-large turnout it would be necessary to increase the number of starts. 4 or 5 boats makes for a good start – more than that and it could become interesting (from a bystander's point of view!)

If it is necessary to split either class into more than one start this should be done on their known and declared handicaps. (if at all possible boats with the same handicap should be in the same start)

EACC uses 10:5:Start sequence and it is usual for the River Cruisers to start first, followed by the Allcomers.

Start sequence is as follows (for a 11:00 start) –

- 10:50 River Cruiser Class Flag (Numeral Pendant 3 – red, white, blue – vertical) broken out and sound signal. (NB It is the flag which controls the racing, not the sound signal.)
- 10:55 Allcomers Class Flag & the 'Blue Peter' (P flag) broken out and sound signal.
- 11:00 RC Class flag down and sound signal.
If all River Cruisers are behind the line it is helpful (but not essential) for the OOD to call "All Clear"
If one or more boats are over the line the sound signal will be sounded twice (once for the start and once for the boats over) and the Class flag left at the half mast position. The OOD will then call out the sail numbers of boats over the line. These boats should then return to the start and, once clear of the line, re-start the race. Once the last boat has cleared the line and is ready to re-start the Class flag will be lowered and all clear called.
- 11:05 All Comers Class Flag & Blue Peter lowered and Sound Signal. If there is a false start then the procedure above should be followed. Note that, in the event of all boats being over the line at the start the General Recall Flag

should be hoisted and the entire fleet returns to start again after the last official scheduled start.

Each boat starting is recorded as having started at the official start time – regardless of when they actually start.

Finishing:

A boat is deemed to have finished when its foremost part crosses the line. It should receive a bell and its actual finishing time should be recorded.

A boat disqualified, or not deemed to have started, does not receive a bell, although it would be wise to record a finish time in case they protest the OOD and win their protest!

The elapsed time can then be worked out and converted to seconds.

The handicap is now applied as in the example below –

Handicap Example

Race starts at 14.00.00

Yeoman 24 finishes at 15:20:41

Her elapsed time is 1 hr, 20 mins & 41 secs

Converted to seconds - 1 hour = 3600 secs (1 X 60 X 60)
 20 mins = 1200 secs (20 X 60)
 + 41 secs

She therefore took a grand total of 4841 secs

For all negative handicaps (those without a + in front of them) subtract the handicap from 1 and multiply by number of seconds

Yeoman 24 has a handicap of 13% - subtracted from a 100 = 0.87

0.87 x 4841 would give an adjusted finish time of 4211.67 **if the handicap is positive then it is 113% which is 1.13 x 4841 = 5470.33.**

There is an Excel spreadsheet available to do this for you if you have access to a laptop.

Shortening Course

If a race has lasted for at least an hour it may be necessary to shorten the course. Weather conditions may also cause the OOD to shorten the course.

The course may be shortened when the lead boat in any fleet is within sight and sound of the finish line.

The signal to shorten course is made by hoisting the Class Flag & the Shorten Course Flag (S – white flag with a blue square in centre) and by drawing the boat's attention to the flags with 2 blasts of the hooter.

The lead boat then takes the shortest possible route to the finish and receives a bell. All other finishers following the same course then receive a bell. (They do not need the 2 sound signals)

If there is more than one class racing, each lead boat in each class receives the shortened course signals.

Towards the end of the racing discretion may need to be exercised with regard any boats that have given up and gone home without informing an officer.

After the racing is over:

1. Work out the results as quickly as possible and inform competitors
2. Cajole as many as you can in to helping with the clear-up – buoys, start line, masts, marquee
3. Thank competitors
4. Thank your assistant(s)
5. Send results to Skipper & Mate (the Mate will pass them on to other parties)
6. If you can, write a report for the newsletter, web site, EDP
7. Inform the Mate of any breakages, problems etc.
8. Go home and have a beer
9. Have another!

Variations:

Day 1 of the Summer Regatta is the Thurne Roundabout.

Buoy (A) will be much further downriver, even as far as Upton Dyke.

Buoy (B) will be further upriver, possibly beyond the 2nd Pumping Station

Buoy (C) may be a little further upstream – near Womack Dyke

Boats have no specified start time, starting anytime after 10:30
All boats must finish the course by 16:00

Boats may start in either direction and may round buoys in any direction to suit themselves.

Their elapsed time is recorded and handicap applied.

OOD is advised to request all boats hail the line as they start and finish.

The Autumn Regatta begins, by tradition, with a passage race to South Walsham. The start is at the Club Site and Buoys (C) & (A) are usually in use, although much will depend on wind direction.

Being a Passage Race boats should start not in Classes but in handicap with boats of similar handicap starting together.

The problem for the OOD with this race is that he/she needs to set a course, which, after starting the last group of boats, will still allow him/her to reach a suitable finishing point before the fastest boat in the first group!

Don't forget to take the outer triangular marker with you to make the finish line, **which is usually some way down S. Walsham Fleet Dyke, but before the trees close in.**

Don't forget that no one is perfect, we all occasionally make mistakes and can only correct them and apologise to anyone it may have effected.