

# RCRA Race Committee Instructions

## Wednesday Night Races

Updated 4/12/10

### CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Race Committee Checklist
3. Equipment Checklist
4. Rendezvous
5. Starting Area
6. Finishing the Race

### INTRODUCTION

While Wednesday Night Races tend to be a little less formal than CBYRA races, it will be more fun for all concerned if the race committee duty is carried out smoothly and without “issues”. The skipper of the committee boat functions with the full authority of the RCRA Race Committee Chairman. It is the responsibility of the Race Committee to ensure a fair, competitive race.

Before the day of the race, the committee boat skipper should:

1. Review the Notice of Race and Sailing Instructions.
2. Review RRS Part 3 – Conduct of a Race.
3. Spend a few minutes reading this guide.

### RACE COMMITTEE CHECKLIST

#### *Prior to Race Day*

1. Have a copy of the Racing Rules of Sailing as well as an up-to-date paper chart of the race area available. Review equipment check list.
2. A crew of three or four works best for Race Committee. Set a departure time that will allow ample time to arrive at the rendezvous point (RCRA “A”) before the rendezvous time (1815).
3. Be sure that committee boat is fueled, has all required Coast Guard safety gear, operational navigation and anchor lights, and is otherwise ready to go.

#### *Race Day*

1. Check the weather before leaving for the boat.

2. Arrive at the marina 30 minutes before departure time allowing time to load race committee gear, food and beverages.
3. Before departing, review the equipment checklist to see that all items are on board.
4. On the way out assign responsibilities. Some of these duties can be combined if necessary.

### **Time Keeper**

Use GPS time. The timekeeper is responsible for keeping the RC crew “on schedule” and should announce the next signal (i.e. “Prep Flag up and horn in. . . ) Give times at 1 minute, 30 sec., 15 sec., and count down the final 10 seconds. Doing this over the VHF will help keep the competitors informed and ensure a better start for all.

### **Line Watcher**

The line watcher must be positioned in line with the yellow flag displayed on the RC boat and the pin so that he/she can easily sight down the line. He should have a horn in one hand and the individual recall and general recall flags within easy reach. The Line Watcher will give the sound signals for the start sequence as well as any over early signals. At the end of the race, the line watcher calls out the sail number of each boat as it approaches the finish line, sounds the horn for the first boat as it finishes and calls “OVER” as each subsequent boat finishes.

### **Flag Tender**

The flag tender will make sure that the RC flag is flying, fly the rendezvous (L) once the committee boat is on station, attach the yellow start/finish flag, and raise and lower class flag (white – Spinnaker Class) and prep flags at the proper times.

### **Recorder**

The recorder will record all of the entries in the race by sail number and boat name. The recorder must print neatly and clearly. Prior to the start of the race, the Recorder will record the course, distance, start time, wind direction and speed. As boats finish the race, the recorder records the sail number and the time in military time (i.e. 2048) as each boat is called over the line. The recorder will verify that all boats are accounted for before the RC boat pulls anchor.

## **EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST**

- ***RC equipment bag:***
  - Flags - class (white – Spinnaker Class) , start/finish line (yellow), postpone, RC, prep – P, shorten course – S, individual recall – X, general recall – 1<sup>st</sup> substitute, rendezvous – L)
  - Course Board- dry erase board with green, red and black markers
  - Horn and extra air cylinder (test before leaving pier)
  - Paper and writing utensils for recording race details
  - Scoring Forms (entry list, if available)

- Paper chart – the laminated version showing all the RCRA marks is adequate.
- ***Aboard Boat:***
  - Anchor and rode sufficient to hold in start/finish area
  - Sufficient fuel
  - VHF radio (handheld preferred)
  - Binoculars (optional)
  - Timer (GPS time works best)
  - Copy of Sailing Instructions, Racing Rules of Sailing
  - Check navigation lights including anchor light
  - Powerful flashlight for finishes after dark

## RENDEZVOUS

- While motoring to the rendezvous area, assign duties and begin setting up the boat.
- Once the RC boat is on station, sound one long horn and hoist the L flag.
- Douse the L flag with multiple short blasts of the horn one minute prior to the first warning signal.

## STARTING AREA

The committee must perform the following tasks upon arrival in the starting area. Some of these tasks can be started or completed beforehand.

### ***Select the course***

Selection of a competitive course is as important as ensuring a fair start. The "ideal course" configuration is one that includes equal lengths of upwind and downwind legs. Given the constraints of racing in the Patapsco River this is not always possible. If at all possible, try to include at least one true upwind leg and one true downwind leg in the course. **All races will finish at RCRA # 5 unless course is shortened due to lack of wind.** Keep in mind that there is a time limitation and all boats should be able to complete the course within the limit (2100 hours). For this reason, it is also a good idea to include marks along the course that would allow shortening if conditions warrant. Normally a good distance for Wednesday night is 4-8 miles depending on wind strength. Also, avoid using unlit marks as rounding marks after sunset.

### ***Set the starting line***

The starting line should be square to the wind (upwind starts) and about 300 feet in length (for a 10 boat fleet). It should be longer in heavy air. For downwind starts, the starting line should be set square to the direction of the first mark and can be a bit shorter as well.

To set the line, motor past the pin at a right angle to the course. After going the required distance, turn head to wind. Continue to windward far enough so that after anchoring, the boat will drop back to the position where the line will be square to the wind. Use of a hockey puck type compass helps if one is available.

In determining the length of the line, remember that knots times minutes equals distance in 100s of feet. For example, if you want a 300 foot line, motor at 3 knots for one minute.

**Post the course boards**

The course board indicates the sequence and direction boats will round the marks. Marks to be left to PORT are indicated with **RED** numbers. Marks to be left to STARBOARD are indicated with **GREEN** numbers. **The finish mark should always be RCRA #5 and should always be GREEN.** The sequence of the marks on the board should be correct as seen by the competitors. Double check to see that the board reads correctly from left to right.

**Record contestants**

Have a person spotting sail numbers and checking them against the check-in sheet on which entries have been listed.

**Signals**

Time	Flag	Sound	Meaning
1815	Hoist L flag	1 long horn	RC boat is “on station”
1829	Drop L flag	Multiple short blasts of horn	One minute before first warning
1830	Hoist white flag	1 horn	5 minute warning for Spin Class
1831	Hoist P flag	1 horn	Preparatory Signal
1834	Drop P flag	1 long horn	1 minute before Spin Class start
1835	Drop white flag	1 horn	Spin Class start

**Over Early’s**

When one or more boats are over the line early, the line watcher must, AFTER THE STARTING SIGNAL, give one short blast on the horn and immediately hoist the code flag "X". If possible, hail premature starters by sail number over the VHF radio channel 71.

In the event that so many boats are over early that the line watcher cannot identify them all, a general recall must be signaled; two short blasts of the horn and hoist the First Substitute code flag. The warning signal for a new start for the recalled class shall be made one minute after the First Substitute is removed (one sound), and the start sequence will be repeated.

**FINISHING THE RACE**

The finish line will be between the committee boat and the last mark of the course – RCRA #5 (Rock Creek “2”). Set a relatively short finish line. It should be roughly half the length of the starting line. If the last leg of the course is a beat, the line should be set square to the wind. If the last leg of the course is a reach or downwind, the line should be perpendicular to the course from the previous mark. It is helpful for after dark finishes if the committee boat is well lit.

If the wind is light jeopardizing the chances of all fleets finishing the race, the course may be shortened (according to the sailing instructions) to any designated mark of the course providing that no boat has rounded that mark.

A long horn should be sounded for the first boat finishing in each class. Subsequent boats in the class should receive a hail “*sail #\_\_ OVER!*”

As a finishing boat nears the line, the timekeeper calls out time and counts the seconds, the line watcher calls out the sail number and "OVER". The recorder records the sail number, finish time (in military time), and, if time allows, the boat name.

The recorder should also make note on the "Order of Finish Sheets" if a finisher is flying a protest flag (this does not relieve the competitor of his obligation to notify the committee of a protest).

Be sure to make sure that all boats have finished or that the time limit (according to the sailing instructions) has expired before leaving the finish station.

Turn score sheet in to the scorer or RCRA Commodore immediately after the race.

*Pat yourself on the back for doing a great job!!!*