

Crawley Mariners Yacht Club

Hedgecourt Lake Events - general

Support Boat Helm (SBH) and Support Boat Crew (SBC)

- Training is recommended for Support Boat Helms and Crews. The RYA has devised courses in the use of Powerboats and Safety Boat requirements and techniques. These courses are offered by RYA Training Establishments, including CMYC and refresher courses are also offered. Familiarisation sessions for the CMYC Support Boats are also available. Support Boat personnel who wish to undertake these courses and sessions should contact the CMYC Training Officer. The RYA Safety Boat Handbook 2007 (publication reference G16) is recommended reading. These guidelines refer mainly to the organisation of SB activities and are not a substitute for SB training.
- If in doubt about anything, seek assistance and guidance from the Race Officer, committee member or other experienced club member
- Actions
 - Ahead of event
 - Ensure that you have the current combination codes for gate/clubhouse and Support Boat shed (separate combination for the coastal support boat shed)
 - Previous evening
 - Obtain local wind/weather forecast for the day. Do not forget suitable clothing for conditions (sun, cold, rain) and a buoyancy aid. You are likely to be colder on a SB than when sailing due to the lower level of physical activity and you should be prepared for this – a hat is useful for keeping warm.
 - You should be prepared to get wet and for the possibility of SBH or SBC being required to enter the water when assisting competitors.
 - On the day
 - Start time minus 90 mins
 - Arrive in good time before the event (one and a half hours before the advertised start time is normal) and report to the RO. Unlock the Support Boat shed if the RO has not already done so.
 - Team up with your Support Boat Crew (SBC)
 - Verify which Support Boat (SB) is to be used and make appropriate checks to ensure that the boat and engine are in suitable condition and with sufficient fuel. The kill cord should be in good condition and a spare kill cord should be present.
 - If refuelling is required, the fuel tank must be removed from the boat for refuelling.
 - If it is deemed appropriate to have radio communication between RO and SB/shore (eg for larger events), ensure that you are familiar with the operation of the radios.

- Launch the SB and take boat to end of jetty to give a reasonable depth of water. Be aware of shallows all of the time. The prop should always be kept out of the mud. Tie up to pontoon.
 - Check that engine is locked in the down position
 - Check that all necessary equipment is properly stowed and tidy all ropes
 - ALWAYS ATTACH THE ENGINE KILL CORD TO ENGINE AND YOURSELF BEFORE STARTING ENGINE. THE KILL CORD SHOULD ALWAYS BE ATTACHED TO YOURSELF WHILST THE ENGINE IS RUNNING.
 - Start engine and check cooling flow tell tale.
 - Await instructions from the RO.
- Start time minus 60 mins
 - The RO will probably request a trip out to the centre of the lake to assess the wind conditions and decide on a suitable course for racing. To avoid fouling the propeller in the mud, keep the boat 'flat' by positioning of occupants and regulation of speed. When taking the RO/ARO's out to the Maid of Kent limit the number to 4 in total inc' SBH/C - unless very light!
 - He may also require marks to be moved and the Outer Distance Mark (ODM) to be laid for the correct starting line length and angle to the wind. You should be ready to assist with these tasks.
- Start time minus 30 mins
 - Attend the briefing so that you understand how the event is to be managed (number of starts, course)
- Start time minus 15 mins
 - Keep a close eye on competitors sailing out to the start – your first priority is to assist capsized competitors as promptly as possible and the SB should be ready for action prior to competitors launching
 - Ferry the RO and ARO team to the Maid of Kent.
 - Unless required to assist a competitor, keep alongside the Maid of Kent (opposite side to Start Line) before start in case of need.
 - Keep the engine running so that the SB is ready to render immediate assistance
 - The RO may require an adjustment of the ODM during the period prior to the Preparatory Signal
- During the race
 - Continue to keep a close eye on competitors and assist promptly whenever required
 - Station yourself in a position where you can quickly reach competitors – this will vary depending on conditions but remember that you can reach people more quickly if you are upwind of them and that capsizes may happen more in certain areas of the course eg gybe marks, dead runs. Generally, keeping near to the Maid of Kent or the centre of the lake is a good option as it will give the shortest distance to any

problem. In light winds keep the speed to an absolute minimum unless an 'emergency' occurs. Try to stay clear of competitors racing.

- Be aware of competitors who are more likely to require assistance eg inexperienced, older, less physically able competitors
- Always go to a boat in difficulties and stand off ready to assist if asked – if they receive help then they have to retire. If there are multiple capsizes use your judgement as to who you stay with.
- Be aware of competitors tiring after capsizing and that hypothermia is a distinct possibility – the judgement of the SBH/SBC over-rides that of the competitor if they believe this to be the case (irrational decision making by the competitor affected can be a sign of hypothermia!)
- Be aware of the people in the water as well as ropes when assisting capsized boats and manoeuvre/position the boat in a safe manner.
- If it is difficult to right a capsized boat, or people have been in the water for a protracted period for other reasons, be prepared to take the helm/crew aboard the SB and ferry them ashore, the first priority always being safety of persons. As it can take some time to go ashore and return to the race area, depending on the condition of the persons concerned consider the option of taking them to the Maid of Kent, which will allow the SB more time to keep in attendance for other competitors. Use commonsense judgement to decide.
- When taking people aboard, keep the propeller away from them on your approach and stop the engine as soon as contact is made with the person. Assist them with boarding the SB, taking care to avoid injury to yourself and others.
- Maintain contact with the RO and team on the Maid of Kent (if not using radios, keep an eye open for any signals from the Maid of Kent – they may have seen something that you have not). In any event, return to the Maid of Kent at regular intervals eg 10 mins unless occupied with assisting competitors.
- Because of the shallow nature of Hedgecourt Lake, capsized boats sometimes get their masts stuck in the mud. It can help if the SB positions itself by the mast and works along it towards the top, the SBC pulling it up as it goes.
- Depending on conditions, recovery of any abandoned boats may need to be left until the race is finished. Again, use commonsense judgement.
- At the end of the race
 - The SB should ensure that all competitors boats are safely ashore before collecting the Duty crew (or at least be aware of any boats still sailing back to shore who may need assistance, whilst you are collecting the Duty crew). In light/zero wind conditions, offer to tow or take alongside boats which may be struggling to get back ashore. The SB should remain on the water until all competitors are safely ashore.
- Post-finish time

- Obtain sufficient assistance in recovering the SB from the water onto its launching trolley and bringing it up the ramp – remember to tilt the engine up
- Wash down the SB if it has become muddy
- Ensure that the Support Boat(s) are put away, correctly laid up ready for the next SB crew to use and boat sheds securely locked.
- Report any problems with the SBs to the Club Bosun by completing a ‘Defect Form’ a supply of which are kept in the boatshed.

Key point summary

- **Suitable clothing**
- **Check fuel**
- **Use kill cord**
- **Check engine tell tale**
- **People before property**
- **Be vigilant**