

Notes for Race Officers – Hedgecourt (2026 version 3)

At least 2 weeks before the duty day, check that the Support Boat Helm/Crew and Assistant Race Officers (AROs) are available for their duty. Initial confirmation can be gained by referring to the DutyMan information via the Club website or duty reminder. However, it is strongly recommended that the Race Officer confirms by telephone wherever possible, a link in the duty reminder will log you in to DutyMan allowing you to see contact phone numbers. When contacting the Support Boat Helm check that he or she has read 'Support Boat Operating Guidelines for Hedgecourt', available on line (as for Sailing Instructions below), the RO should also be aware of the content. Make sure that the Support Boat team are aware they may be called upon to go into the water to carry out a rescue and are therefore appropriately dressed.

Sailing Instructions for Club racing are in the Race Officer's Notes folder, which should be in the Race Officer's box in the clubhouse and online at: www.cmyc.co.uk -> Member Area -> Policies and Documents.

1. Preparation

- On arrival, open Entrance gates, tumble the lock codes so that the entry code is not visible, and Clubhouse patio door.
- Brief AROs and Support Boat team on the timetable and ensure that they understand their roles (For suggested allocation of roles see under heading number 2). If the SBH has not read the 'Support Boat Operating Guidelines for Hedgecourt' brief him or her on the main points. A copy should be available in the RO folder.
- On the course board indicate that Briefing will take place 30 minutes prior to start time.
- Set up Signing-on sheet on clipboards and make available for the competitors to sign on; it is their responsibility to do so, but it is useful for AROs to circulate in the rigging area.
- Collect the Optimum stopwatch and whistle from the Race Officers box, and check that these are working. (press start/stop, and clear when stopped). A personal back up stopwatch is highly recommended.
- Check that the stop watch is in 5-4-1-0 count down then up mode set it to count down from 5 minutes (press prog once).
- Four handheld radios (not VHF) are available, currently in the cupboard next to where the First Aid kits are kept. It may be helpful for the Race Officer and Support boat to have a radio. If you find that a radio needs charging please put it on charge while you are out on the water, return it to the case before leaving the club.

2. Suggested allocation of roles for RO and AROs

- RO: Makes sound signals, sights along Start/Finish line for premature starters, calls out sail numbers as boats cross line at end of laps and at finish, operates backup stopwatch.
- ARO 1: Hoists and lowers visual signals, completes Back-Up sheet.
- ARO 2: Starts stopwatch, calls out times during start sequence and when RO calls out sail numbers.
- ARO 3: Enters Race Record sheet and keeps an eye on any abnormal entries, cross –checking with Back Up sheet if appropriate.

3. Conditions

- RO should take a circuit of the lake to assess wind strength & direction, take a burgee to assess the best position for the windward mark and plan the course (refer to next section).
- Position Outer Distance Mark (ODM) with ideally 5-10° of port end bias (ie. port end nearer the wind). ISAF recommend a line length of between 1.3 and 1.5 times the number of boats times the boat length. This may be difficult to judge, be generous.
- Check numbered buoys are in appropriate positions for the prevailing conditions, if not have them moved, after returning ashore if time is tight.

4. Course

- All club races except for pursuit races and Open meetings start and finish between the Maid of Kent and the Outer Distance Mark (ODM).

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- Design a course with the first leg heading as near direct into the wind as possible, i.e. a beat, with preferably a port rounding at the first mark. Note if the wind is Northerly it will not be practical to have a beat for the first leg. If you have to set a course with a reaching start then make the first leg as long as possible to allow the boats to spread out before the first mark. Also do your best to include at least one beat somewhere in the course.
 - Try to include a variety of reaches and runs, avoid fetches as these may become beats as the wind shifts.
 - Exclude intermediate marks on a leg unless there is a good reason for including them.
 - Draw the course on the board, list the marks with the side on which they must be passed or rounded and include the Start/Finish line at end of list.
 - Check again that buoys being used have sufficient clearance for the course to be sailed, are not in wind shadow and are clear of weed, when present, you may move them within their general area.
5. Number of starts
- Note on Course Board the start time.
 - See section 10 for race starting procedures.
6. Briefing
- Ensure AROs and SB crew attend the briefing.
 - Go through the Course, start times, signals to be used, race duration (see SI 13) and give a time check by watch being used.
 - If there are competitors who are new to racing or inexperienced, make sure that all competitors are aware of this.
 - Check that competitors have signed on correctly, first name and surname and correct boat variant e.g. Topper 4.2 not just Topper if they are sailing with the smaller sail, or Sail Cube (club variant of Oppie) rather than Optimist.
7. Race Recording sheets
- Prepare sets of Race Record sheets & Backup sheets on clipboards.
 - AROs should transfer details from Signing-on sheets to Race Record sheets, listing classes in alphabetical order with blank line between classes, and in numerical order within Class. This makes the recording of results easier. If there are back-to-back races, separate sheets should be prepared for each race. If the number of boats would allow both on one sheet then that is acceptable, but make sure that the two sets of results are clearly distinguished.
8. Prepare for start
- RO and at least one ARO to be taken to Maid of Kent 15 minutes prior to start, others to follow ASAP with all clipboards and RO instructions (but NOT the Signing-on sheets). The three small RIBs are permitted to carry a maximum of four people.
 - Check that the length of line and its angle to the wind are still OK, as in 3 above. The line can be shortened after the start, this is particularly worth doing if it reduces the possibility of competitors inadvertently sailing through the line other than when they are finishing a lap, resulting in them having to exonerate themselves.
 - ODM may be moved up until the Preparatory Signal (4 minutes prior to start time).
 - Aim to start at the agreed time but be prepared to give some flexibility for boats that may have been delayed in getting afloat.
9. Postponing a start
- If still ashore, make an announcement, and write on the Course Board.
 - If afloat, hoist Red and White cylinders (AP) with 2 sound signals at any time prior to the Warning Signal.
 - End a postponement by lowering the AP (one sound signal) one minute before the new Warning Signal time.
10. Starting sequence – Single Start
- Times given below are for a count-down watch set to count down from 5 mins.
- 5 mins: Warning Signal: Hoist Class signal (Yellow cylinder) with one sound signal.

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- 4 mins: Preparatory Signal: Hoist Blue over White cylinder with one sound signal.
- 1 mins: One Minute Signal: Lower Blue over White cylinder with one sound signal.
- 0 mins: Start: Lower Class signal (Yellow cylinder) with one sound signal.

NOTE: According to RRS 26/CMYC SI 9 competitors should time their starts according to the VISUAL signals, However, most CMYC competitors use the sound signals, so a slight delay in hoisting or lowering a cylinder is acceptable. If a significant error occurs with the visual signals – e.g competitors are unable to see at what stage they are in the sequence - then abandon the start by hoisting Blue over White and White/Blue/White cylinders with 3 sound signals. When ready to restart the sequence lower both cylinders with 1 sound signal one minute before new Warning Signal.

In the event of an error in the precise timing of the sound signals, from 4 minutes to the start, then the restart procedure, as above, can be used.

A simple alternative, if for whatever reason problems occur with using the above, is to make several sound signals, lower any hoisted cylinders and restart the complete sequence.

11. Premature starters

- At 30 seconds to go, stand sighting along the start line, one Assistant ready to record any premature starters & another counting down the last 10 seconds to the start.
- Make one sound signal & hoist White/Blue/White cylinder.
- If practical notify the offenders by hailing their sail numbers, this is a courtesy not a requirement.
- Record these numbers and delete when that boat has returned and is completely behind the start line or an extension of the line.
- Any who do not completely return to the pre-start side of the start line shall be recorded as OCS (On Course Side) in results.
- Four minutes after the start or sooner if all OCS boats have returned to the start side of the line lower the White/Blue/White cylinder.

12. General recall

- General Recall is appropriate if it is not practical to identify ALL the offenders
- Hoist Blue/Yellow/Blue/Yellow/Blue cylinder and make 2 sound signals.
- Lower it with one sound signal one minute before the new Warning Signal.

13. After start

- Unless required to assist someone, keep SB alongside during starting procedure in case you need it, for instance if shortening the line after the start.
- Subsequently ensure that the SB either stays alongside or returns at frequent intervals (10-15 mins) to receive any instructions.

14. Recording

Record the time at which each boat crosses the Start/Finish line as follows:

- The RO calls out the class of boat and its sail number (the last three digits may be adequate) as it approaches the line, an ARO calls the time when the boat reaches the line.
- On Race Record Sheet insert the time in appropriate lap column.
- On Backup Sheet abbreviate the boat class to one or two letters followed by the last three digits of the sail number in the first column. These entries can be made as the boats approach the line and the lap times added in the second column as appropriate. Although it is helpful if the entries are in the correct chronological order on the backup sheet, if boats swap positions while approaching the line and the boat class and numbers have already been entered it is acceptable for the times to be out of order.
- On intermediate laps the EXACT time is not necessary, but it is when the boats finish!

15. Boats that Retire

- Boats that sign on but do not approach the starting area should be noted on the Record Sheet as DNC.
- Boats that arrive in the starting area but retire before the start should be noted on the Record Sheet as DNS.

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- Boats that retire after starting should be noted on the Record Sheet as DNF.

16. Boats that do not sail the correct course

If the Race Officer observes a boat failing to sail the correct course the boat should be marked NSC (RRS A5.1). If possible, hail the boat or get the support boat to tell them. The boat may exonerate itself by correcting the mistake, in which case delete the NSC. Continue recording the lap times. If the boat did not exonerate itself notify them as soon as possible after the race. Occasionally a course may be interpreted in different ways, be prepared to listen to any such claims and if a satisfactory outcome cannot be reached, after looking at lap times and consulting other helms, then refer the matter to the Sailing-Sub-Committee .

17. Finish

- The maximum race times are given in the sailing instructions, The finish signal applies to all fleets.
- At end of Race time, hoist White/Blue/White cylinder with 2 sound signals
- Record finishing times for every boat as under Recording.
- Make a sound signal as each boat finishes (when any part of the dinghy hull crosses the line, usually the bow; it is still 'racing' until it has cleared the line in ANY direction).
- Premature starters that did not restart correctly are not given finishing signals, but record their time.

18. Shortening the course

The race may be finished earlier than the planned duration if necessary, for example:

- To ensure that all boats are off the water by 30 minutes after sunset (bye-law 9).
 - To ensure that the scheduled number of races can be completed and finish at a reasonable time.
 - In certain conditions (for example in heavy weather or extreme light airs).
 - In order to avoid a small number of boats having to do an additional lap (particularly if the lap length/time is long).
- If possible, shorten the course such that the leading boat on the water is finished first.
 - Indicate the decision to shorten the course by giving two sound signals and hoisting the shorten course visual signal (white/blue/white).

19. Ashore after race

- Remind helmsmen to sign off on the relevant Signing-on sheet (but it is their responsibility to do so).
- Should any competitor wish to dispute an incident in the race, refer to the RYA Rules Disputes Options (available in RO cabinet in Club House) – request assistance if necessary. Encourage resolution through mediation.
- Collect together all Race Record sheets, Back Up sheets, Signing-on sheets for the day. Ensure that the content is legible and that all helms have entered their forename and surname on the sign-on sheet. If you have a smart phone take a photo of each sheet, check that the image is clear and send them to the Race Results Officer either by email to raceresults@cmyp.co.uk, details are also in the Handbook, duty reminder and RO folder. Mark the sheets "Sent" and file them in the results folder, which should be located in the Race Officer's box... If you do not have a smart phone ask one of the duty crew or competitors to do this for you. Do not take the race sheets away from the clubhouse.
- Tidy up all gear and power boats, open and return first aid kits to the cabinet, lock the boathouse(s).
- Return handheld radios to the storage box in the cabinet next to where the first aid Kits are kept.
- Thank the members of the race team for their assistance.
- Make sure someone will lock the Clubhouse and that the last member to leave locks the gates.

Sailing Sub Committee - February 2026