

**Severn Sailing Association**  
**RACE COMMITTEE HANDBOOK**  
**2014 Edition**

**Introduction**

Severn Sailing Association is justifiably proud of its national reputation for excellence in race management. As a part of SSA's Standing Race Committee's efforts to maintain and improve our capabilities, we have developed this handbook to provide guidance for our regatta Principal Race Officers (PROs) and Vice-Chairs concerning their specific on and off the water responsibilities.

This handbook is NOT intended to be comprehensive. Rather, it is designed to be used in conjunction with the U.S. Sailing's Race Management Handbook, which is available from USS ([www.ussailing.org](http://www.ussailing.org).)

**Standing Race Committee**

SSA's Standing Race Committee (SRC) is responsible for the organization and operation of SSA's racing activities. Committee members (see Appendix D) are drawn from the ranks of SSA's most experienced sailors, and most are graduates of USS's Race Management program and are Certified Race Officers and/or Judges. The SRC develops and maintains a list of Members who are Qualified PROs or Vice Chairs (see SSA's website - [www.severnsailing.org](http://www.severnsailing.org)).

The SRC works with SSA's Sailing Committee to develop the annual racing schedule, and assigns Race Committee PROs and Vice Chairs for each event. It is responsible for the assignment of Race Committee staff for each of our regattas and for Protest Committees for club series events as needed. The committee also prepares SSA's Sailing Instructions, and is responsible for the maintenance of our on-the-water racing equipment - boats, flags, marks, etc.

The SRC has responsibility for forming a Protest Committee and hearing protests from Club Regattas. These are normally heard the Thursday following the event. The Fleets have responsibility for forming Protest Committees for their Invitational events.

Members of the Standing Race Committee are available by phone or at the Club to help ensure the smooth running of the regatta.

## General Responsibilities of Chair and Vice Chair

The Principal Race Officer is responsible for all aspects of the on-the-water management of a regatta. This specifically includes responsibility for the Sailing Instructions and any amendments to them and ensuring that the scorer has correct information and is provided with accurate racing results. The PRO is also responsible for the development and training of the Vice Chair and the other members of the Race Committee, and for reporting Race Committee and Protest Committee attendance to the Club.

The Vice Chair's responsibilities specifically include coordinating the staffing of the Race Committee and any and all duties assigned by the PRO, or assumed by him/her in the absence or incapacitation of the PRO.

Both the Chair and the Vice Chair should be aware that, while the quality of Race Management is their first priority, the development of Vice Chairs into qualified PROs is essential if SSA is to maintain its high standards of race management. Where possible (excluding major championships and extreme conditions), the PRO should take on a supervisory role and allow the Vice Chair to perform relatively routine tasks such as setting the line, timing, signal displays and course changes.

## Before the Regatta

PRO:

Review the Racing Rules of Sailing (2013-2016), especially Part 3, Conduct of a Race.

Carefully review the Sailing Instructions. SSA's standard Sailing Instructions should be used for all Club regattas. Many of our Invitational regattas will also use SSA's standard Sailing Instructions, but most major invitational events will require custom Sailing Instructions, to reflect special Fleet or Class requirements, which the PRO should review well before the event.

Check with the participating Fleet Captains well ahead of such an event, and work with the Fleet to develop appropriate Sailing Instructions if requested. Custom SIs need to be reviewed by the Standing Race Committee prior to the event. Any last minute changes to the Sailing Instructions must be posted on the Official Notices board - discussion at the Skipper's Meeting alone is not adequate.

Check with the Fleet Captains on Invitational events concerning arrangements for a Protest Committee (or other desired procedure - judges, arbitration, etc.).

Review equipment needs.

If not experienced with the operation of SSA's Race Committee boats, especially "Favored End II", make arrangements to be checked out on the equipment by the Dockmaster prior to the regatta.

Identify, from assigned RC staff, operators for "Edgar D", the Parker and the RIB (if needed). The Dockmaster can help with identification.

Use of RIB: The RIB is not for standard use, but rather for large events, especially in the spring and fall when the assigned RC is larger than 10 persons. All use of the RIB must be approved by the Dockmaster or the SRC. First time operators must be checked-out by the Dockmaster. Marks, boats to be towed, etc. should not be tethered to the handles on the RIB. If tied to "Favored End" during races, fenders should be used. Care is needed with the handling of anchors, etc., to avoid puncturing the hulls.

Vice Chair:

Two weeks prior to the event, verify and contact the Members assigned to the Race Committee for your regatta. A list is available on the SSA website at [www.severnsailing.org](http://www.severnsailing.org), in the "Members Only" section. Click on "Reports", and then "Duty Roster by Week". Call or email each of the people on the list at least a week in advance of the event to confirm their participation. Instruct them to be present at SSA by 8:30 each morning of their assigned event (11:30 for 1:00 start days). Be sure you get a response - a call back or answer to your e-mail. If you do not, try again - it is important that contact is made, to ensure that you have adequate staff on the morning of your regatta.

If a member assigned to the weekend is unable to attend, let them know that it is their responsibility to find an appropriate replacement. In the event that you are sure that you will be understaffed, contact the club office as early as possible to ensure that adequate personnel will be available to staff the Race Committee.

### On the Day of the Regatta

Both the Chair and the Vice Chair must arrive early! This means no later than 2-1/2 hours prior to the scheduled on-the-water warning. Generally, 0815 to 0830 will suffice. The following tasks must be accomplished before going out on the water:

Post any amendments to the Sailing Instructions and other Notices on the Official Bulletin Board (east portion of Snack Bar area, under stairs).

Check in with the Dockmaster, meet with Race Committee staff and assign personnel to various RC boats and responsibilities. Be sure that an experienced power boat operator is on each boat. Exchange cell phone numbers with someone on each RC boat - the club phone on "Favored End II" is 443-926-3744; the Dockmaster's cell is 410-991-1383.

Check Main Committee Boat (Favored End II"), Windward mark boat ("Edgar D"), and the small Parker for fuel and all required equipment, including flags (equipment lists for each boat are at Appendix A). Check radio, and obtain hand-held radios from Dockmaster, and review operation (Emergency radio information is on a laminated sheet in the cabin on "Favored End II" - also see Appendix C). Be sure that the "Ollie" (automatic timer) is onboard "Favored End", if it is to be used.

Registration: For Club regattas, assign a committee member to accept registration forms (and cash/checks from non-SSA members). For Invitational events, registration is a responsibility of the participating Fleets. ANY SSA MEMBERS, WHO ARE DELINQUENT IN DUES, SLIP PAYMENTS AND/OR SERVICE DAY FINES WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO COMPETE UNTIL THEY PAY IN FULL. A list of delinquent members (if any) will be provided for the registration desk.

Check the inflation level of the marks to be used—do not over inflate; load them as follows: Windward and Gybe marks (and offset mark) on the "Edgar D"; leeward mark, starting line pin end (and offset mark if any) on the Parker. Be sure the uninflated "change mark" (tetrahedron) is on board the "Edgar D".

Determine which sound signals are appropriate based on preference of the Fleets racing, and the fleet size and wind strength. Generally, the Ollie horns are better for smaller fleets and low wind conditions - if the "Ollie" is to be used, check that it is set on the appropriate sequence (5 minute or 3 minute). The propane cannon is better for larger fleets or strong wind conditions.

Review the operating procedures for the Ollie or propane cannon. Remember: The cannon fires one second after the button is pushed.

Review with the fleet captain(s) the starting system to be used. The 5-minute sequence, RRS 26, is the default starting system. If another system is to be used, such as the 3-minute system, a majority of the participating Fleets must concur in its use. (See Appendix "B", starting procedures)

Review with the Fleet Captains the race area and the recommended order of start in various weather conditions; minimum and maximum velocities for racing; course geometry (isosceles vs. equilateral); course shape (Olympic, Triangle, Windward-Leeward), and velocity/chop conditions governing each.

Conduct a Competitors Meeting: This is normally scheduled for 1-1/2 hours prior to the on the water warning (9:30 for Club Regattas). Say as little as possible and never make only verbal changes to the Sailing Instructions. If there are any amendments to the Sailing Instructions, post them on the Official Notices board (with code flag L Flag displayed from the club flag hoist with a horn). The Official Notices Board is in the east side of the Snack Bar area, under the stairs. Your packet of forms should include one for posting changes in the SI's, including SI Schedule A for changing the numbr of races scheduled from the default 3 on Saturday and 2 on Sunday in the Sis. Sun. .

The following should be covered in the Competitors Meeting:

- Welcome competitors to SSA
- Car parking arrangements: leave keys in car or on the key board in the clubhouse outside of the office, if blocking someone and park car only in designated areas inside the yellow lines.
- Announce that any amendments to the published Sailing Instructions have been posted.
- Point out the Main Committee Boat, the "Edgar D" and the Parker, and any other vessels which will be used (check-in, patrol, jury, etc.).
- Describe the marks being used
- Wish everyone good luck and good sailing.

## **On the Water**

Plan to leave the dock early enough to be able to start the first race at the scheduled time.

When disconnecting the shore power from the main committee boat always disconnect the shore end first!

Use the Port spring line to turn "Favored End" when leaving the slip.

Be sure the key on the "Favored End" is turned to the off position when the engine is shut down.

Review assignments on the main committee boat on the way to the course, and run several full-dress rehearsal starting sequences. Nothing else you can do will contribute as much to the success of your starts as this simple dress rehearsal.

Send the Parker ahead to the designated Race Area to begin taking wind readings.

Rendezvous with the Parker and discuss course layout, etc. Set up course, check-in competitors, and begin racing sequence. (See Appendix "B" for starting procedures)

Tips:

- The person taking "check ins" should hail the sail number back to the competitor.
- Hoist the orange (starting line) flag one flag height below the fully hoisted position. This will permit the competitors to see more easily other hoisted flags.
- Have "AP" flag bent on hoist, ready to display if needed.
- Preparatory flags ("P", "I" and "Z") should be bent on cabin-top hoists. Have RC member assigned to these signals practice hoist and drop.
- Do not fly the Individual and General Recall signals from the stern of "Favored End", as they cannot be easily seen by competitors. If using the signals on a pole, locate the pole at the front Port-side edge of the cockpit.

**At the End of the Day's Racing**

The Race Committee must follow the fleets back to SSA, with at least one RC boat behind or with the last competitor.

Post the arrival time in the SSA harbor of the Main Committee Boat on the Official Notices board; hoist the B flag on the SSA flag pole with a horn signal; the flag must be lowered, with a horn signal, in one hour.

Stow all equipment (flags, anchors, horns, etc.).

Return the "Ollie" and radios to the Dockmaster

Note any equipment problems on sign-out form and give to Dockmaster.

Clean up the committee boats and marks and their tackle. Remove trash and hose down "Favored End".

Provide the scorer with the racing results and assist with clarifications as needed.

Turn in Race Committee Attendance Sheets.

Attend the Trophy Presentation:

Club Regattas: The PRO should preside at trophy presentation. Trophies purchased by the club should be obtained from Dockmaster.

Invitationals: Trophies are purchased by participating Fleets, and presented either by the Fleets or upon request, the PRO.

### **SSA Policy on Alcohol**

Members of the Race Committee on any SSA committee boat shall consume no alcohol while on duty, including prior to and during protest hearings. No alcoholic beverages are allowed on any of the club boats when being used for racing activities.

## Appendix A

### RACE COMMITTEE BOAT EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

#### Main Committee Boat (Favored End II)

RC flag

Orange flag

Course flags (per SIs) D, W, O, T

Ollie timing and signaling system or propane cannon

Clipboard and check-in sheets and finish sheets

Recall flags - Individual recall (code flag "X") and general recall (code flag "first substitute")

Stopwatch or countdown timer

Tape recorder

Code flag "C" and "+" and "-" Signs

Code flag "P"

Code flag "I"

Black flag

Hand bearing compass

Wind direction measuring sticks (two or more)

Handheld VHF radio

Number board to indicate course direction

Class flags to use as warning signal for each class racing

Club Cell Phone - #443-926-3744

Air Horn and Whistle

## RACE COMMITTEE BOAT EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

### Windward Mark Boat (usually Parker 23 "Edgar D.")

RC flag

Orange flag

Handheld VHF radio

Blue flag

Code flag "S"

Code flag "C"

Code flag "M"

Number board to indicate course change direction

Air horn or other sound signaling device

Small round marks, for offset marks (2)

Orange cylinder, for windward mark

Anchor, counterweight and rode for each mark

GPS (optional)

Clipboard and finishing sheets

Hand bearing compass

Wind sticks

## RACE COMMITTEE BOAT EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

### Leeward Mark Boat (usually older Parker center console)

RC flag

Orange flag

Blue flag

Handheld VHF radio

Hand bearing compass

Code flag "M"

Code flag "S"

Code flag "C"

Number board to indicate course change direction

"+" and "-" course change sign boards

Red triangle and green square course change sign boards

Orange cylinder marks (two if using leeward mark gates)

Yellow cylinder mark (for start and finish line)

Anchor, weight, and rode for each mark

Clipboard and finish sheets

Air horn

Whistle

## Appendix B

### SIGNALS AND STARTING PROCEDURES

SSA normally uses the following signals in starting and running races - be sure all are aboard the main Committee Boat before leaving the dock:

- Race Committee Flag: Displayed from the staff forward on the cabin top.
- Orange Starting Line Flag: Displayed from the aft position on the main hoist.
- Starting Sequence Board: Permanently installed on the starboard side of the main Committee boat; class boards stored in the cabin.
- Class Flags: Stored in the rolled-up canvas flag holder in the cabin; display from one of middle positions on main hoist.
- "P", "I" and "Z" Flags: Stored in flag bin in cabin; Display on cabin-top hoist.
- Course Flags: Stored in flag bin in cabin - display from one of middle positions on main hoist.
- Recall Flags: Individual and General Recall flags are stored in flag bin in cabin; display forward on poles, or on forward cabin top hoist. Have ready to display prior to beginning starting sequence.
- "I" and "Z" Flags: Stored in flag bins in cabin.
- Postponement Flag: Stored in flag bins in cabin; have on hoist ready to display.
- Sound System: Attach "Ollie" securely to stern deck when anchored and in position for starting sequence. Start button begins 5-minute sequence, with warning sounds. If using propane cannon, attach securely to cabin top before leaving dock.

Normal SSA Starting Procedure:

- Display starting sequence of fleets on fleet board
- Display course flag

- Begin starting sequence with class flag and sound signal
- Hoist "P" flag or other Preparatory signal at 4 minutes to start
- Drop "P" flag or other Preparatory signal at 1 minute to start
- Drop Class flag at start

Subsequent classes are started with new sequence.

## Appendix C

### EMERGENCY RADIO COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES SSA Standing Race Committee

#### DISTRESS COMMUNICATIONS:

Distress communications indicate a vessel is threatened by grave and imminent danger, and requests immediate assistance. Typically a distress communication would relate to a potential loss of life or the potential sinking of a vessel. Distress communications shall be broadcast on VHF-FM channel 16:

- (1) MAYDAY MAYDAY MAYDAY
- (2) THIS IS Severn Sailing Association Race Committee (repeat three times).
- (3) Provide your position in GPS latitude and longitude coordinates. If you do not have a GPS unit, provide your position based upon compass bearings to charted objects. If you do not have a compass, generally describe your location as best you can.
- (4) State the nature of the distress.
- (5) State the kind of assistance desired.
- (6) Provide any other information which might facilitate rescue such as the length, type, and color of vessel, and the number of persons on board.
- (7) After broadcasting the above information, say OVER.

Typically the U.S. Coast Guard will respond to MAYDAY broadcasts, either Station Annapolis or Sector Baltimore. If the distress alert has been inadvertently transmitted and needs to be cancelled, advise the responding U.S. Coast Guard station immediately.

#### URGENT COMMUNICATIONS:

Urgent communications typically relate to the safety of the vessel or a person. If a sailor needs emergency medical assistance, but it is not life threatening, then an urgent communication would be appropriate. Urgent communications shall be broadcast on VHF-FM channel 16 as follows:

- (1) PAN PAN PAN PAN PAN PAN
- (2) Coast Guard Station Annapolis (repeat three times).
- (3) THIS IS Severn Sailing Association Race Committee (repeat three times).
- (4) After broadcasting the above information, say OVER.
- (5) The Coast Guard will respond to your broadcast, and typically request that you shift

to their working channel, normally 22A.

- (6) Once communications have been established on the working channel, explain to the Coast Guard the nature of your urgent communication, your location, and what assistance is needed.

**SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS:**

Safety communications typically relate to concerns over safety to navigation or meteorological warnings. Examples of safety to navigation might relate to a commercial vessel that is entering the race area. Safety communications shall be broadcast on VHF-FM channel 16 as follows:

- (1) SECURITE SECURITE SECURITE
- (2) THIS IS Seven Sailing Association Race Committee (repeat three times).
- (3) State the nature of your concern and if it relates to a particular vessel.
- (4) Say OVER.
- (5) Once communications have been established, switch to VHF-FM channel 13, which is normally used for bridge-to-bridge communications.

## Appendix D

### SSA Standing Race Committee - 2014

Peter Hale, Chair

Andrew Cole

Carl Engel

Rosemary Foltis

Sandy Grosvenor

Mark Hasslinger

Mike Higgins

Bill Sandberg

Jim Schmicker

Juliet Thompson

Mike Waters

Alon Finklestein, Liaison to BOG