



# Instructions to Race Committees for Lightning Class Regattas

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These Instructions are designed to assist Racing Committees conducting Lightning Class races and regattas of all categories, by providing a tested framework and method for conducting fair racing. This approach outlines standard procedures, thereby removing uncertainty and limiting the need to improvise. Excellent and consistent race management is a measure of a top notch Class.

For sanctioned regattas these Instructions should be followed exactly. For invitational or open races certain parts of the Instructions may be modified.

Deviations from these Instructions should be made because of specific physical limitations and not because of personal opinion or lack of equipment

These instructions are guidelines only. Nothing contained herein may be used as the basis for a protest, except as provided in ISAF/ILCA rules.

## I – RULES

The conduct and management of any regatta should be governed by the Racing Rules of Sailing (Rules) as specified in the Lightning Class Association By-Laws. The By-Laws specify the Rules of the ISAF as adopted by the nation in whose waters the regatta is held and ILCA Documents Governing all Sanctioned Events.

## II – SAILING INSTRUCTIONS

ILCA sailing instructions should be followed as closely as possible, with no deviations except as may be necessitated by local conditions. Copies of the sample Sailing Instructions may be obtained from ILCA Web site or by calling, faxing or writing the ILCA.

## III – ORGANIZATION

### 1. ILCA Representation

For Area and World Championships there will be two points of contact between the Race Committee (RC) and the ILCA. First, there should be a Class representative on the RC boat for purposes of giving advice to the RC pertaining to the wishes of the Class in race management. Secondly, before the regatta, there should be discussion between the ILCA VP for the Area event or World Championship (and/or Class Executives) and the RC chairperson regarding the expectations of the Class with respect to schedule and timing of races, type of courses, use of the I, Z and black flags and general race management, including max number of races a day and estimated time on the water.

For Area and World Championships the Executive Committee of ILCA shall approve the Notice of Race and the Sailing Instructions.

### 2. Race Committee

The Organizing Authority should appoint the Race Committee. Race Committee responsibilities include helping with the Notice of Race, writing the Sailing Instructions and managing the racing. The Chairperson and members of the RC should be experienced in their positions and have knowledge of current racing practices. The duties of each member should be outlined.

### 3. Protest Committee

The Organizing Authority should select the Protest Committee(s) of at least three people. If possible the Protest Committee(s) should be selected from capable persons having knowledge of the rules and may include contestants only as a last resort.

For Area or World Championships this committee shall be composed of experienced sailors with excellent knowledge of the racing rules, extensive protest committee experience and for some of the members Lightning experience. The jury shall consist of a chairperson and other members for a total of at least five members. A majority shall be International Judges and all others shall be certified by their national authority. It shall be independent of and have no members of the RC or contestants and be approved by the ILCA Executive Committee. For World Championships no more than two members shall be from the same national authority. For World Championships all judges shall be thoroughly conversant in English.

The handling procedure for protests must be pre-decided and adhered to without exception.

## IV – REGATTA TIME SCHEDULE

The RC should budget the total time allotted for the regatta with the purpose of sailing the required number of races under the best weather conditions possible. Thus the RC should make the best use of good weather when it occurs including sailing extra races early if the potential for deteriorating conditions exists.

It should be stated in the Sailing Instructions that the published starting times and the number of scheduled races in a day are tentative, and can be changed by posting on the official bulletin board no later than 8:00 PM on the preceding day if the number of races for the next day is to be increased or if the start of the first race is to be advanced.

## V – RACING COMMITTEE EQUIPMENT AND PERSONNEL

### 1. Equipment

There should be support boats as follows: R. C. Boat, line boat for starting line, two stake boats, patrol boat and crash boats. Boats should be carefully selected for size and other characteristics. The RC boat can be either a power cruiser or auxiliary but should be at least 25', with ample power to maintain 6 mph in heavy seas. There should be at least one boat capable of 15 mph to facilitate quick movement of marks. The RC boat should have a suitable setup for displaying starting and other needed signals.

2. Consideration should be given to the potential for the substitution of one of the other boats as a RC boat, in case of engine or other failure of the RC boat. This substitute boat must have a suitable setup for signals. It is desirable to have additional patrol boats.

The Race Committee has the responsibility to assure that there is an adequate number of crash boats on the course for existing conditions and number of participants.

The RC boat needs to have additional anchoring capability beyond that normally encountered; namely the capability to hold station in open water and potentially large seas.

The RC boat should have two sound signal capabilities such as a loud horn and/or power megaphone. The starting Signals should be flags as prescribed by the Racing Rules of Sailing. There should be radio communication between the various race committee boats and both the RC boat and the line boat. Stake boats should fly a large orange signal from the spreaders or mast or on other supports so it clearly can be seen.

The marks should be light in weight and easily handled, with good but not excessively heavy anchors. They should be fitted with ample line to prevent drifting and have a weight +/- five feet underwater so line doesn't catch on centerboards.

### 3. Personnel

Experience has shown that, as a minimum, there should be six people on the Race Committee Boat at major events:

- a. The Chairperson, who shall direct all operations on the RC boat and over the entire race course. He/she should have no other specific duties on the RC boat.

- b. Sound Signal person.
- c. Signal hoister.
- d. Timer.
- e. Line observer.
- f. Boat operator and assistant line observer.

Three or four people should be on each stake boat, line boat, and patrol boat.

## VI – TRIAL RUNS FOR THE RACING COMMITTEE

For major events, at least one trial run of the RC should be made if possible. The trial run(s) should include the full working committee with all boats and equipment. The trial runs should be made on a race with as large a racing fleet as possible to closely approximate actual regatta conditions.

## VII – CONTESTANTS MEETING

For the purpose of answering questions and imparting local knowledge, it is in order to hold a contestants meeting preceding the first race. Subsequent meetings should be held only in the case of an emergency. Any instructions given at the contestants meeting which are contradictory to the Sailing Instructions or to the Documents Governing all Sanctioned International Lightning Class Championships, must be immediately posted on the bulletin board. For sanctioned events such changes should be discussed and cleared beforehand with the ILCA VP for the event or the highest ranking ILCA representative.

## VIII – MANAGEMENT OF THE RACES

A time schedule for Race Committee operations should be established well in advance, and all personnel briefed accordingly. It is important that The RC boat be on station sufficiently early to track: weather, sea conditions, wind shifts, current and other pertinent factors to enable selecting a good course and length, a well-positioned weather mark and the setting of a fair starting line.

Sample schedule is given below:

### 1. Schedule

- 10:00 a.m. Starting Signal
- 9:59 a.m. One minute Signal
- 9:56 a.m. Preparatory Signal
- 9:55 a.m. Warning Signal
- 9:50 Recheck wind bearing and make any necessary changes.
- 9:40 RC recheck wind bearing and line bearing and make corrections by patrol boat or line boat moving port mark.
- 9:35 RC recheck wind bearing.
- 9:30 a.m. Stake boats receive instructions and leave starting area to proceed to place marks.
- 9:20 a.m. RC check wind bearings and make preliminary determination of starting line bearing, course, course length and mark locations.
- 9:00 a.m. RC establishes approximate starting area.
- 8:30 a.m. RC and all committee boats leave for course check.
- 8:00 a.m. RC personnel assemble and make equipment check.

### 2. Check-In

Prior to the start, an individual on the RC boat, or designated check-in boat, should account for all registered entries. Particularly in rough conditions, this list should be compared against the list of finishers for any discrepancies.

### 3. Patrols

The patrol boat or boats should keep all craft, including spectator boats, well away from the racecourse. Elimination of interference by pleasure craft is one reason why major Lightning regattas should be scheduled during the week rather than on weekends if at all possible. It has been noted that official boats are sometimes the worst offenders. It should be remembered that the wake of a larger boat could be just as disturbing in a race as the wind shadow it creates.

#### 4. Radio Communication with Competitors

Communication from the RC Boat is desired in order to keep the competitors informed of RC decisions which may affect timing of the scheduled races while on the water. (E.G. length of time the RC intends to wait for anticipated breeze, delays due to equipment failure, etc.) A courtesy countdown to the starting signals and start is appreciated and strongly encouraged.

#### 5. Delays

Races should not be delayed because of boats arriving late. The only reasons for postponement should be unsatisfactory sailing conditions, too much or not enough wind, not enough support boats for the conditions, trouble with equipment, or insufficient wind to allow competitors to reach the race course area when leaving the harbor at or before the harbor gun.

The Sailing Instructions should include the expected sailing time to the race course or should provide for a harbor gun signaling that all boats should be on their way. Boats leaving any later can be assumed to be doing so at their own risk, and this should be mentioned in the sailing instructions.

Every effort should be made to start races on time.

However, the RC should not be reluctant to wait for favorable winds. A common problem is, after waiting for some time, a start is signaled, before a breeze of some constancy has set in.

#### 6. Wind Condition Delays

- a. Light wind - Races should not be started unless there are sustained winds at least 4 mph across the course.
- b. Heavy winds - Races should not be started, nor continued, in wind conditions of 26 miles per hour or more.
- c. Other Factors for Delay- Other conditions such as large seas, cold weather, rapidly shifting winds, fog, the possibility of thunderstorms or other factors that preclude tactical racing.
- d. If a Postponement is required, whether on the water or on shore, communication with the competitors is vital. If at all possible, a postponement on shore should be accompanied by a specified number of hours prior to the earliest possible lowering of the AP flag. This practice is left to those knowledgeable of the local conditions.

#### 7. Starting Line

The starting line should be at an approximately 85° angle with the average wind. Thus, the port end will be favored by 5°. It is the intention that the first leg be dead to windward and that the RC should change the first Mark until such conditions exist. However, minor differences are acceptable if a major shift occurs, the race should be postponed and a new course set up. Starting marks should be easily moveable so that good lines can be easily set.

The RC should not be reticent about moving the starting line to accommodate wind shifts, especially after a recall—particularly if the competitors are clustered at one end of the line. While, in theory, it is possible to change the line towards favoring the leeward end more by letting out more anchor line on the committee boat, that is not really a good solution in a large fleet, as the length of the starting line would dictate letting out more line than is generally feasible. A common mistake is to not change the angle of the line sufficiently when making a change. Marking the Line

The mast or pole (with an orange flag) on the RC boat, which establishes the starboard end of the starting line, should be near the stern of the RC boat to reduce interference by the RC boat with the starters.

#### 9. Choice of Courses and Signals

The typical Lightning course is a Windward-Leeward course with legs numbering from 3 to 7. The occasional triangle course (either double triangle or Olympic Course) should be considered with the appropriate conditions (planing conditions, with angles wide enough to allow for planing on the reach legs). When subsequent races are expected to be sailed on a specific day, a downwind finish is typically preferred in order to reduce time between races.

Course Signals -will be displayed before or with the warning signal and will be letters and/or numbers to designate the course specified in the Sailing Instructions.

- a. Course O (Olympic, right triangle) will be indicated by display of Code Flag "O"(Red and Yellow triangles), or a letter "O" displayed on the RC Boat.
- b. Course W (windward-leeward) will be indicated by code flag W (red on white on blue) or a letter "W" displayed on the R

#### 10. Length of Course

The RC should establish the length of course carefully prior to each race, taking into consideration weather and other conditions. Standard course lengths for major events are discussed below in section XII. A typical leg will range between 0.7 and 1.2 NM.

Deviations may be made from the recommended lengths in the event of very light air, very heavy air, heavy seas, extremely hot weather especially accompanying light winds, extremely cold or inclement weather particularly when accompanied by heavy winds and/or seas, proximity to darkness or other dangerous conditions, or inadequate time to finish a schedule.

No matter what course length is selected the Committee may always shorten course or lengthen or shorten a leg. This should always be remembered in selecting a course length and the Committee should not hesitate to shorten course should any of the above wind or weather conditions discussed above become evident after the start.

#### 11. Direction of Course

Course should always be sailed counter-clockwise, buoys to port. Therefore, no course direction signal is needed.

#### 12. Markers

Fixed marks should never be used as they restrict the ability of the RC to make best use of existing wind conditions in laying out the best course.

#### 13. Weather Mark

The weather stake boat should motor directly up wind from the center of the starting line. The wind direction should be frequently checked during the run. The weather mark should be dropped and the stake boat anchored 100' to weather. If the wind shifts at any time prior to the preparatory signal, the stake boat should move the windward mark until the center of the starting line is dead to leeward of this mark. The RC boat should display the magnetic bearing to the weather mark.

#### 14. Second Mark

The stake boat should anchor 100' beyond the mark in line with the second leg. A downwind gate should be used, with Gate Marks a minimum of 6 boat lengths apart.

#### 15. Starting and Finishing

The determination as to when a yacht starts and finishes will be made in accordance with the ISAF Racing Rules.

#### 16. Start

In addition to the compass bearings taken to determine the starting line angle, the RC should observe the contestants carefully as they cross the line close hauled during their practice runs as an additional check on the line angle. With the line 85° to the wind, boats crossing on port tack will appear to be crossing the line at nearly the same angle as boats on starboard tack.

The line observers at each end should immediately after the start distinctly call the numbers of the boats over, and these should be written down as called by the gunner or signal handler. The signal handler should, on hearing one or more numbers called, prepare to make one or two sound signals and raise either the individual or general recall flag immediately. Appeals have ruled that taking too long to raise the individual recall flag is grounds for redress.

The RC should carefully rehearse the exact procedure to be followed in case boats are over the line (just who is to call the numbers, who is to write them down, how the person on the sound signal knows when to make it, etc.). A common mistake is to try to rush things - the important thing is to get an accurate record of the numbers over the line;

A general recall must be made if:

- a. There is any doubt as to the status of any boat.
- b. The timing, colors, etc., of the signals are in any way improper.

There should be no general recalls and restarts because too many boats are over the line, only because of the inability to identify all boats over. It is even possible to note all boats not over and thereby score all others as OCS.

After a General Recall, the warning signal for a new start shall be made one minute after the First Substitute is removed (one sound).

In major championships, it is recommended that the one minute rule as prescribed in ISAF rules be followed after all recalls. If the fleet continues to have recalls and it is ascertained that the line is sufficiently long and is correctly aligned to the wind, then the Z flag (20% penalty), the I-over-Z, and the black flag may be used. The black flag should only be used in extreme cases, after multiple starts under the Z or I-over-Z have resulted in a General Recall. It must also be remembered that simply lengthening a line not correctly aligned with the wind does little to alleviate the situation. The line angle should be reset.

#### 17. Handling Two or Three Fleets Sailing the Same Course

Under the Racing Rules of Sailing the starting time for all fleets other than the first fleet to start is not specific. Sometime after the start of the previous fleet the RC signals the next sequence with the warning signal when it is ready. The preparatory signal is one minute later. This may be ideal for your race management. You have time to reset the starting line (either direction or length) and do other important things. Other starting systems are not recommended and may only be used if described in the Sailing Instructions. As an International Class, we believe the starting system prescribed in the Racing Rules of Sailing should be used. Caution should be taken to avoid having a fleet nearing and/or rounding a leeward gate mark in close proximity to a starting line while another fleet is starting.

#### 18. Finish Line

After all boats have cleared the starting area, the RC may leave this area and may for a while act as a roving patrol, being careful not to interfere with contestants. Before the leading boat begins the last leg, the RC boat should set up the finish line at right angles to the wind, using the mark as one end of the line, and the orange flag on the RC boat as the other end. The RC boat will display a blue shape when on station at the finish line. The appropriate stake boat should move to the buoy end of the finish line.

If one or more of the fleets will not have completed rounding a Mark that is also being used as a finishing Mark, a substitute mark 1, readily distinguishable, should be set out of the way. If this procedure is used it must be described in the Sailing Instructions. In the event the Finish Line is being shifted due to a substantial wind shift the Substitute Mark will be set in the same manner.

#### 19. Shortened Course

If conditions are such that a shortened course is probable, the RC boat should stay well in advance of the leading boat and allow ample time to set up a finish line, make the proper signals, etc., at the mark where the race is to be terminated. The shortened course signal should be made as soon as the lead boats can see/hear the signal. The course must never be shortened to less than four legs or less than three legs in the case of a windward-leeward course.

#### 20. Course Changes

In the event of a significant wind shift, courses should be reset during the race to facilitate fair and tactical legs. The potential for wind shifts should not be used as a reason to not start a race. Marks can be moved, or races can be abandoned if shifts occur.

If a major wind shift occurs on the first leg, particularly if the shift leads to the likelihood of a boat laying the weather mark on one tack from the starting line, the RC should abandon the race immediately and signal a restart on a new course, however, the failure to do so shall not constitute grounds for subjecting a race to protest.

## IX – SCORING

A single individual should be responsible for posting the scoreboard. He/she shall post the order of finish immediately after each race, disregarding protests, uncertain disqualifications and the like. When protests are decided the final point scores and totals shall be posted.

## X – COURSES

Following are recommended course lengths for major events- (For lesser regattas, or if conditions warrant, legs can be shorter):

- a. Course O. Olympic - Once around a triangle(45 - 90 - 45), then up the windward 4th leg; a dead run return on the 5th leg; and finish on the windward 6th leg. The weather leg should be between 0.7-1.2 nautical miles.
- b. Course W. Windward/Leeward—numbering between three and seven legs, each between 0.7-1.2 nautical miles.

## XI – RULINGS

1. Life Preservers shall be construed as being any vest or jacket type approved by the National authority, for example the Coast Guard in the USA. Protest Time Limit. The question of legality of sailors or equipment must be challenged within the time limit (for filing protests) prescribed in the race circular in the regatta in question.  
(Executive Committee, Oct. 1966)
2. Dry-Sailing. In the absence of any limitations imposed by the local committee due to inadequate facilities, boats at all sanctioned regattas may moor in the water or haul out between races according to the wishes of the skipper. (Executive and Measurement Committee, May 1967)
3. North American Championships. I.L.C.A. Rules provides for division of Fleet after the Elimination Races. The fleets will be determined as specified in ILCA Documents Governing North American Championships.

If the Qualifying Series is scheduled on the first two days with no more than three days devoted to the series if races have to be abandoned or postponed. The Race Committee should make every effort to get the four qualifying races in, reducing the length of the course to as little as seven statute miles and/or shortening courses to four legs, three legs in the case of a windward-leeward course, if necessary to alleviate a time problem

However, the qualifying series will be closed out by the end of the third day and scored on the basis of the race or races sailed. If the Race Committee is trying to complete a schedule with two races to go and is running out of time it is recommended that the first race be shortened to 4 legs, three legs in the case of a windward-leeward course, and try to run the next race full course. The RC in the interest of reducing the time between races may start the next flight without waiting for the last finishers to return to the starting area provided the boats in question are not scheduled to race in the flight to be started, and provided that this procedure is specified in the Sailing instructions, or posted on the official bulletin board.

During the Qualifying Series, the PRO and Class Rep should carefully consider the effects the TLE Scoring Provision will have on all boats and avoid an inequitable scoring situation, perhaps by abandoning the race if a "critical mass" of boats will not finish within the TLE limit. Scores for any race in the Qualifying Series are relative to all boats registered in the regatta, not just relative to those in a single start.

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