



## SGYC Race Officer Duties

The **Race Officer (RO)** is the person in charge of the Race Management Team and setting of the courses for the races to be held. This team consists of the Race Officer, boat driver, any driver or crew of other rescue boats used and the Tower Officer.

The RO is expected to **arrive at the club at least 2 hours before the scheduled race** to prepare the boat and equipment for the races.

The **RO should be familiar with the Club's Sailing Instructions** regarding how the race will be conducted. This includes the organisation of the race, the rounding marks or buoys that will be used, the starting sequence, individual and general recall rules and signals, finishing procedures and shortening of the course procedure if necessary.

The **RO must ensure the safety of all sailors** and must be equipped at all times in the boat to provide assistance to a "sailor" if in difficulties. The first priority is to assist the sailor to safety before any boat is salvaged.

SGYC Basic rules as follows:

- If the wind strength is 25 knots or over, the race will not be held.
- If there is wind strength below 5 knots, consideration may be given to cancelling or postponing a race depending on tidal conditions; and
- Consideration must be given to the experience of yachtspersons when planning and conducting a race.

### Before Race

#### **1. Open compound and tower**

Open the compound, both eastern and southern gates, boatshed and toilets. The Clubhouse has a different key as does the Tower. If you do not have a key, please speak to The Commodore or a Committee member.

Turn on the power at the switchboard on the eastern wall of the Clubhouse. Only turn on the top left switch.

Unlock the tower ladder restraint (has its own key located in the Clubhouse) and unlock the tower door as well. Lift the window shutter, turn on the radio (channel 77) and raise the Australian Flag with the Club pennant underneath. These flags are hanging on the rear wall of the tower.

The Tower Officer may have already undertaken these tasks or some of them.

#### **2. Check start/rescue boat equipment**

Check equipment is onboard:

Fuel tanks – 2 tanks of fuel (unleaded) - available in the boat shed.

Buoys/marks



- 3 inflated course buoys (number will depend on course being set)
- 2 pink pimples
- timing mark with anchors

#### Course flags

- |                                       |                       |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| ➤ Port-red                            | ➤ Shorten course flag |
| ➤ Starboard-green                     | ➤ Postponement flag   |
| ➤ Orange starting flag                | ➤ Abandonment flag    |
| ➤ Class flags,                        | ➤ Mark missing flag   |
| ➤ General and individual recall flags |                       |

#### Additional equipment:

- Tool Box
- Safety Equipment (including binoculars)
- First Aid Kit
- Portable radio
- Wind Strength gauge – make sure it is working on the “knots” scale.

### 3. Preparing rescue/start boat(s)

To prepare the main rescue/start boat, do the following:

- Turn radio on and ensure it is on Channel 77.
- Turn on the isolator switch in the battery compartment of the rescue boat
- Check Air horn operation
- Ensure bungs are fitted to the boat

If the rubber duckie is required, prepare it as per the checklist below and transport it to the beach.

- Check the pontoons are inflated
- Check there is a tank of (2 stroke fuel) available
- Ensure the handheld radio is fully charged
- Organise a licensed boat driver (and crew) to man the rubber duckie

### 4. Set the course

A race committee of two or three experienced sailors can be formed to assist the RO with the setting of the course (if RO is inexperienced or needs assistance). Things that may be discussed could be anticipated weather conditions; possible tidal effects; location of the marks; possible use of rubber duck as additional rescue vessel.

When the RO is satisfied where the course is to be situated and all relevant gear is stowed, they will organise a tractor driver to take the boat to the ramp for launching.

Once boat has been launched, the RO and boat driver will position the rounding marks for commencement of the race.



After the course is set, the RO and boat driver go to shore.

The RO sketches the course on the course board, showing approximate location and colour of the marks as are on the water ready for briefing. Start Divisions and order together with wind conditions should also be noted.

## **5. Briefing competitors**

Briefing should take place 30 minutes before the scheduled race start time.

The RO draws attention of competitors to the briefing by giving 3 sound signals from the bell in the tower.

The RO provides a briefing, explaining the course plan, the approximate starting time, the number of starts for each class including what order they will start and answer any questions concerning the course. The RO should draw attention to danger points, sand bars etc. and describe the rounding of marks.

The RO reminds all sailors to sign their names on the “sign on” sheet before the race and to sign their names on the “sign off sheet (the same sheet) after the race. Stress this process is carried out for safety reasons as well as preventing a situation where a person who does not sign on is not officially in the race as well as a person who does not sign off could be disqualified.

After briefing the boat driver and RO will return to the boat and proceed to the starting area.

## **During Race**

### **6. Set start line and prepare for starting sequence**

The first leg of any race will be to windward therefore the Start/Rescue Boat must be aligned to the start line at 90 degrees to the wind direction with the windward mark at the port end of start line. It is suggested that the start boat move directly into the wind for some distance before dropping the anchor. The boat can drift back to the position where the start line is 90 degrees to the wind, then locate the boat in that position. Invariably the wind direction can shift. The RO should be mindful of this fact when fixing the starting line. The tide will also have a major bearing on how the boat lies to the wind.

To decide the length of the start line it is useful to use the formula of Number of boats starting x length of boats plus 10% to 50%.

Consideration needs to be given for shorter lines for light weather or more experienced yachtspersons and longer start lines for heavier weather or lesser experienced yachtspersons.

Approximately 10 mins before the start, the course flag indicating port or starboard should be raised. There is no sound signal when this flag is displayed.

Once the boat is anchored and the start line is set, the Orange Flag is raised with a sound signal to indicate the boat is on station. The starting sequence will commence at any time after that.



At least two people are needed to start the race successfully, one to be timekeeper and operate the Club radio and the other to manage the flags. Both to spot premature starters and get recall flags ready.

## **7. Starting Sequence**

Familiarise yourself with the timer on the boat.

SGYC uses a 3-minute start sequence.

3 mins – One sound signal is made using the horn on the start boat. It is best to have silence on the boat as all involved must concentrate on the starting procedure. Simultaneously with the sound signal the class flag of the first division to start is raised. Contact should be made with the tower immediately after to advise that the timing sequence has started.

At 2 mins - (one minute after the first warning signal sound) the Code Flag “P” (Blue Peter) is raised and displayed.

At 1 min to go – One sound signal is made and the Code Flag “P” (Blue Peter) is lowered. At this point only the Division Flag should be displayed. At this time you should be looking down the start line for any boats that are close to the line, that could be possible premature starters.

Start - During the last minute before the start, the timekeeper is continually counting down and the for the last 10-15 seconds should countdown over the radio to the tower.

At the start , one sound signal is made, the Divisional flag is lowered quickly and the race begins. If there are any premature starters, take appropriate action for individual or general recall.

If there is another class starting, the start signal becomes the 3 minute signal for the second division and their class flag will be raised simultaneously as their starting sequence commences.

This sequence keeps repeating itself until all classes have started.

## **8. Individual Recall**

If at the start the RO identifies any boat or boats which are over the start line (that is: OCS – on course side) they will sound one sound signal and promptly display the “Individual Recall” Flag.

Code Flag X is a white flag with a blue vertical cross.

The boat numbers of the OCS boats should be noted and watched to make sure they return behind the start line and restart correctly.

Code Flag X remains displayed until all such boats are completely on the pre-start side of the starting line or its extensions but not later than 4 minutes after the starting signal or one minute before any later starting signal, whichever is the earlier.

There is no sound signal when the Code Flag X is lowered.

The RO is not required to call out to the boats that are OCS to identify and warn them.



It is the responsibility of the yachtsperson to return over the line. If they do not do this they are disqualified. The RO should immediately identify the situation to the time keepers.

## **9. General Recall**

If at the start, the RO cannot identify the individual boats or there are numerous boats over the line early, they will make 2 sound signals and promptly display the First Substitute Flag. This flag is a yellow triangular flag with a blue border.

All boats in the race shall return to the pre-start side of the starting line.

When the RO is satisfied that all boats have returned to behind the start line, they remove the first Substitute Flag with one sound signa.

The warning signal for the recalled class shall be made one minute after the first Substitute Flag is lowered and the starts of any succeeding divisions shall follow the new start.

## **10. After the Start**

After the boats are away, it is the responsibility of the RO to maintain a constant vigilance over the whole fleet as the RO is in charge of the whole race until the last boat finishes.

The RO will be in contact with the timekeepers and safety observers in the tower who will inform of any boats that could be in trouble or have been damaged.

The RO must instruct the boat driver to up anchor and “follow the fleet” paying particular attention to the inexperienced yachtspersons.

The RO must continually observe the weather conditions and, based on any significant changes to the weather, make a decision to abandon a race or, more likely shorten the course.

The RO is to ensure the safety of all sailors during the race and rescue a sailor as a first priority before salvaging a yacht.

## **11. Shortening the Course**

If the RO feels that the race cannot be completed within the time limit or the weather has changed to endanger the fleet (that is the wind strength has risen above safe levels or lack of wind), the RO can shorten the course by displaying the Code Flag S with 2 sound signals. Code Flag S is a white flag with a solid blue square in the centre.

To shorten the course the RO must signify the Code Flag S BEFORE the leading yacht in the division reaches the rounding mark where the RO wants the course shortened. As such, the RO must decide well in advance at which rounding mark at which the course is to be shortened.

The SGYC Sailing Instructions state that a rounding mark bearing the Code Flag S will be positioned at a point in near proximity to the rounding mark.



The leading yacht of the division will go around the rounding mark and proceed to the finish line and **cross the finish line in the same direction as drawn on the course board.**

The RO may decide that 1 or 2 divisions will not be able to complete the course within the time limit or due to deteriorating weather conditions. In this case, the RO can still shorten the course for those divisions by displaying the Code Flag S with the divisional flags of the classes whose course the RO is shortening BEFORE the leading yacht in the division reaches the rounding mark.

Two sound signals are made to bring the attention of competitors the shortening of the course. The leading yacht in the division will go around the rounding mark and proceed to the finishing line and cross the finishing line in the same direction as drawn on the course board.

The RO must keep the timekeepers in the tower informed at all times of the decisions made affecting the race.

## **After the Race**

The race has not ended until all boats have crossed the finishing line (whether for the full course or a shortened course).

As such it is important that all boats have been accounted for (with the aid of the tower people as required).

If there is no second race, ask the boat driver to proceed to collect the buoys (rounding marks).

Organise through communication with the people in the tower for a tractor driver to be available at the ramp to enable the boat driver to place the rescue boat on the trailer. Once the boat is safely on the trailer, then it will return to the Club. The rubber duckie could be taken up to the compound via the beach and beach ramp.

Once back at the Clubhouse, wash the rescue boat and/or Rubber duckie and flush motors normally with the assistance of other people.

Stow the tractor, boat, rubber duckie, equipment and buoys in the shed in designated areas.

Plug in the battery charger for the tractor (and rescue boat). Also, turn off the isolator switch in the battery compartment of the rescue boat.

When the tower has been vacated, ensure all radios are turned off, leave the weather station turned on and lower all flags, close the front shutters, lock up the tower and the ladder.

Lock boat shed, toilets and shower block. Ensure disabled person's toilet is locked from the men's change room side.

Ensure all hoses have been turned off at the respective taps.

Turn off the electricity at the switchboard, lock the northerly sliding door on the western door of the clubhouse.

Ensure the security lights are working correctly. Lock compound and return any borrowed keys.

Remember to have fun as a RO, enjoy the day and treat it as an opportunity to learn about racing from a different perspective. Keep your wits about you, constantly monitor changing weather and sea conditions and keep all yachts under observations, particularly those yachts that may be in difficulty and assist a sailor to safety as a first priority (that is before a yacht) when required.

### Appendix: Flag Chart

**Common Yacht Racing Flags**

| Letter | Flag                     | Meaning  |
|--------|--------------------------|--|
| I      | Black square             | Start line                                       |
| J      | Blue pennant             | Start imminent                                   |
| K      | Red pennant              | Numeral pennant or number board indicates course |
| L      | White pennant            | Postponement                                     |
| M      | Blue pennant             | Individual recall                                |
| N      | Yellow pennant           | General recall                                   |
| O      | Red pennant              | Penalty flags                                    |
| P      | Blue pennant             | Round the ends                                   |
| Q      | White pennant            | 20% penalty                                      |
| R      | Red pennant              | Disqualify                                       |
| S      | Blue pennant             | Shortened course                                 |
| T      | Red, white, blue pennant | Next mark moved                                  |
| U      | Red, white, blue pennant | Replaced mark                                    |
| V      | Red, white, blue pennant | Change of instruction                            |
| W      | Blue pennant             | Boat at finish line                              |
| X      | Checkered pennant        | Abandonment                                      |
| Y      | Checkered pennant        | This race - return to start                      |
| Z      | Checkered pennant        | All races - signals ashore                       |

**At Start**

- Start line
- Start imminent

**Start Sequence**

- 3 mins: Class Flag (Yellow pennant) ↑
- 2: Blue pennant ↑ or penalty flag
- 1 min: Blue pennant ↓
- 0 start: Class Flag (Yellow pennant) ↓

**Race Control**

- Shortened course
- Next mark moved
- Replaced mark
- Change of instruction
- Boat at finish line
- Abandonment
- This race - return to start
- All races - signals ashore
- All races today

**Penalty flags**

If across start line in last minute:

- round the ends
- 20% penalty
- disqualify

**Numerals 1-9**

Starts may be at 5 or 3 minute intervals or other variations. Secondary flags are often flown for additional information. Check your sailing instructions for variations. ● indicates sound signal. No responsibility is taken for inaccuracies or errors. Copyright © Nov 2011 Geng Pty Ltd ABN 17009481009 Australia