

OUTRIGGER YACHT CLUB
RACE COMMITTEE ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES
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A FEW WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Race committees have a difficult but rewarding job, which they perform best if they study their tasks beforehand. This guide is intended to help you prepare for and conduct the races during a race day.

There are four basic steps that a RC chairman carries out:

- I. Communicate with your committee.
- II. Get ready
- III. Set the course.
- IV. Conduct the race

On the following pages, you will find specific instructions and suggestions for dealing with each of these steps. If this is your first experience as Race Committee Chairman, these guidelines will give you more confidence. If you're a seasoned race manager, you might want to read them as a refresher course.

The signals and procedures in this document represent the "standard" procedures for racing on Lake Norman specified in The Racing Rules of Sailing as modified by the Lakewide Sailing Instructions. The Notice of Race (NOR) and any separate Sailing Instructions (SIs) may alter these signals and procedures and it is very important that you are aware of, and understand any special requirements for your event.

Just remember that no one is perfect, and that even the most experienced person can still make mistakes. Most sailors are tolerant people who will understand what you are going through. If there are some who don't, don't let them rattle you.

I. COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR COMMITTEE

A. **RC DUTIES:** As RC Chairman, it is your job to assign the members of your committee to specific tasks. After the races are started, you may choose to send them off in the chase boat to track the fleet and let you know how the race is going. But, at the starting and finishing line, you and your helpers will have to accomplish 7 duties:

- ◆ Determine the course, set course signals and the starting line
- ◆ Check in the fleet
- ◆ Time the starting sequence
- ◆ Display the starting signals
- ◆ Sound the signal horn
- ◆ Judge the line
- ◆ Record the finish times

B. **NOTIFICATION:** About 10 days before your race day, contact each member of the committee telling them when and where to meet and outlining their duties. Have them arrive early to allow time for contingencies. To set the Starting Pin, perhaps a Weather Mark, design and signal the Course, register all boats and start the race on time, 1 1/2 hours before the scheduled First Warning is not too early to leave the dock. 1 hour at the very least.

II. GET READY

A. **BEFORE RACE DAY:**

Review The Racing Rules of Sailing, Part 3 – Conduct of a Race and Rules 60.2 and 61, the Lakewide Sailing Instructions and the Notice of Race (NOR) for the regatta or series. The International Code Flags and Race Signals are pictured inside the back cover of The Racing Rules of Sailing. The Lakewide Sailing Instructions do modify these Signals however, adding a check-in signal (Numeral Flag #3) and specifying that the Race Signals for shorten course for individual classes will be S over S for the Spinnaker fleet and S over N for the Non-Spinnaker fleet.

Coordinate with the individual responsible for the Mark Boat (Vice Commodore/Fleet Captain) to insure that it is in running condition, will be full of gas, and all Code Flags and necessary equipment will be available.

B. **ON RACE DAY:**

Listen to the weather forecast. Dress accordingly, and think about how the weather might affect your race management.

Bring the following:

- ◆ Digital watch for timing starting sequences and taking finish times
- ◆ Stopwatch for backup timing
- ◆ Sharp knife
- ◆ Binoculars (optional)

BEFORE LEAVING THE DOCK:

1. Be sure all understand the Sailing Instructions.
 - Is there a time limit?
 - What are the instructions for shortening course?
 - Are there instructions for setting start/finish marks?
 - Are there separate starts for the various classes?
 - What are the instructions for displaying signals?
 - Is there a One Minute rule? What does it mean?
2. Check the inventory of Starting Equipment:
 - Code Flags - Be sure you have extra “M” (Temporary replacement mark), “N” (Abandonment) & “S” (Shorten course) flags for the Mark Boat.
 - Race Committee Flag
 - Clip Board
 - Writing Pad
 - Pens or Sharpened Pencils
 - Digital Watch
 - Back-up Stop Watch
 - Air Horn (try some long blasts while on shore)
 - Bull Horn/Radio (if available)
 - The Racing Rules of Sailing, the Lakewide Sailing Instructions, and the NOR
 - A list of boats registered for the race (if available)
 - Mark Boat: Be sure it runs, has proper safety equipment and is full of gas.
3. Check Starting Pin and Weather Pin to be sure they both have ample line and suitable anchor.
4. Check the anchor line on the Committee Boat. You will need 150 - 200 feet to hold well at the Starting Area, especially if it is blowing.
5. How do you plan to attach the flags for the start sequence?
6. Run up the “RC” Flag.
7. Take a moment to study the wind direction. Have some course designs in mind before you arrive at the Starting Area.

LEAVE THE DOCK EARLY

III. **SET THE COURSE:**

When you enter the general Marker 2 Starting Area, go head-to-wind, get dead in the water and decide:

A. **DETERMINE WIND SPEED AND DIRECTION:**

Analyze the wind direction and speed to determine what course to sail. If there is little or no wind, don't hesitate to postpone until it starts to blow or cancel if it proves to be a flat day. If the winds are light, set a short course using a combination of a Weather Mark (W), the Starting Pin (P), R, Y, X and B. If the winds are fresh and look like they will hold, go for a longer course including marks C and Z. If the winds are fresh but you are not real sure they will hold, set a short course and use the Twice Around (#2) flag. You can always shorten if the winds die.

A windward - leeward course is desirable. Try to avoid long reaching legs since they don't give anyone much of a chance to improve their position.

Provide a windward start. You can designate a fixed first mark if the course to the mark is within approximately 25 degrees of the prevailing wind direction. Otherwise, put a temporary Weather Mark far enough to windward to spread out the fleet. About 1/4 mile is good. Write down your estimate of the distance to the Weather Mark so the scorer can compute the correct times.

B. **AVOID CROSSOVERS:** After all of that, make a firm decision on Course Design. All marks are rounded to Port. So, make sure the course is designed so there are no crossovers. If, for example, the wind is blowing from the Southwest, the first mark should be a Weather Mark toward Lucky Cove with the second mark as B, X, or P. If the second mark were R, boats rounding the Weather Mark would have to cross the boats still approaching the mark.

C. **SET THE STARTING LINE:**

Set the starting line about 85 degrees to the left of the wind direction (Pin slightly favored) to encourage boats to use the entire line. Adjust the length of the line to accommodate the largest class that will be starting. Figure about 1 1/2 boat lengths per boat using the longest boat as a guide. If in doubt, set a long line rather than one that is too short. No corrections can be made after the Warning Signal. A badly skewed or short line is dangerous and should be avoided even if the race must be delayed to reset the pin.

If you're using a Weather Mark, put it in the water 15 to 20 minutes before the start, directly upwind. Watch for wind shifts and be prepared to reset the mark if the wind shifts so as to allow boats to reach it on a single tack. If the wind is oscillating, set the mark in the middle of the shifts and get the race started. Don't waste good air.

D. **SET THE INTERNATIONAL CODE FLAGS:**

Before arranging the Code Flags, re-check your Course Design to be sure you are correct:

1. Is the course free of crossovers?
2. Is the wind blowing hard enough to finish within the time limit?
3. Are the anchors on the Starting Pin, the Weather Mark and the Committee Boat all holding?

When you are sure all is properly set, run up your Course Signals.

IV. CONDUCT THE RACE:

A: CHECK IN THE FLEET:

Set the Numeral Flag #3 and begin to check in the fleet.

RECORDER: This should be the same crewmember who will be recording the finish times. He or she will have a chance to become familiar with the fleet and the score sheet. Be sure to acknowledge each boat as it is registered by responding "(SAIL #) ACKNOWLEDGED."

B: COMMENTS FROM THE FLEET:

Be sure of what you are doing and IGNORE ALL COMMENTS FROM THE FLEET!!
...except in the following situation:

If any skipper or crew member becomes abusive to the personnel on the Committee Boat, you are hereby instructed to take the sail # and advise the skipper that his or his crew's actions will be reported to the Protest Committee for action under Rule 69.1(a).

C: GIVING VERBAL INSTRUCTIONS:

Unless the International Code Flag L (Come Within Hail) is flown, you are hereby instructed to give absolutely no verbal instructions to any competing boat with the following exception:

There are days on Lake Norman when there is not enough wind to raise the Code Flags off the mast so that they can be read. On such occasions, you may, if requested by a skipper, name the Code Flags in their order. YOU MAY NOT DESCRIBE THE COURSE.

THE FINAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR KNOWING AND SAILING THE CORRECT COURSE RESTS WITH THE SKIPPER.

D. THE STARTING SEQUENCE:

The duties for starting the Race are best divided between available Committee Boat personnel. Conduct starts in accordance with the Sailing Instructions, keeping an accurate time. Remove the #3 Flag (or the AP Flag if the race has been postponed) with one sound signal one minute prior to the Warning Signal. Require silence aboard the Committee Boat in the last moments during the countdown to the start. If multiple starts are specified, the Warning Signal for the succeeding class should be made with the Starting Signal of the preceding class. If you elect to change the course for the next class, delay the Warning Signal for that class and when the preceding class is away from the line, display the AP flag with two sound signals.

TIMER: Should have a digital watch with a stop watch as backup. The timer should have few other duties before the start. He or she must keep an eye on the clock at all times after the warning signal. The timer announces each act of the start sequence about one minute in advance, counting down the last ten seconds.

Example: "One minute to Warning Signal and horn." or "30 seconds to Preparatory Signal down and long horn." Make sure that the Recorder notes the clock start time for each fleet on the score sheet.

FLAGS: Should know the sequence and realize that the Flags are the true time signal and must be absolutely on time.

HORN: The sound signaler blows the horn when appropriate with each flag signal. If a flag is raised on time, but the horn is delayed, it should be omitted. A late horn signal only confuses the competitors. An exception to this is the warning signal. If the horn is missed then, postpone and restart the sequence with the horn. This will allow the competitors to start their watches.

LINE: The Captain for that day's Committee Boat should be the judge on the Starting Line. It also leaves him available before the Start to give support to the TIMER and FLAGS. The line judge is responsible for identifying premature starters. Be sure and have someone at the X flag (Individual Recall) and First Substitute (General Recall) at the start. It is critical to raise the X flag with one sound signal as soon as a premature starter is identified by the line judge. This can be done by having the X flag attached to a boat pole or similar arrangement so it can be displayed immediately if needed. You may also hail the premature starters by sail number to insure they are aware of the infraction. The X flag remains displayed until all identified premature starters have cleared the line on the pre-start side, but not later than four minutes after the starting signal. If there are too many premature starters to identify, the First Substitute should be raised immediately with two sound signals. It remains raised until one minute prior to the warning signal for the restart.

THE AP: Have the Answering Pennant (AP) ready. It is your best friend and can be used to postpone any time before the start. If the anchor drags, the timing gets messed up, the wind shifts and a new course is needed, or a crew falls overboard, simply raise the AP with two sound signals and everything stops. You can take your time, correct the situation and restart when you're ready. It gives you total control of the situation. Don't be afraid to use it.

STARTING SIGNALS

Races shall be started by using the following signals. Times shall be taken from the visual signals; the absence of a sound signal shall be disregarded.

<i>Signal</i>	<i>Flag and sound</i>	<i>Minutes before Starting signal</i>
Warning	Class flag; 1 sound	5*
Preparatory	P, I, Z, Z with I, or black flag*; 1 sound	4
One-minute	P flag removed; 1 long sound	1
Starting	Class flag removed; 1 sound	0

* - or as stated in the sailing instructions.

I, Z, and Black Flags signal one minute starting penalties under Rule 30 as stated in the sailing instructions.

The race committee shall begin the sequence one minute after the check in flag is removed or if the race is delayed, one minute after the Answering Pennant is removed. The Warning Signal for each succeeding class shall be made with, or after the starting signal of the preceding class.

E. CLEARING THE STARTING LINE, SETTING UP THE FINISH LINE:

As soon as the last boat has cleared the Starting Line, it is advisable to clear the area:

1. Pick up the Starting Pin, unless it is being used as a mark of the course, and the Weather Mark if used, and remove the course flags.
2. Set the Committee Boat at the Finish Line, as square as possible to the last leg of the Course. If the wind is good and it looks like you can finish without shortening course, display the Blue Flag. This tells the fleet you are “on station” and lets them know exactly where to finish.
3. If you question if the course marks are in place, get in the chase boat and verify they are in place. Be sure to take an anchor and the “M” flag in case you have to substitute as a mark.

F. **SHORTENING COURSE:**

Valid reasons for shortening the course are as follows: No wind, Tornado Watch, a storm approaching or some other danger. As long as there is good sailing, the time limit should be adhered to.

If there is justification for shortening the Course, proceed as follows:

1. The shorten course signal is the Code Flag S below the RC Flag with two sound signals. If the shortened course applies only to the Spinnaker fleet, set S over S. If it applies only to the Non-Spinnaker fleet, set S over N. It is very important that these signals not be displayed until the first boat in the affected fleet has rounded the last posted mark prior to the finish mark.
2. If you are going to set a finish line at a mark other than Marker 2, motor near the fleet (no wake) so they may see the signal. As a courtesy, you may send the chase boat through the fleet to notify them of the shortened course while the Committee Boat anchors and sets up to take time.
3. Set up the new Finish Line near a Mark of the Course or a prominent Channel Marker. Again, the finish line should be as square as possible to the last leg of the new course. Fly the Blue Flag to indicate you are “on station”.

G. **NO WIND:**

Light wind conditions are common and the most difficult to manage. If there is no wind at the start, don't start. (Use proper procedures if you decide to delay or eventually cancel.) If the race starts and the wind dies, clean up the starting area and wait for one hour. Do not move to the finish line. A good rule of thumb is the fastest boats should finish in about 1 1/2 hours. You can use the chase boat to help monitor the fleet's progress. After an hour, estimate where the fastest boats will finish, check the weather conditions and make your decision to shorten course accordingly. This is no easy decision.

H. **ABANDONING RACE:**

This is another tough decision. A race should be abandoned if the weather conditions endanger the fleet and Race Committee or if the wind dies and the first boat fails to reach the first mark within the time limit (3 minutes for each 0.1 mile). The Race Committee can abandon a race for any reason, but these two are the most common. Once the decision is

made, follow the proper notification procedures and be prepared to hear from at least one unhappy skipper - the one in the lead at the time. If your decision is to abandon with no more racing, set N over A with three sound signals. If you want to attempt a restart, set the N flag only with three sound signals. This tells the fleets to return to the starting area. Remove the N flag, with one sound signal, one minute before the Warning Signal for the restart unless the race is postponed or abandoned again.

I. **TAKING THE FINISH TIMES:**

As with the Starting Sequence, the duties for taking the Finishing Times are best divided between the members of the Committee Boat:

TIMER: Use the "official time" digital watch and record clock finish times.
*Note: If something goes wrong with the digital watch you may take finish times from the stop watch.

RECORDER: Should be the same Crew Member who checked in the fleet since he or she is most familiar with the score sheet.

LINE: Watch Finish Line, call out finishers, signal the first boat over in each class with the Air Horn.

J. **TAKING A BUNCHED UP FINISH:**

In the case of a bunched up Finish, all you can do is the best you can do and all the skippers should understand this. When it occurs, stay cool:

TIMER: Stay with the watch and be ready to read times.

RECORDER: Grab up the Pad. Take down anything the LINE calls out.

LINE: Sometimes you can get a better view by moving to the end of the Committee Boat closest to the approaching fleet. As the bunched up boats start to Finish, keep up a running commentary. It might sound something like this:

LINE: "Here they come. What's the time?"

TIMER: "12:23 and 16 seconds" RECORDER: Writes 12:23:16

LINE: "First boat #16, next Blue J 29, next Eckenroth, next Helms 24 or 27, next #444, next Red 3-24, next Erickson - it's Beck... that's all. What's the time?"

TIMER: "12:23 and 28 seconds" RECORDER: Writes 12:23:28

Continue taking the Finishing Times as before. You can go back and reconstruct those seven finishes when time permits, even back at the dock (but away from the skippers). It's always a good idea to use a portable tape recorder for recording finishes in large regattas. This is an invaluable source of information for reconstructing close finishes.

K. **PROTESTS:**

Protesting boats must notify the Race Committee after completing a race. Assign someone to record these protests. "They should note the Sail # of the protesting yacht on a pad and whether or not it was flying a protest flag. Be sure they respond properly by saying "# ____ protests # _____. Thank you". There should be no further discussion regarding that or any

other protests.

L. **ACCOUNTING FOR ALL BOATS:**

The Recorder should ensure that all yachts have finished, withdrawn, or are otherwise accounted for. If more than one recorder is used, they should compare all times recorded and agree before leaving the finish area.

M. **RESULTS:**

The Captain of the Committee Boat should note the day's course and distance on the Finish Sheet and hand it over to the proper Flag Officer, along with any notifications of protest.
DO NOT TRUST MAIL WITH THE ORIGINAL COPIES OF THE RACE RESULTS!!

(SAMPLE LETTER)

Name 1
Name 2
Name 3

RE: OYC RACE COMMITTEE DUTY

This is to remind you that we have Race Committee duty on (Day) _____,
(Date) _____. Please meet me at _____ not later than
_____AM.

Assignments are as follows:

Please let me know if you cannot be there and advise me of who will be your substitute and how to contact that person. My telephone number is _____.

I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

