



SUNSHINE BAY YACHT CLUB (SBYC) RACE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN (RCC) COMMITTEE BOAT RESPONSIBILITIES

This document has been prepared for use as a reference by the SBYC. It includes specific guidance on basic race management principles and should be reviewed by each committee boat skipper prior to obtaining the committee boat equipment. It can be referenced by section as questions arise and should be kept on your yacht.

The **Committee Boat Procedure** is subdivided into eight elements, cookbook fashion, to set actual responsibilities and outline the starting sequence. As committee boat, you control the on-the-water racing process and as such the quality of each race. We all count on a timely, informed, organized and aware committee boat. If you have never served in this capacity, you may be overwhelmed. This is natural. In fact, the process is simple and can be fun if you prepare.

Plan on having fun. Stock up your boat for an enjoyable few hours. Take along a camera to record the antics, if you wish.

Committee Boat Procedure

A Day Prior to the Race: As committee boat, it is your responsibility to get all the race equipment prior to the race. When the equipment is picked up, check the items under “Club Supplied Inventory” on the Checklist. If an item is damaged or missing indicate it on the checklist. Depending on the item you may need to notify the “Fleet Captain” as soon as possible to have for race day.

Make sure your boat has all the “owner supplied” equipment called for on the checklist.

Be sure that your VHF Channel 72 is in good working order. It is recommended that all yachts have a radio for changes in the race or emergencies. Use Channel 72 to communicate changes in the race course such as race shortening or abandonment's.

There should be at least 3 people to accompany you on board during the race. You are accountable for these people and to ensure that your yacht is anchored and positioned properly and if any radio transmission is required, it should be by you. At the start, one person watches the clocks and count down prior to the start. One person raises and lowers the appropriate flags and watches for early starts. One person sounds the horn.

One and One-half Hours Prior to the Race...

Attend the “Skippers Meeting” in the Club House to ensure that you have all information and are aware of last minute changes, i.e.: alternate course. Also identify yourself to the skippers so they are aware that you are the Committee Boat and the name of your yacht.

In case of bad weather, consult members of the race committee. Rain is not normally sufficient reason for postponement or abandoned, but fog or storm winds may be. Remember...YOU have the responsibility for the safety of your boat and the authority to cancel the race.

Anything else that can be done at the dock in terms of preparing or arranging equipment will save time later and give you and your crew time to enjoy the race.

When your crew arrives, assign jobs and talk through the sequences as much as possible. If you need additional help, contact your “Fleet Captain” ASAP.




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At Least One Hour Prior to the Race

Leave the dock. You are responsible to be on station, at anchor in time to set the course, record the racers, and **START THE RACE ON TIME**.

Determine wind direction outside of the bay. Be aware what the course layout is and the alternate courses. If you want help, talk to the "Fleet Captain". "Fleet Captains" have the right to provide advice and assistance to the committee boat in setting a course and the starting line. Remember, help is always available.

If the published start time approaches and there is no wind, consider a postponement. If you choose to postpone, hoist the "AP" flag and **blast the horn twice**.  When conditions change and you are ready to start the sequence, **blast the horn once** and lower the "AP" flag. The normal start sequence will begin one minute after the "AP" flag is lowered. Follow the standard starting procedure.

When you have set the course, determine which side of the starting mark to anchor on. The starting mark must be passed on the same side as all subsequent marks of the course. The **LENGTH OF THE STARTING LINE** should be approximately 1.50 times the total length of all the boats starting in the largest Fleet. Too short a line will cause chaos at the start and potential boat damage. If in doubt, error on the side of making the line too **BIG**.

ANCHOR SQUARE TO THE FIRST MARK, which should also be **SQUARE TO THE WIND**. This is most important. The first leg should be upwind, although it could also be downwind, but downwind starts are unusual.

If conditions change or you have second thoughts about the course, you have the right to change it any time before the first horn. During a postponement the course can be changed at or before the warning signal which follows the postponement. If practical, try to announce the **CHANGE OF COURSE**. You need only to announce that it has been changed to the alternate course as per the skippers meeting. Ensure you have a good reason for changing the course.

Half an Hour Prior to the Race...

Your flags should be ready to hoist. Position, secure and have the horn ready. If you have GPS on board, use it to establish the starting time. Practice proper operation of at least two timers, one for continuous timing and one to start at the first gun. In this way you have a backup.

Hoist Race Committee Boat flag (RC) and the Yellow flag, this indicates that the race committee boat is on station. This will help the racers recognize you. Flags can be hoisted on your flag lines or the pole provided. The RC flag must remain up for the entire race time. It can be hoisted from the jib halyard and guyed to lifelines.

Five Minutes Prior to the First Horn...

Position someone at the Flags. Make sure the horn is ready. Consider donning earplugs. Keep using one of the timers to time until first gun.

Ten Seconds Prior to the Listed Start Time....

Begin verbal countdown.



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Starting Races

The Racing Rules of Sailing 2005-2008 incorporated changes to **Rule 26, Starting Races**, and preserved those changes through the current version of the **Rules (2017-2020)**. As a result, most yacht racing venues have adopted the new start methodology. The change is designed to allow more flexibility for the committee boat during a regatta. That is, it allows the committee boat during a regatta to un-link the start sequences of successive Fleets. Other than new timing sequences, it will have little impact on the conduct of the race. To that end, we have included in this section an illustration of the signals and timing of Rule 26. The primary visual signal is the “P” flag.



The four alternative signals have specific meanings as identified in the Racing Rules of Sailing. This guide will illustrate the “Preparatory” visual signal using the “P” flag.

The Starting Sequence

Raise Fleet flag (All flags should be raised briskly). (#1 Pennant and #2



Pennant are Fleet flags). The **#1** is the first Fleet flag to be raised. The flag should be raised on time, with **one short blast** of the horn (5 minutes before the start). This is important because racers will be timing their starts from the flags, not the horns. **If all boats are racing as one fleet then this is the only fleet flag to be used.** Blast horn. **Try to make the horn blast at the same time as the flag is raised, but if they are not simultaneous, the flag determines the time. If the horn does not blast and the flag is correct, just continue the start sequence.**

Time + One Minute

Raise the Preparatory “P” Flag and one short blast of the horn.



Time + Four Minutes

Lower the Preparatory Flag and **one long blast** of the horn.

Time + Five Minutes....Start of First Fleet LOWER the Fleet Flag (**#1 Pennant**), RAISE the **#2 Pennant**



Fleet Flag and **one short BLAST** of the HORN.

If all boats are racing as one fleet do not raise the #2 Pennant. The start line is between the race committee flag and the mark. No part of the boat may be over this line.

If any boats are over early, blast one long blast on the horn and hoist the “X” flag, and announce name of boat or sail numbers over the radio. They must re-start.



If a large number of boats are over early and it is difficult to determine them all, have a General recall. Signal it by **two short blasts** on the horn and by hoisting the “First Substitute” flag.



After a general recall that involves all Fleets, new warning, preparatory and start signals must be used. A general recall can also be used if there has been a serious error in timing or starting procedure. If the



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general recall is for the 1st Fleet, they will start 5 minutes after the 2nd Fleet in the normal starting sequences if no boats are over early, it is courteous to say “**ALL CLEAR**” over the radio.

2ND Fleet Start Sequence: **Time + Six Minutes...**



Raise the Preparatory Flag and blast the horn.

Time + Nine Minute Lower the Preparatory Flag and blast the horn.

Time + Ten Minutes Start of Second Fleet. LOWER the 2nd Fleet Flag and blast the horn. The start line is between the race committee flag and the mark. No part of the boat may be over this line.

Individual recalls are handled as described above. If a general recall is in order, then it may be issued. If a general recall had been issued at the start of the first Fleet, then the 1st Fleet Flag will be raised with the start of the second Fleet, and the sequence will proceed as described above.

After the Start

Assuming all boats have started properly and cleared the starting area, heave a sigh of relief and enjoy watching the race develop. A lot can be learned from watching others. Now is also a good time to use your camera to capture the activity for your friends.

Monitoring the Progress of the Race. If the winds are extremely light or non-existent for an extended period consider abandoning the race or shortening the course. To abandon the course, hoist the “N” flag and blast the horn three times.



To shorten the course, have the whaler proceed to the next mark that the race leader will be rounding and have the whaler display the shortened course flag and verbally inform each boat that rounds this mark that the course has been shortened. Don't be afraid to do this but identify in your notes why.



Think of what you would want as a racer. You are the boss.

The Finish.

Recording the Finishing. Be ready to write finishing time in the proper place on the race sheet. If a large number are crossing at about the same time, you may want to quickly write the times and boat names or sail numbers on a piece of scrap paper and later transfer them neatly to the race sheet. The best procedure may be one person calling out boats, one watching a timer and using the lap button (don't depress the “stop” button), one or more people recording. The person watching the line and calling boats can also blast the horn as each one crosses.

The Finish. A boat finishes when any part of the boat or its equipment in normal position crosses the line, which again is between the Committee boat flag and the mark. The rest of the boat need not complete a crossing of the line.



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Record its time under **“Finish”** on the race sheet. Start and finish times should all be clock time. Also record the finishing order, i.e.: first over the line, second etc.

Watch for flags flying from the racers starboard upper shroud or backstay. **If a boat is flying a protest flag (red) or a flag acknowledging fault (yellow) make note of this on the race sheet.**

Make note of any boats informing you that they are protesting, being protested, or acknowledging fault. It is their responsibility to report it to you.

Provide protest forms to anyone who asks. Completed forms must be turned in by the protester as per the protest procedure.

After the Finish

If possible snap a photo of each of the race sheets and email them to the club scorer; this will allow the timeliest scoring of the corrected times and finish placements. In addition, please leave the results in the metal clipboard. The scorer will pick-up the results for a backup


Your final task is to put the equipment back in order. Please mark down on the inventory checklist sheets any problems with the equipment. Remember the quality of the race is the responsibility of the on-station Committee Boat.

Postponements, Cancellation, Abandonment

In light wind conditions, winds typically less than 2 knots and variable, you should consider postponing the start and abandoning the race after waiting an appropriate time after the designated start time. Once the race is started, if you have decided to shorten the race, have the whaler proceed to the next mark that the race leader will be rounding and have the whaler display the shortened course flag and



verbally inform each boat that rounds this mark that the course has been shortened. Don't be afraid to do this but identify in your notes why. Think of what you would want as a racer. You should abandon the race if the wind is light and even if you have shortened the race, no boats would finish within the time limit.

1. **Postponements**  The Committee Boat should postpone the start of any race when wind conditions are such that a Fleet cannot clear the starting line prior to the subsequent Fleet start (usually 5 minutes). A postponement is signaled by hoisting the code flag “AP” and two blasts of the horn. The “AP” flag will be lowered and one blast of the horn will signal the end of the postponement and that the warning for the next Fleet’s starting sequence will be in one (1) minute.
2. **Cancellation** The Committee Boat that has postponed a race due to lack of wind should wait a minimum of ½ hour (for night races) and one hour (for all other races) before considering abandoning. Just prior to abandoning the race, the Committee Boat should assure itself that there are no signs of a filling breeze (flags on the beach, wind lines smoke, etc.). If no signs of a filling breeze are visible, and the minimum time has passed, the Committee Boat should then abandon the race.
3. **Abandonment** An abandoned race is one that is declared void at any time after the start or a postponement. A race should be abandoned when no boat from its respective Fleet has rounded the first mark within half an hour of its’ start time; no boat from its respective Fleet has crossed the



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finish line within the time limit (these times are taken from each Fleet's start), because of a missing mark, etc. A code flag "N" and three (3) blasts from the horn will signal all races abandoned with further signals and instructions (i.e. – new course, cancellation, etc.) to be made in the starting area.



If the race is to be re-sailed that day, the "N" flag will be lowered and one (1) blast of the horn will signal the end of the abandonment and the warning for the first Fleet's starting sequence will begin in one (1) minute. Only those boats that sailed in the abandoned race can sail in the re-sailed race. Note: Courses should be shortened, particularly if the abandonment is because of lack of wind, once a race is started to assure its completion.





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ALL ABOUT THOSE RACE COMMITTEE FLAGS

by Morgan Stinemetz, [Bubba Whartz'](#) dad.

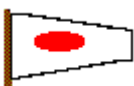
Here it is race day. You've polished up your boat. Polished up your good manners so you won't abuse you crew. And you are ready to race. But are you?


Do you know that the start sequence for sailboat races has been a five-minute countdown series since 2001? If your club is still using the old 10-minute system, someone needs to take the 21st century by the horns and get things modified. So, here's how the sequence goes.

If everything is on schedule, when you get out to the committee boat you will see an **RC** flag and a yellow flag that delineates the committee boat end of the start line. If things are running late, you will see the previous two flags and the  **AP** signal. That's a red and white pennant, which is also called the  **Answering Pennant**.


When the  **AP** comes down, it signifies one minute until the class flag is raised. The class flag is the one which is so designated by the Sailing Instructions. So, at this point, there are six minutes until the start.

The 1st **Fleet Flag** goes up at five minutes before the start and remains up until the start. This is a warning flag only. The 2nd Fleet Flag is raised at the start of the 1st Fleet and remain up for five minutes. The Rules of Racing (RRS) don't kick in for another minute. **It is accompanied by a sound signal.**



The  **P** (Preparatory) flag goes up at four (4) minutes before the start. The P flag is blue with a white, square center. **It is accompanied by a sound signal.** This flag will remain up for three minutes.



The  **P** flag comes **down** at one minute before the start. **It is accompanied by a sound signal.** The only flag still up is the **Class Flag**.

START: The Class Flag comes down. **It is accompanied by a sound signal.** You should be at or very near the starting line going fast.

OTHER FLAGS YOU NEED TO KNOW



X: Blue cross on a white background. It means that one or more boats have started prematurely. The race committee may, but is not obligated to, inform the guilty boat(s). This flag will be lowered when all premature boats have returned or after 4 minutes, whichever comes first.



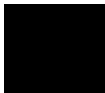
FIRST SUBSTITUTE: This is a triangular flag with blue edges top and bottom and a yellow center. This flag indicates a **General Recall**. Everybody starts over. New start sequence, etc.



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I: Yellow flag with solid black circle at center. This indicates that Rule 30.1 (the around-the-ends rule) is in effect at the start.



BLACK FLAG: This flag is all black. It means that any boat on the course side of the start line within a minute prior to the start is disqualified.



Y: Diagonal red and yellow stripes. This flag means that all competitors are **required** to wear personal buoyancy.



L: Diagonal yellow and black squares, two each. Ashore, it means that a notice to competitors has been posted. Afloat, it means come within hail or follow me.



M: Blue Flag with white X. This flag means, "The mark is missing. Round me instead of the missing mark."



S: White with blue square. This flag means, "The course has been shortened. The finish is between this flag and the nearby rounding mark,"



C: Red, white and blue horizontal stripes. This flag means, "The course has been changed." Look for compass heading to new mark and/or + or - sign indicating leg will be longer or shorter.



N: Blue and white checkers. This flag means, "The race has been abandoned." It should be accompanied by 3 sound signals.



N over A: This combination means, "Races have been abandoned. Further signals will be made"



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Club Supplied Inventory - Checklist

Item	Mark if Received (Y/N)	Ensure you note any problems with equipment, damage, loss or missing
Boston Whaler in working order		
Fuel for Motor on Boston Whaler		
Oil for Motor on Boston Whaler		
VHF radio for Boston Whaler		
Race Marker Buoys and Anchors		
Horns (2)		
Set of Racing Flags and Pole(s) Committee Boat Flag Fleet Flags (#1 & #2 Pennants)		
Committee Boat Information Document		
Racing Sheets		
Stop Watches (2)		
Hand held wind meter(1)		
E-mail for Club Scorer		



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Owner Supplied Inventory - Checklist

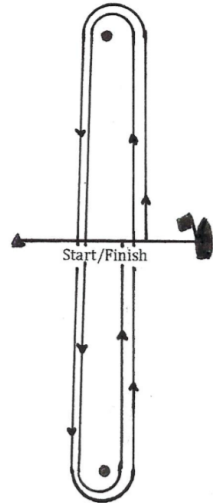
Item	Owner (Y/N)	Notes
Yacht to be Committee Boat		
Safety Equipment and lifejackets for Yacht.		
Life jackets for Whaler crew.		
Anchor for Yacht		
Head Facilities for Committee members		
Refreshments (hot or cold) & Snacks for Committee members (you do not have to supply, but ensure all bring something to keep their energy up).		
Cell phone with camera to take snapshot of race results and email to Club Scorer.		
Camera to capture sailing antics		



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COURSE DIAGRAMS

Course 1 A Windward - Leeward Course
Start - 1 - 2 - 1 - 2 - Finish



Course 2 A Triangle - Windward - Leeward Course
Start - 1 - 2 - 3 - 1 - 3 - Finish

