

# **MINIMA YACHT CLUB**

## **RACE OFFICERS MANUAL**

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## **1. DUTIES OF RACE OFFICER**

1. The duties of the Race Officer are primarily to conduct races for the enjoyment of sailors, consistent with safety.
2. The Race Officer should be familiar with the Notice of Race and the Sailing Instructions issued for Minima Races or the particular Open Meeting as appropriate. These are kept in the file in the race box (and can be found on the MYC website).
3. The Race Officer's role is to manage the race acting as the Race Committee as set out in The Racing Rules of Sailing such as: Rule 27 - Setting the course; Rule 29 – Recalls; Rules 32 and 33 – Shortening, Abandoning, and Changing the Course.
4. Race Officers who want help may invite any experienced Race Officer to assist if one is available, to give guidance on procedure or making decision (preferably, not a competitor in that race).
5. If possible the Race Officer should be present one hour before racing starts in order to prepare and give the launch crew adequate time for laying marks for the course before ferrying is required.
6. Valuables may be left in the locked box in the Race Box which should be left locked when the Race Officer is not present.
7. A sailor cannot Protest a Race Officer for breaking a Rule but may request redress from a Protest Committee from an error by a Race Officer.
8. Sailors cannot be penalised without a hearing of a Protest Committee. Enforcement of the Rules is primarily the responsibility of sailors. A Race Officer may Protest a sailor for a hearing by a Protest Committee, subject to informing that sailor as soon as possible.
9. Protestors are required to hand to the Race Officer a completed Protest Form within one hour of the last boat completing the race. On receiving a Protest Form the Race Officer should arrange for a Protest Committee to be formed or request a member of the Sailing Committee to do so.
10. The Race Officer **MUST** make sure that results are entered into The Race Book before the end of the day.

**2. PREPARING FOR THE RACE**





1. Identify the race or races to be conducted when you are Race Officer.
2. Establish contact with the Bosun (There are walky talkies is the race box for use by the Bosun and Race Officer).
3. You must enter in the Race Book the sail numbers of competing boats and record lap and finishing times of boats completing their laps. It may be easier initially to enter these details on scrap paper.

**ENTRIES MUST BE ENTERED IN THE RACE BOOK BEFORE YOU LEAVE.**

Enter into the Race Book as much information as you can – see section 11.2 below.

**4. Flag Pole**

Raise the Commodore, Vice-Commodore, Rear-Commodore Flag or Club burgee according to the most senior member in attendance.

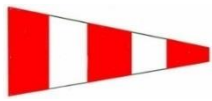



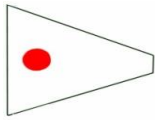











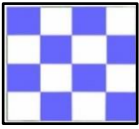
	Commodore		Rear Commodore
	Vice Commodore		Minima Club Burgee

**5 Equipment**

Check that the following items are available ready for use: Race book, class boards, buoy boards and lap number boards, timer, pencils, scrap paper, hand bell, megaphone.

6. The Race Entry Book, headed and dated should be placed in the lobby (by the kitchen) with a pen. The entries help the scorer and are a check for errors, Sailors are requested to enter Boat, Helm/Crew details along with any other notes i.e. sailing without crew in a double hander, Retired (RET) etc.

**Flag (or Board) Signals**

<p><b>Postponement</b> Flag AP</p>		<p><b>Compulsory PFDs (Buoyancy Aids)</b> Flag Letter Y</p>	
<p><b>Merlin Class</b> Flag Letter O</p>		<p><b>Enterprise Class</b> Flag Letter E</p>	
<p><b>Solo Class</b> Flag Numeral 1</p>		<p><b>Handicap Class</b> Flag Letter H</p>	
<p><b>Thames Rater Class</b> Flag Letter A</p>		<p><b>Topper Class</b> Flag Letter T</p>	
<p><b>Mass Handicap Start</b> Flag Letter Z</p>		<p><b>All Classes Start</b> Flag Letter G</p>	
<p><b>Preparatory Flag</b> Flag Letter P</p>		<p><b>Laser Class</b> Flag Letter L</p>	
<p><b>Individual Recall</b> Flag Letter X</p>		<p><b>General Recall (1 minute to restart sequence)</b> Flag 1st Substitute</p>	
<p><b>Shorten Course</b> Flag Letter S</p>		<p><b>Change Course</b> Flag Letter C</p>	
<p><b>Abandon Race</b> Flag Letter N</p>			

Races are controlled by the visual signals: flags and boards above. Times are taken from the visual signals which take priority over sound signals.

Signals are to be displayed by flags or boards whichever are available in the Race Box.

### 3. SAFETY

1. Race Officers and all sailors should be familiar with MYC 'Standard Operating Procedures', 'Health and Safety Policy' and MYC Emergency Procedures, these are posted in the Race Box. Copies of these documents are in section 14.
2. The Race Officer is responsible for the race; launch crews can take instructions from the Race Officer on safety matters.
3. Ensure that the launch is manned for the duration of the race and ready for action. Consideration should be given to launch cover and location, especially in potential hazardous situations such as extremities of the race, gybe marks, or boats close to Kingston Bridge. A race may be abandoned if there is insufficient launch cover.
4. In adverse weather conditions or when there is a strong stream running –
  - a) Display the Compulsory Buoyancy Flag Y (compulsory PFD's) as early as possible. This flag must be displayed before any other flag that is part of the starting sequence. Ring the hand bell once when displaying this flag.
  - b) Warn inexperienced sailors or minors that it may not be wise to sail as their rescue cannot be guaranteed. Minors under the age of 16 must take the Race Officers decision not to race if it is given.
  - c) While it is not necessary to compel a minor to stop sailing just because he or she has capsized, minors should be instructed to return to shore if the Race Officer considers that it is unsafe for them to continue sailing.
  - d) Competitors are responsible for their decision to race; special consideration should be given to minors (under the age of 16) with regard to safety coverage (see above).
  - e) Increase safety cover when conditions are demanding, by ensuring that two people are in the launch or by mobilising a second launch.  
In the event of an emergency, if there is nobody available to assist the Bosun, the Race Officer should take this role.
  - f) Instruct Launch Crews to advise sailors who have capsized and showing signs of hypothermia or fatigue to retire and return to the Dinghy Park or Clubhouse.
  - g) If the Race Officer feels that there is a risk of lightning strikes during a race then it should be abandoned.
5. Stream Conditions (Molesley Lock to Teddington Lock) can be checked on the Environment Agency website – <http://riverconditions.environment-agency.gov.uk/>  
If 'red boards' are showing the likelihood is that racing will have been cancelled, if 'yellow boards' are showing, Flag Y should be flown.
6. The First Aid Kit is located in the Kitchen.

7. In a real emergency you can call on the RNLI who say they can reach Kingston in their RIB from above Teddington lock in 10 minutes and Hampton Court in 15 minutes. Call 999.
8. Any serious incident should be recorded as soon as possible in the club's Accident Book which is to be found in the kitchen.

#### 4. SETTING THE COURSE

1. The objective when setting the course is to facilitate an enjoyable race for the Sailors.
2. Examples of courses are shown in the following pages but there is no limitation on other courses. Inexperienced Race Officers are advised to set the course and number of laps in consultation with an experienced sailor, except for pursuit races where the number of laps is not set.
3. Mark C should be Kingston Bridge side of the start line, and if both A and B are used then B should be the furthest upstream.
4. Courses should normally be set with marks to be passed on the port side, exceptions being zig-zag courses or to help boats to pass the upstream marks when there is a strong stream.
5. Races should be planned for the leading boat(s) in each class to finish in 75 minutes for 'Long Series' Races **EXCEPT** when shorter finishing times are needed to facilitate more than one race (i.e. Summer Series), light wind or river conditions.
6. If a course is set with laps entirely upstream of the Race Box finishing line, the Race Officer must arrange for the number of completed laps and lap times to be recorded in the Race Book.
7. Instruct the Bosun where to lay the marks in plenty of time to avoid delaying ferrying sailors to the dinghy park.
8. Use of a variety of courses over time will make best use of the water available to the Club. Avoid downwind starts which may cause overcrowding at the leeward mark. The exception being when there is a strong stream when all starts should be upstream.

#### **Light winds:**

9. The marks should be set to try to avoid dead wind areas close to trees or other obstructions, such as moored boats.
10. The open water between The Church and Ravens Ait may be the only area where there is reasonable wind. In this area a number of circuits may be made and the race may be started or finished from the launch or the bank i.e. The Race Officer will run the race outside of the Race Box (take paper, pencil and the timer/clock with you to record the lap/finish times).
11. When the wind conditions are uncertain Marks A and B can be placed initially, the Race Officer can then choose which one to use nearer to the start time.
12. Whilst the normal duration of the race is 75 minutes, when there is a failing wind pay attention to the stragglers (which could be the majority of the fleet in certain circumstances). The race may be shortened for the leader to much less than 75 minutes, possibly only 1 x lap if it is felt that the rest of the fleet may struggle to finish.

### **Strong winds**

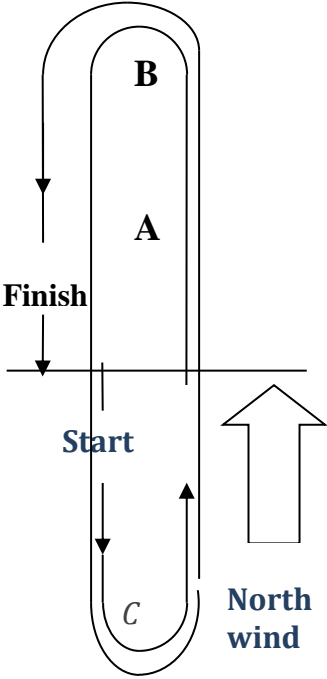
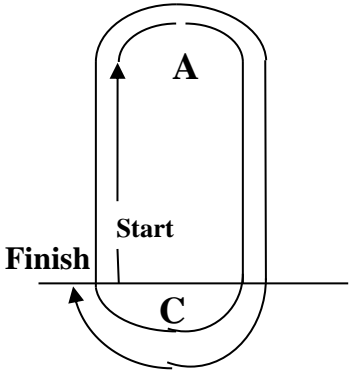
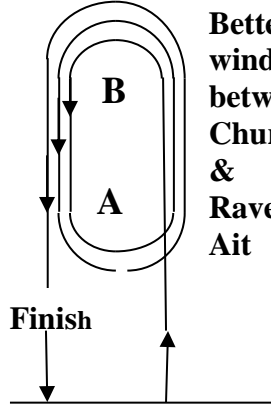



13. Strong winds open up the possibility of longer courses but you may only be able to set these when both launches are in operation.

### **Strong Stream**

14. With a very strong stream: set a short course with marks set according to the wind direction to take advantage of the slower stream nearest the bank; i.e. .when the wind is best for creeping up the Clubhouse bank: set the marks for starboard rounding, and when it is best for the Dinghy Park bank: set the marks for port rounding.



5. SAMPLE COURSES

<p><b>Course 1</b> A simple north windward-leeward course: port rounding – 2 laps.</p> 	<p><b>Course 2</b> Strong stream course: starboard rounding – 2 laps.</p> <p>Marks close to bank to avoid strong stream</p>  <p>Mark C close to start line to avoid difficult sailing area down stream</p> <p>Wind in any direction.</p>	<p><b>Course 3</b> Windward-leeward course: port rounding - 3 laps round B &amp; A</p>  <p>Better winds between Church &amp; Ravens Ait</p>
<p>Kingston Bridge</p>	<p>Kingston Bridge</p>	<p>Kingston Bridge</p>
<p>Flags displayed:</p>		
 <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 40px; margin: 10px auto; text-align: center; line-height: 40px;">2</div>	 <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 40px; margin: 10px auto; text-align: center; line-height: 40px;">2</div>	 <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 40px; margin: 10px auto; text-align: center; line-height: 40px;">3</div>

## 6. STARTING PROCEDURE (All Races)

1. As early as practicable before the start, display on the front of the Race Box:

The letters indicating the marks for the course: red (leave to port) or green (leave to starboard) to indicate the rounding direction, and the number of laps.

2. Sort the class flags or pursuit group numbers needed for the race into order.
3. Check that the main power switch is on in the Clubhouse
4. Switch on the power at the isolator to start the Race Clock:

On/Off Switch .....	ON
Reverse/Forward Switch .....	REVERSE
Class/Pursuit Switch .....	CLASS (Class or Handicap)
.....	PURSUIT (Saturday Pursuit)
Bell Switch.....	ON

5. Note the sail numbers of the boats about to race.

### Notes

- a. There is only a thirty second gap between switching on the start timer and the bell for displaying the first board or flag (Class Flag). Therefore, have this board ready in the frame to slide across.
- b. Before the start, make sure that the Individual and General Recall flags are to hand as they must be displayed promptly if needed.
- c. The purpose of ringing the bell is to draw sailors' attention to flags displayed or removed. **Official times are taken from the display or removal of flags.**
- d. For open meetings, check the Sailing Instructions and Notice of Race.
- e. To postpone a race, display the AP (postponement) flag and ring the hand bell twice. To cancel the postponement remove the AP flag and ring the bell. Display the class flag for the next start one minute afterwards. Signals are heard more clearly if the hand bell is rung continuously for two or three seconds. When two or more rings are specified, the process is repeated.
- f. The clock on the wall in the Race Box is a radio clock and accurate. If you start the race when the clock is on the minute it gives you a check and can help you if you forget to start the timer.
- g. If you do forget to start the timer, the easiest way out is to start the timer 1 minute after the start (see f. above) i.e. 60 seconds, then record lap times as the timer on rough paper. It is easy to add 60 when transferring the lap times into the Race Book.

## 7. COUNTDOWN TO THE START (CLASS AND HANDICAP)

1. **Five and a half minutes** before the start of the race, switch the Starting Clock FORWARD/REVERSE switch to FORWARD.
2. **Five minutes** before the start, when the bell sounds after the buzzer:
  - Display the first Class Flag, or the Mass Start or Handicap Flag
  - Ring the hand bell once
3. **Four minutes** before the start, when the second bell rings:
  - Add the Preparatory Flag P
  - Ring the hand bell once
4. **One minute** before the start, when the third bell rings:
  - Remove the Preparatory Flag P
  - Ring the hand bell once (Long)
5. **The Start** when the fourth bell rings:
  - Remove the Class Flag (so there are no flags left showing)
  - Ring the hand bell once
  - START THE TIMER**
6. Five minutes after the **Start**, repeat the starting sequence 2–5 above for the next class. You will be prompted by the buzzer and bell. Repeat the process again until all classes have started.
7. If a mistake in the starting procedure has been made, the start may be postponed by displaying the postpone race flag AP and ringing the hand bell twice. This means return to start area for the start procedure to be restarted at the next start indicated by the start clock.
8. Note After all the boats have started, switch the FORWARD/REVERSE switch to REVERSE to wind the clock back ready for the next race officer
9. If any boats are over the line at the start, display the individual recall flag X and sound the hand bell once. Continue to display the Individual Recall flag until all boats have started correctly.
10. A boat that has been recalled cannot be penalised for not re-crossing the line unless the sound signal is made and the Recall Flag is displayed. If possible the boat(s) that has not started properly should be informed by using the megaphone but a hail in lieu of sounding the hand bell is not sufficient for a Protest Committee to impose a penalty.
11. If too many boats are on the wrong side of the line and cannot be identified then display the General Recall Flag - 1<sup>st</sup> Substitute and sound the hand bell twice. When you are ready to restart the race for the recalled class, the warning signal for a new start shall be made after the General Recall is removed.
12. After the new start, the next start will follow by displaying the next class flag, five minutes later, as indicated by the starting clock.

## **8. COUNTDOWN TO THE START (PURSUIT)**

1. Change the Class/Pursuit Switch to Pursuit
2. **Five and three-quarter minutes** before the start of the race, switch the Starting Clock FORWARD/REVERSE switch to FORWARD.
3. **Five minutes** before the start, when the bell sounds after the buzzer:
  - Display the Group 0 Flag '0'
  - Ring the hand bell once
4. **Four minutes** before the start, when the second bell rings:
  - Display the Preparatory Flag P
  - Ring the hand bell once
5. **One minute before the start**, when the third bell rings:
  - Remove the Preparatory Flag P
  - Ring the hand bell once (Long)
6. **The Start** when the fourth bell rings:
  - Replace the Class 0 number with a 1
  - Ring the hand bell once
  - START THE TIMER**
7. **Three minutes** after the Group 0 Start,
  - Prompted by the buzzer and bell, ring the hand bell once, and replace the 1 with a 2. Three minutes later repeat this, replacing the 2 with a 3, until Group 8. The preparatory flag is not used again.
8. If any boats are in Groups higher than 8, the bell will sound at the wrong time. For higher groups start them at three minute intervals when the timer reads: Group 9: 1620secs; Group 10: 1800secs; Group 11: 1980secs; Group 12 2160secs. Alternatively you can use the radio clock to count every 3 minutes after Group 8 has started.
9. After the last group has started, switch off the bell, leaving the starting clock running.
10. Have ready a note on a piece of paper each boat that is ready to race with the group in which it is required to start. If any boats are over the line at their group start, display the individual recall flag X and sound the hand bell once. If possible, warn the relevant boat(s) that they have not started properly. Any boat that did not restart after a warning will be marked as OCS.
11. You will need to have a list of the Pursuit Race Group for each individual helm.

OR - if the race is scheduled as a Class Pursuit Race, you will need a list of the Class Pursuit start times (see below).

12. After the boats have started or when Group 8 has started, switch the FORWARD/REVERSE switch to REVERSE to wind the clock back ready for the next race officer.
13. In any Pursuit Series, if only one boat enters the race she shall be scored as having competed in that race provided that she has completed at least one lap. The Race Officer should follow the Shorten Course procedure when satisfied that there is no other competitor.

### **CLASS PURSUIT RACES**

1. Follow the same guidelines as above 8. 1. to 8. 6 above.
2. FROM THE START OF CLASS ZERO - numbers are changed and groups started at 1 MINUTE INTERVALS.
3. The starting groups for Minima Handicaps are posted on the Notice Board and in the Race Box:
  - Topper
  - Argo
  - Solo
  - Laser Radial
  - Enterprise
  - Laser
  - Merlin
  - Blaze
4. If the race countdown clock is started to coincide with the 'Radio Clock' in the Race Box then you can use this as a guide to the 1 minute start timings i.e. make sure that you start the sequence ON THE MINUTE.

## **9. PROCEDURE DURING THE RACE**

1. During racing: note the completed lap times as each boat completes a lap through the start line.

### **To Abandon racing**

2. In case of an emergency - If a race is in progress; abandon the race by displaying Flag N and ringing the hand bell three times.
3. The Race Officer may abandon the race, if the race has started and a mistake has occurred, by displaying Flag N (Abandon Race) and ringing the handbell twice. In dangerous weather or stream conditions the race should be abandoned or if the launch is out of action or cannot cope due to the number of capsizes.

### **To Change the next leg of the course**

4. The Race Officer may change a leg of the course that begins at a mark by changing the position of the next mark (or the finishing line)
5. If the next leg will be changed, the Flag C shall be displayed and all boats shall be informed before starting the leg by ringing the bell 3 times and or loud hailer or by the launch crew. The C Flag is in the canvas roll of flags under the bench in the Race Box.

### **Note**

For example: in unanticipated falling wind strength, shorten subsequent legs to mark A instead of B, or to move a mark or marks to move the race into a more windy area.

## 10. FINISHING

### Duration of Races and Time Limits

1. The Target Times and Finishing Windows are set out in the Notice of Race, White Book, or as decided by the Race Officer according to the conditions on the day.  
As a guide:
  - a) Sunday afternoon (single) races for Spring and Autumn Series should be approximately 75 minutes for the leading or main pack of boats.
  - b) For the back to back Summer Series aim for 45 minutes for each race.
  - c) Long Distance Race should be at least 2 hours depending on wind conditions. Make sure that the race is a decent length but allows the slower boats to finish in reasonable time.
2. For Pursuit Races the target time is 90 minutes from the first start.  
For Saturday Pursuit (Personal Handicap) all boats should complete the same number of laps. The Race Officer may finish the race up to ten minutes early if sending the leading boat round for another lap would result in an extremely late finish by the last boats.
3. If only one boat starts in a Pursuit Race then she only has to complete one lap to score as having finished in that race. The Race Officer should shorten the race after one lap if satisfied that no other sailor intends to compete
4. The recommended times for finishing Wednesday evening races are:
  - a) April 20:15
  - b) May 20:30
  - c) June and July 20:45
  - d) August 20:30.Finish the race earlier in failing wind or light conditions, but if conditions are good let it go as long as you can.
5. For Handicap Racing – Wednesday Evening Series and Sunday Autumn Series all boats should complete the same number of laps if possible so that scoring is accurate and fair.  
The Stragglers Rule can be applied if necessary.
6. For Class Races (Spring and Summer Series) longer or shorter courses can be considered for the faster and slower classes.  
Classes do not need to complete the same number of laps as they are racing as classes and not against all boats as in Handicap above. The slower classes can do fewer laps than the faster classes.
7. Normally boats should be finished as they pass the finishing line in the same direction as the Start having completed whole laps. An exception might be when the course has been set with circuits near Raven's Ait, failing wind conditions or strong stream.

### **Finishing Procedure**

8. Ring the handbell once as each finishing boat crosses the line and record as accurately as possible their finishing time in the Race Book.
9. If boats finish very close together, then their order of finishing should be recorded.
10. For Pursuit Races, boats that have been lapped do not finish until they have completed the same number of laps as the leader (unless The Stragglers Rule is used for boats that are way behind).

### **To shorten the course**

11. This is necessary if the fleet is not going to complete the set number of laps within the target time. The Race Officer may shorten the course by displaying Flag S after the lead boat has rounded the final mark and ringing the hand bell twice. If the shortened course is to apply to only one class then the appropriate class flag should also be displayed.
12. The Race Officer may shorten the course by establishing a new finish line between the launch or the bank and any mark, provided that sailors are informed by displaying Flag S and ringing the hand bell twice before they have started the final leg of the course.

### **The Stragglers Rule**

13. The Stragglers Rule operates at the discretion of the Race Officer. The purpose is to give boats that are far behind, a finishing position.  
The Race Officer informs boats that they have finished by giving them a finishing bell as they pass the finishing line, hailing them or by asking the Bosun to inform them.  
'Stragglers' boats may be finished before the leading boat has passed the finishing line if it is felt that if they did another lap they would run out of time.
14. The rule applies automatically for boats that have not completed the course (i.e. the same number of laps as the leading boat) by the time of the Finishing Window. These boats should also be informed that they have finished.
15. The Scorer will calculate the result(s) from their completed laps.
16. The Stragglers Rule would not normally apply to Open Meets.
17. Boats that finish under The Stragglers Rule either by the Race Officer or by the expiry of the Finishing Window should NOT be marked DNF in the Race Book but a note 'Finished under Stragglers Rule'.



## **11. AFTER THE RACE**

1. On request, issue Protest forms. Protests must be returned to the Race Officer, Flag Officer or a member of the Sailing Committee within one hour of the last boat finishing the race. The time at which the completed form is returned should be recorded. If the Protest Form is returned to you, arrange for a Protest Committee to hear the protest.
  
2. **The Race Book should be fully completed immediately after the race** with the following details:
  - a) Date
  - b) Race Details – i.e. Series and Race Number (if known)
  - c) Weather Conditions, Wind Direction and Strength
  - d) Names of Race Officer(s) and Bosun(s)
  - e) Boats Competing – Sail Number etc
  - f) Helms sailing in different boat or sails, single handed sailing in 2 hander etc
  - g) Laps and Finish Times
  - h) Course Details including course shorten details
  
3. Also note in the Race Book:
  - a) Boats that did not start should be marked DNS
  - b) Premature starters OCS (On Course\_Side at Start)
  - c) Did not finish DNF
  - d) Boats that did not complete the same number of laps and were finished under the Stragglers Rule. These will be scored on the average of completed laps by The Scorer.
  
4. If you had any difficulties or arguments with competitors, you can note them briefly in the race book but please tell the Commodore or Vice Commodore, so that we can improve Sailing Instructions and the Race Officers Manual.
  
5. After racing, return the flags to the locker, switch of the isolator switch, tidy up and lock the race box. Return the keys to the hook in the lobby.

## 12. LONG DISTANCE RACES

1. Long distance races are usually Mass Start Handicap. The procedures are the same as described for other races except as follows.

### The Marks

The "C" buoy is laid downstream of the Race Box  
The "B" buoy is laid at Hampton Court  
The "S" buoy is laid at Thames Ditton Island (optional)  
The "A" buoy is downstream of Ravens Ait Island (optional)

### Setting the course

2. A course which has been previously successful is one lap to Hampton Court or Thames Ditton depending on the prevailing conditions. Several short laps to Ravens Ait can be added if the wind is good and racing fast. Other options are any combination of the following assuming an upstream start:
  - BC to Hampton Court and back,
  - SC to Thames Ditton Island and back,
  - AC Ravens Ait and back,If necessary shorten the course at the Race Box, or shorten the course by finishing the race (upstream) from the launch, when the Race Officer should note the order and times of boats and displaying Flag S.
3. As soon as the leading boat is approaching the completion of the first lap, the Race Officer should review (in the light of the prevailing wind conditions) the likely time to be taken for the slower boats to complete the remainder of the course that has been set.
4. The above guidance provides for the circumstances when the boats complete the first lap slowly, but adverse weather conditions or other circumstances such as a launch out of action may be considered to be grounds for shortening the race.

### Launches

5. Instruct the bosun where to lay the marks in plenty of time to avoid delaying ferrying of sailors to the dinghy park. The most distant marks may be laid from the launch after the race has started.
6. It is recommended that the Race Officer and launch crews carry mobile phones or the Walkey Talkies kept in the Race Box.