Blackwater Yacht Racing Association
Race Committee Instructions
December, 2016

I. **Purpose**: The Race Committee is the single most important component of a successful sailboat racing program. The outcome of a race, regatta, or whole series may turn on the conduct of the Race Committee. One of the benefits of the BYRA policy of rotating race committee duty among the competing boats is that each sailor gains the experience of running and scoring a race and will consequently be more tolerant and patient of the others who serve. Race Committee is a critical assignment and must be taken seriously.

II. **Experience**: Some BYRA members have served as Race Committee many times and are knowledgeable and experienced, but everyone has a "first time". The first time Race Committee should thoroughly prepare by reading all of the pertinent rules and guidelines and by consulting with the Fleet Captain and the Quartermaster well prior to race day to review and confirm the duties and to become familiar with the materials, equipment and the operation of the Committee and Chase Boats. It is very helpful to serve as an assistant on a Race Committee before being in charge.

III. **Appointment and Service**: The Race Committee schedule is set and coordinated by the Fleet Captain. Assignments are made by boat. Committees are selected to assure that experienced competent skippers are running the race according to the Racing Rules. Less experienced sailors are paired with veterans to learn proper race management through good example.

The skipper of the assigned boat may not compete in the assigned race, but the assigned boat will be credited with a completed series race scored as the average of the boat's best four actual finishes in that series.
The skipper of the assigned boat is responsible for serving as scheduled, or for making a satisfactory substitution if the skipper cannot serve. Assigned dates may be "swapped" with another RC, but the Fleet Captain must be notified and approve of any change. The assigned RC team may include other persons on the Race Committee however Race Committee Credit will only be granted to assigned boats as designated by the Fleet Captain.

IV. **SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**: The following are practical guidelines for conducting and scoring a race:

A. Pre-Race Day Preparation:
1. Review BYRA Race Committee instructions, BYRA Sailing Instructions, BYRA "Fundamentals of Sailboat Racing", and Racing Rules of Sailing.
2. Consult with Fleet Captain about any questions or uncertainties. Arrange to meet with Fleet Captain at 9:30 a.m. (or two hours prior to the Skipper's meeting) on the race day.
3. Confirm availability and participation of other members of your committee
4. Consult with the Quartermaster regarding operation and use of Race Committee pontoon and chase boat.
5. Advise committee members if you will provide food and beverages on Committee Boat
6. Contact the member who will launch the chase boat to coordinate timing and provide assistance.

B. Race Day – Pre-Race:
1. Check weather conditions and forecasts.
2. Arrive at PPYC by 9:00 a.m. and consult with Fleet Captain (and other Race Committee, where appropriate) about weather conditions and possible courses.
3. Assure that sign in sheets are ready for Skipper's meeting, registration sheets for all fleets, pens, clipboards, road course descriptions, etc. These may be prepared by the Fleet Captain
4. Confirm availability and readiness of equipment, anchors and lines, starting horn, timers, course board and cards, flags, buoys, **radios**, fenders, work gloves, binoculars, cooler, foul weather gear, pfds, etc.
5. Review checklist and instructions for Committee Boat operation (posted on steering column) and bring Committee Boat around to dock by clubhouse. Check and load race equipment.

C. Course Selection:
1. Consult with Fleet Captain about plans for course selection for all fleets.
2. Always try to set course so that mark roundings are "to port"
3. Do not set courses prior to the skippers meeting. The wind will change requiring additional time to reset marks.
4. Set a windward / leeward course and choose a venue that fits the wind direction. If wind is expected to be N, S, SE, or SSE – use Bull Run. If the wind is from the NW, W or E – use the Blackwater.
5. If wind is light, use a short course with laps and require crossing the start line to begin the second lap. This will allow the race to be easily shortened, if necessary. Use the S/F card in the course description to require that boats pass the starting line to begin second lap.

6. If wind is heavy (12+ knots) set a longer course with one mile legs. If conditions are threatening, use a course with laps and with the "S/F" so that the race can be shortened, if necessary.

8. If wind is steady and moderate (8– 15 knots) consider a "road course", which is described in the Road Course sheet. The card that designates the letter of the road course should be posted on the <u>course board.</u>

9. **There should be two races on a race day**. The first race should be relatively short depending on the conditions to allow for the second race to be started before 3:00pm.

D. Skippers' Meeting:

1. Start Skippers' meeting promptly as scheduled, introduce Race Committee.

2. Describe course if conditions allow the course to be confirmed at this time.

3. Provide a cell phone # to contact the Race Committee.

4. Announce the order of starts for all fleets. Fleets I & II should start first to provide clear air for the faster boats and competition unhindered by slower classes. Announce recall procedure, and whether or not the one minute rule and around the ends rule applies, and whether any other special condition applies (such as mandatory life jackets). Announce the use of an advance warning signal that the sequence is about to start (i.e. 3 blasts on the horn 1 minute prior to the first flag).

5. Remind the Skippers that a starting fleet has priority over the starting line area and the non-starting fleet(s) should keep clear.

6. Review flags, timing sequence, recall procedures, and any other special announcements. Specifically identify the class flag for each class for the starting sequence. (See paragraph F) In order to race a boat must display sail numbers.

7. Announce the time for beginning the starting sequence, which should ideally be no more than one hour from the end of the Skippers' meeting. It is generally desirable for the fleets to assemble on the water.

E. <u>Race – Pre-Start:</u>

1. Based on the intended course, set the starting line. The starting line should not be too short. Try to allow at least 20 feet per boat in the starting fleet. <u>Generally a 70 yard line is appropriate.</u>

2. Ideally the Race Committee will have the use of a "chase boat" so the Committee Boat can be set securely and the chase boat can place the pin for the appropriate angle and distance for the starting line.

3. It is advisable to watch the wind for several minutes to determine shifts before placing the pin. The line should be as square as reasonably practical, but no line is perfect. The main goal is to get the race going promptly with the best reasonably practicable line. Ask a race boat to do a wind check to assure the line can be crossed on a starboard tack.

4. Avoid setting the line where either end is near land, an obstruction or shallow water. There should be adequate water behind and beside the line for the boats to maneuver prior to starting.

F. <u>Starting Sequence</u>:

1. At least three to four persons should constitute the Race Committee and have specific assigned duties. Five is best:

(1) Timer

(2) Flag person and horn

(3) Line watcher (both start and finish),

(4) Someone should be designated as the "Skipper" in charge of the Race Committee

2. Do a practice drill or "dry run" starting sequence to ensure that the timing watches are ready, and that everyone will be coordinated with the proper flags at the proper time.

3. The timer should have both "stop watches" ready to go. One should be set for 6 minutes and one for 11 minutes. Start them together when the "Come within hale" flag is lowered. The first "count down" timer will tick down the sequence to the first start and then count up to record the race time. The second timer should be set for 11 minutes to ensure that there is a specific timing device counting down for the second start. Use a wrist watch with a second hand as a backup timer. Clock start time should be noted on the finish log. Consult with Fleet Captain about operation of timers.

4. No race sequence should be started unless there is consistent wind of at least 3 knots or, in the judgment of the race committee in consultation with the Fleet Captain, boats are able to maintain enough headway that a race could be successfully started. No race sequence should be started if the consistent wind exceeds 22kts or if gusts exceed 30kts. The race should be postponed until the winds are at an acceptable speed. The postponement flag will be flown during the postponement and the horn will be sounded two times for each postponement. If the wind does not build to a consistent 3 knots or decrease to less than a consistent 22 knots within two hours of the postponement, the race shall be abandoned and reset for a makeup day. Abandonment is signaled by three sounds of the horn and displaying the abandonment flag.

5. When it is determined that the 3 knot rule or the 22 knot rule have been satisfied, the Race Committee should ensure that all boats are ready to start the sequence by sounding the warning (3 toots) that the starting sequence is about to begin followed by lowering of the postponement flag. NOTE: The postponement flag substitutes for the "Come within Hail" only during a postponement.

STANDARD STARTING SEQUENCE
 The following sequence shall be used:
- Prior to sequence: fly the "come within hail" flag
- One minute prior to sequence: douse "come within hail" flag and sound horn three times,
- 5 minutes to start: hoist the red class flag and sound horn
- 4 minutes to start: hoist "P" flag (White Square on blue flag) and sound horn. All racing competitors' engines must
    be turned off or in neutral.
- 1 minute to start: douse "P" flag and sound horn
- Start: Douse the red class flag and sound horn and raise the FLEET III class flag for the beginning of the second sequence.

The flag person will sharply drop the class flag as the timer says "Start", and the horn is simultaneously sounded. The line watcher is watching the line to determine if anyone is over early. The flags must be raised and dropped precisely on time since the flags control if there is a discrepancy with the horn.

"Loose Cannon" Automatic Starting Horn: This devise has three buttons and an on/off toggle. The top button is a manual horn and should be pressed three times to indicate that the "Come within hail" flag is lowered.   This is six minutes prior to the first start. One minute latter press the middle button. This is the auto setting and will begin the starting sequence with one long blast. The horn will continue to sound one blast one minute latter (four minutes before the first start) and again one minute before the start and again at the starting signal.
The horn will cycle again for the second start in the same way automatically. After the second start press the bottom button to stop the cycle.
NOTE: The auto horn will give 3 short quiet warning beeps one second apart before each loud horn blast in the program mode.

G. Recalls:
1. Individual – if one or more boats are over early and all boats over early can be identified, the Committee should promptly:
        (1) Display the individual recall flag "X", and
        (2) Sound the horn once, and
        (3) make a reasonable effort to hail the subject boats to confirm that they are "over early", but remember, it is the responsibility of each boat to determine if they were over early when the individual recall flag "X" has been raised.
        (4) When "over" boat has returned to the pre-start side of the start line or its extension, hale "all clear" and lower the "X" flag.
        (5) The "X" flag must be lowered within 4 minutes of the start even if "over" boat has not returned.
2. General – if more boats are over early than the line watcher can fairly identify, the Committee should promptly:
        (1) Raise the general recall flag, and
        (2) Sound the horn two times, and
        (3) Immediately begin a five minute starting sequence by raising the class flag (with horn sound).
If the first start is recalled, the Committee should direct the recalled fleet to wait for the second fleet to start.
3. Second General Recall - In the event of a second general recall, the Committee may, as a last resort, announce and impose a "black flag" or disqualification penalty on any boat over early on the subsequent start.

H. During the Race:
1. Monitor the competing boats to determine if any boat is in distress, or in light air to determine if the race needs to be shortened. Observe that boats do not pass through the start line on the first downwind leg. All competitors that do pass through the start line on the first downwind leg are disqualified.

2. Always have at least one person on the Committee Boat to monitor the timing devices and the radio.

I. Shortened Course – the course may be shortened at any turning mark prior to the lead boat passing such mark. Skippers will be notified by the display of the "shortened course – S" flag, two sounds at the horn, and hailed, if possible, as to the fact that the course has been shortened. This may be done from the chase boat where feasible. If the wind is light, committees are encouraged to set a short leg course and to use the "S/F" card to facilitate shortening, if necessary.
1. The course should be shortened (if possible) if it appears that the wind is dying and the race will be either unduly prolonged or that the "3 hour rule" will not be satisfied.
2. 3 Hour Rule – If at least one boat in the fleet has not finished a race within 3 hours of the start, the race for that fleet will be abandoned and rescheduled. If at least one boat in the fleet finishes within the time limit, the race time is extended for all other boats in that fleet.

J. Finish:
1. If the finish line has been changed from the starting line, the finish line should be conspicuous and as square to the last mark as possible. Display the "Blue" shape flag to denote on station at finish. In addition, display the "S" flag if you are shortening the race to indicate a shortened course.
2. When taking finishes at a mark other than the start /finish line, position the chase boat to starboard of the finish mark and square to the direction from the previous mark. Fly the "blue" shape and the "S" flag.
3. The recording of the order of finish and exact time for each boat is critical. Often the corrected time results in positions determined by one or two seconds.
4. The line watcher should audibly call "Over" and give the sail number as the bow of each finishing boat touches the finish line. The timer should call the exact time for each boat as it finishes, and the person designated as scribe should record the exact time on the finish log along with the sail number and/or the boat name. When the first boat in each class crosses the finish line, the Committee should sound the horn once. You may sound the horn for each boat if you wish.

K. Post-Race:
1. Review the proper entries on scoring sheets. Double check times that they are sequential, preferably by another person.
2. Pick up all marks after the last boat has passed. The chase boat can begin picking up the marks behind the last boat, even though the race is not finished. Retrieve marks by the ground tackle. **Do not lift by the inflatable mark.**
3. Note the docking time on the finish log when docking the committee boat. Any protesting skipper has one hour to submit a written protest.
4. Give race results to the Fleet Captain and report notice of any protest to the Fleet Captain or Commodore. The Fleet Captain is responsible to appointing an impartial protest committee of three judges to hear the protest.
5. Return marks, shapes, timers, buoys, radios and any other and any other equipment to the appropriate storage locations. Return Race Committee Boat to proper slip, and secure all covers. Report any problems with the equipment or committee Boat to the Fleet Captain and Quartermaster.
6. Fleet Captain will enter the times from the finish log into the lap top computer which will calculate the adjusted finish times. One member of the committee should assist in this posting. Results should be transferred onto the sign-up sheets and results posted at the post race party.

V. **SCORING**:
     A. See Sailing Instructions, Section 6 for Scoring.

     B. Scoring Calculation: BYRA uses a time-on-time formula for determining corrected finish time. The formula converts the clock time based on the individual boat handicap and a time correction factor to an adjusted elapsed time.