**Lake Harriet Yacht Club**

**Race Officer Guidelines**

# Introduction

The primary objective of a race officer is to ensure that a fair course is sailed in a safe and timely fashion. This task requires concentration, preparation, and a thorough knowledge of sailboat racing. LHYC race officers are chosen for their general good judgment and knowledge of the sport.

**Safety**

Safety of all participants is the race officer’s primary responsibility. The key to safety is preparation. Beginning the day before you officiate, watch the weather forecast. Watch the weather and the forecast on the day of the race to be sure you are current on the weather situation. Finally, use your senses and good judgment at all times while on the course to decide if action must be taken to ensure racer safety.

**Fairness**

In addition to setting a course that is fair to all, a race officer must be a neutral observer and must not inform racers if they have been observed violating a racing rule.

**Guidelines**

The Guidelines which follow are divided into the following topics:

Before Leaving the Dock

Setting the Course

The Start

During the Race

The Finish

Abandoned Races

Starting Horn (Ollie) Instructions

Flags and their Uses

All topics, however, support the essential objectives of fairness and safety.

Thank you for your participation!

# Before Leaving the Dock

1. Plan to be at the dock at least one hour before the race. Race Officers are also responsible to provide the crew for the Committee Boat.
2. Race Officers are expected to open and close the shed, and operate the alarm system. Bring your keys.
3. To turn off the alarm, enter your personal code and press number 1. If you have difficulties try again. If the second attempt doesn’t work the alarm company will call and ask the club password, which is “LHYC”
4. To set the alarm, first close the door, then enter your personal code and number 2. Alternatively, close the door and press #2. If the alarm starts to beep while you are still in the shed, enter the off code, then reclose the door and reset the alarm.
5. Equipment and Personnel Checklist:
6. Two safety boats with competent crews i. Course Board and markers
7. Recorder and motor operator j. Anchors and lines
8. Sufficient gasoline k. Recording forms and pencils
9. Starting Line mark l. Stop watch and backup
10. Flag Bag m. Radios
11. Ollie n. Race Officer box with gear
12. Air horn o. Necessary floatation
13. Hailer
14. Check that all radios are operable and that safety boat operators understand the radio operation.
15. The Race Officer and the two safety boat drivers will meet before the race to designate a lead safety boat and to ensure that each safety boat crew is familiar with and physically able to right a turtled boat or perform other safety boat duties. If these criteria are not met, it is the responsibility of the Race Committee to either replace the crew or cancel the race.
16. One safety boat should bring an extra buoy and anchor for any possible course changes.
17. Leave the dock and head out onto the lake at least 40 minutes prior to the race to begin measuring the wind direction and speed. Take wind readings.
18. Sound one horn 30 minutes before the Warning Signal. Make sure you are close enough to the dock and the buoy field for all racers to hear.

# Setting the Course

Each race officer will determine who will set the race course. Many race officers take the buoys out with them and set the course themselves. This works well to ensure timely starts. If you are using one of the safety boats to set marks, be sure to call that boat to the lake 15 minutes prior to the race regardless of the number of racers still on the dock.

The key to fair racing is a fair course. Time spent in understanding the wind direction and course preparation is essential for enjoyable and competitive racing. Listed below are a number of suggestions to ensure the first leg of the course is set directly to windward.

1. Leave the dock no later than 30 minutes (preferably 40 or more minutes) before the warning signal and record the wind direction in the middle of the course. Take multiple readings at 2 to 3 minute intervals.
2. Consider wind direction in selecting the course (see the sailing instructions). Consider the wind speed in deciding the length of each course leg (in light air a race officer might consider shorter legs and/or a shorter course). The maximum time for regular courses is 2 1/2 hours; it is 2 hours for shortened courses. Consider whether back-to-back races are scheduled as these use shortened courses.
3. Go to the starting line area and record the wind direction several times in this area as well. Drop the line port buoy. After you are sure of the wind direction, take a heading at 90 degrees higher than the bearing to the windward mark and motor along that heading until a line of at least 300 feet is available. More precisely, the line should be 1.5 times the combined length of the longest fleet. Motor into the wind a distance of 3 times the water depth and drop the committee boat anchor. Let out sufficient anchor line to sight a heading to the port line buoy, which is 90 degrees less than the bearing to the windward mark.
4. If you are not setting your own course, instruct the safety boat where to drop the windward mark and verify by radio that the location is satisfactory. After the mark is set recheck that the bearing to the windward mark is unchanged and that the starting line is square with the wind. The line should be set about 10 minutes before the warning signal.
5. Set the course board on the side of the boat away from the starting line.
6. The recorder shall record the numbers of all boats in the starting area, plus the date, the series, and the number of the race (if more than one is being held this day). Record the names of safety boat operators and their sail numbers. If any yachts are being sailed under numbers other than their own, record this information. Record all TCSC race numbers, and note any boats not sailed by the owner. Finally, record the name and sail number of the race officer.
7. The recorder shall record all yachts over the line or either of its extensions within one minute of the start and notify the race officer. These yachts must reround.
8. Also record which of the boats identified in 7 as premature starters returned and started properly.
9. Record the starting time of each race and the wind speed at the start.

# The Start

The starting sequence requires concentration and careful attention to detail. Postpone any unnecessary conversation during the sequence.

1. Fly the Lifejacket Flag if winds are 20 mph or if the water temperature is less than 60 degrees. If you do not know the water temperature, fly the flag before Memorial Day and after September 15.
2. Horns are to be used when hoisting flags. However, flags will govern.
3. The following are basic instructions for operating the automatic starting horn. (For more detailed instructions see p. 7 below.) One minute before the warning signal (which should be 29 minutes after the 30 minute horn) turn on the remote red sequence switch. This will initiate a 1 minute delay before the 5 minute starting sequence begins. The horn will automatically sound all signals in the starting sequence and continue with up to 5 rolling 5 minute sequences unless it is reset or turned off. Reset is accomplished by turning off the red switch and turning it on again, resulting in a one minute delay before the first horn signal. The black button on the remote or the red square button on the horn box are manual horn buttons, which may be used to signal recalls or other manual signals. Using the manual horn in the midst of a starting sequence will not affect the automatic horn sequence. Use a stopwatch as backup.
4. Verify with your crew how the sequence will be called to ensure the horn is sounded and flag raised simultaneously. (Usually 5,4,3,2,1,horn) The starting horn also sounds a warning beeper at 15 seconds, 6, 4, and 2 seconds before the horn to aid in synchronization of flag/horn signals.
5. If it is necessary to reset the starting line or you are not ready to start the sequence at 29 minutes, raise the Postponement Flag with 2 horns, reset the line, drop the Postponement Flag with one manual horn and raise the appropriate Fleet Flag one minute later.
6. Use of the flag mast:

All descriptions will assume the race officer is in the stern of the committee boat facing the bow.

1. The center tube on the stern side is for the preparatory flag.
2. A holder is installed adjacent to the center tube to place the class flag so you can have hands free.
3. The two tubes on the bow side are for general and individual recall flags.
4. The side lines are for the Line Flag, Lifejacket Flag, Shortened Course Flag, Mark Relocation Flag, and Come Within Hail flag.
5. Do not move the starting line after the Preparatory signal without going to postponement.

**During the Race**

1. Note the wind speed at the start of the race on the score sheet. (This is crucial for determining the winner of the Pete Taylor series.)
2. The recorder should verify that the entire fleet is recorded including TCSC race numbers.
3. The Committee shall drop all flags except Lifejacket (if applicable) and motor to the Windward mark. Drop anchor between the mark and Offset but above both to give the yachts plenty of room.
4. The recorder shall list all sail numbers as they round the Windward mark in the order they round, beginning with the second windward rounding.
5. The recorder shall record all yachts flying a protest flag by marking a “P” next to the sail number at each rounding if the flag is still flying or if the committee boat has been verbally notified.
6. The committee is a neutral observer of the race. Boots should not be notified of violations until after completion of the race. Record any violations observed. The race committee may protest or request redress for a boat under rule 60.2.

1. Station one safety boat near the jibe mark or center of the lake, and the other near the leeward mark.
2. Changing a mark is done in the interests of fair sailing. It is important to watch the boats sailing their first two windward legs, ensuring that both tacks are being used relatively equally, and that neither tack has become clearly favored. This is when your pre-race observations come in handy. You will know at this point if the wind shifts are part of the regular oscillations you have observed, or if the average direction has actually changed.

A change of course is easily accomplished using clear communication with your safety boat, setting a new leeward mark first, and pulling the old mark after all boats have rounded it. The new mark should be in place when the lead boat is rounding the previous windward mark. The committee boat should display the C flag, display the appropriate green or red flag (depending on the direction of the new mark), sound 2 horns, and use the hailer to notify all boats BEFORE they sail the changed leg.

**The Finish**

1. Set the Finish Line at 90 degrees to the windward leg. The line should be long enough for only 2-3 boats to maneuver.
2. The horn is sounded for the first place finisher of each fleet.
3. If a boat strikes the buoy and must do a 360 and recross, record both finishes.
4. Record all boats finishing.
5. Record any protest flags and the sail numbers of the protesting parties.
6. Inform the safety boats when they may pull buoys.
7. If two races are to be sailed, after all boats have finished the first race hoist the Postponement Flag and sound two horns. Check the course and adjust it if necessary. Reposition the committee boat at the starboard end of the starting line. When ready to start the second race, lower the Postponement Flag with one horn. One minute later begin the starting sequence of the second race.
8. Record the time that the committee boat docks after the last race. A protesting skipper has 30 minutes from this time to file a protest.
9. Record the following: protests, premature starters who failed to restart, rule violations, and the results of the race.
10. Review the score sheet for accuracy and clarity, initial or sign and place in the shed in the designated area for the scorekeepers.

# Abandoning Races

Abandonment may be necessary to insure the safety of people involved in the race. Use your judgment and common sense.

Some reasons to consider abandoning a race:

1. High winds or not enough wind. (See 6.2 and 14 of the LHYC Sailing Instructions.)
2. So many yachts capsized that the safety boats are unable to determine if all sailors are safe.
3. Lightning
4. Storm warnings
5. Dark clouds coming in against the present wind direction.
6. Wind has become so light that the race is no longer a fair judgment of skill.

# Starting Horn (Ollie) Instructions

**Note:** Always bring your stop watch as a back up

* Open box and remove remote control, guiding the wire through the slot. Re-latch top to keep out water.
* Attach box to bow of committee boat.

**Starting the Sequence**

* Turning the remote lighted sequence switch ON (light on) will begin the sequence in one minute.
* It will continue with a rolling 5 minute start sequence (5 times) unless reset.
* To reset turn the red button OFF and then ON again. This will take you to one minute prior to the sequence.

**Manual Horn**

You can press the black button on the remote or the square red button on the horn box at anytime to sound the horn. As an example you would use the manual option for recalls and finishes. Using the manual horn in the middle of a sequence does not affect the sequence.

**Individual and General Recalls**

**Individual:** Use the manual horn button to sound the horn once and display the individual recall flag.

**General:** Use the manual horn button to sound the horn twice and display the general recall flag.

**Horn Sounds in the 5 Minute Sequence**

* One horn blast at 5 minutes before the start. Raise the class flag at this time.
* One horn blast at 4 minutes before the start. Raise the preparatory flag at this time
* One long blast 1 minute before the start. Lower the preparatory flag at this time.
* One horn blast at the start. Lower the class flag at this time and raise the next fleet’s class flag.
* The sequence continues to roll until the switch is turned OFF.

**Beeper Sounds to Help Race Committee**

* There will be beeper sounds at various times to help the Race Committee know when a horn is coming to help in timing of the raising and lowering of the flags.
* There will be a long beep 15 seconds before every horn sounding.
* There will also be a 6 second, 4 second, 2 second beep countdown before every horn.

**Controlling Volume**

*Horn Blasts are Loud!* Wear appropriate ear protection. You can mute the horn by putting a towel or jacket over the box.

# Flags and their Uses

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| 1. | After setting the starting line, and before the Warning Signal, display the **Line Flag** on a side line and Course Board. If conditions mandate, display also the Lifejacket Flag (see 12, without signal) and the Shortened Course Flag (see 14). | Starting Line Flag | |
|  |  |  | |
| 2. | At 5 minutes before the Start, raise the **Class Flag** and sound one horn for the **Warning Signal**. The number of legs or their length cannot be changed after this signal. |  | |
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| 3. | At 4 minutes before the start, raise the **Preparatory** **Signal** and sound 1 horn blast. Although the Preparatory Signal may be any one of the following, we will use only the **I Flag, I Flag with Z Flag, or Black Flag.** |  | |
|  |  |  | |
|  | **P Flag**-Rule 30.1 not in effect (“dipping” allowed) |  | |
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|  | **I Flag**—Rule 30.1 is in effect. This is our usual situation as it requires a boat over the line or one of its extensions at one minute before the start to reround. | I Flag.BMP | |
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|  | **Z Flag**- Rule 30.2 in effect. Use Z only with I Flag at LHYC | Z Flag.BMP | |
|  |  |  | |
|  | **Z Flag** **with I Flag**- Rule 30.2 is in effect. A boat over the line at one minute before the start is assessed a 20% penalty and must reround. |  | |
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|  | **Black Flag**—Rule 30.3 is in effect. A boat over the line at one minute before the start is disqualified. | Black Flag.BMP | |
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| 4. | At 1 minute before the Start, drop the **Preparatory** **Flag** and sound 1 long horn blast. |  | |
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| 5. | At the Start, drop the **Class Flag,** raise the next **Class Flag,** and sound one horn. |  | |
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| 6. | Normally different fleets will start at 5 minute intervals. The Starting Signal for the first fleet is the Warning Signal for the second fleet, and the Starting signal for the second fleet is the Warning Signal for the third, etc. In this situation, the Class Flags of each fleet are lowered and raised, respectively. |  | |
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| 7. | If individual premature starters can be positively identified, the **Individual Recall Flag** shall be raised and one horn blast sounded. The recorder shall record the sail numbers of premature starters and may be designated by the race office to call those over. Reasonable attempts will be made to notify premature starters by hailing and/or chase boats. The committee is not obligated to notify, however. | X | |
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| 8. | Note that Rule 30.1 classifies a boat as a premature starter if over the line or one of its extensions within one minute of the start without sailing around either end of the line. |  | |
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| 9. | If premature starters cannot be positively identified, the **General Recall Flag** (First Substitute) shall be raised and 2 horns shall be sounded. A rolling recall is used. | GeneralRecallFlag | |
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| 10. | If the line is not changed after a general recall, the **Class Flag** remains hoisted with the **General Recall** **Flag** and the **Recall** is dropped 1 minute later, immediately after the Preparatory Signal is raised. If a **General Recall** occurs with the last fleet starting, raise that class’s flag immediately after signaling the **Recall**. If the Starting Line is to be moved, go to Postponement. |  | |
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| 11. | If there have been two General Recalls and you are convinced that the line is square and long enough, show the **Z with I Flag** or **Black Flag.** Display these flags at the Preparatory Signal and lower both flags one minute before the start with one 5 second horn..  (Refer to Item 4) |  | |
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| 12 | The **Lifejacket Flag** shall be raised and 2 horns sounded. Make this signal prior to the Preparatory Signal or at a rounding mark before the first boat in the fleet makes that rounding | yankee | |
|  |  |  | |
|  | All sailors must comply by wearing lifejackets before completion of the next leg and continue to wear lifejackets until the race is completed or the signal is struck. The recorder shall record the sail numbers of all boats failing to comply |  | |
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| 13. | The **Come Within Hail Flag** is raised with one horn. This flag should be raised before the Warning Signal. If raised after the Warning Signal, go to Postponement with the Hail Flag | lima | |
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|  | When displayed ashore, the Come Within Hail Flag means that a notice to competitors has been posted |  | |
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| 14. | The **Shortened Course Flag** is usually displayed without a horn before the Warning Signal is raised. If this flag is displayed after the Warning Signal, go to Postponement. If the course is shortened mid race sound two horns as the flag is raised |  | |
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| 15. | The **Postponement Flag** is raised with 2 horns. This flag indicates that all races not yet started are postponed. Lower the Postponement Flag with one horn and raise the Warning Flag with one horn one minute later. | code | |
|  |  |  | |
| 16. | The **Postponement Over B Signal** means that all races not yet started are postponed and will not start sooner than ½ hour after the B Flag is lowered. Raise both the **Postponement** and **B Flag** and sound 2 horns.  Lower the **B Flag** with one horn at least ½ hour before lowering the Postponementflag. Lower the **Postponement Flag** with one horn one minute before the Warning Signal | code  RED | |
|  |  |  | |
| 17. | Fly the **C Flag** when necessary to relocate a mark. A race committee boat, located near the mark beginning the leg that is being changed, shall raise the flag and sound 2 horns. It shall remain in that position, notifying all yachts of the change of mark. Signal that the mark has been moved right of its previous location with the **Green Flag**, and left of its previous location with the **Red Flag**. | C:\Users\Wendy\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.Outlook\QC6A519U\Changing the next leg.jpg | |
|  | RED | GREEN |
|  |  |  | |
| 18 | The **Abandonment Signal** raised with 3 horns indicates that a race is abandoned. (This applies whether or not the race has been started.) | N | |
|  |  |  | |
| 19. | The **Abandonment Flag** raised over the **Resail Flag** indicates that all races are abandoned and will be shortly resailed. These flags are raised with 3 horns. The **Abandonment** and **Resail flags** are lowered with one horn one minute before the Warning Signal. | N | |
|  |  | X | |
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| 20. | The **Finish Flag** shall be raised at the center of the flag mast and the Line Flag on a side line. | BLUE | |
|  |  |  | |
| 21. | The object displaying the **M Flag** replaces a missing mark. | mike | |