

# Committee Boat Responsibilities

## 1. Introduction

This section has been prepared for use as a reference by the Mount Sinai Sailing Association (MSSA) committee boats. 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.

Section 2 is subdivided into seven elements, cookbook fashion, to set actual responsibilities and outline the starting sequence. Remember, MSSA is known for its local racing program of competition and enjoyment. 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. By reviewing this section, preparing ahead of time, and asking questions of those who have experience, you will be an active part of the process. 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. If you are confused or concerned, you may want to arrange to crew on another committee boat prior to your turn. In addition a number of people have volunteered to act as a “support staff” and to accompany people who have never served as committee boat. A list of these individuals can be found following the race notes in the Yearbook.

Plan on having fun and pick your crew with this in mind. Stock up your boat for an enjoyable few hours. Take along a camera to record the antics, bring them to the October membership meeting for the photo-swap

Remember, you and only you can assure the quality and safety of this specific race. *We are all counting on you !*

### 2.1 A FEW DAYS BEFORE THE RACE

As committee boat it is your responsibility to get all the race equipment prior to the race. It is the previous committee boat's responsibility to return race equipment to the MSSA shed immediately after the previous race or to give it directly to the next committee boat. The MSSA Shed is located at Old Man's Boat Yard, at the walkway to the west dock.

When the equipment is picked up, check the items under “Club Supplied” on the Committee Boat Equipment Checklist. If an item is missing check off the item on the list on the back of the “scratch sheet” or call the Race Committee Chairman/Vice Commodore. If you have picked up the equipment from the previous committee boat ask the skipper if there were any equipment problems and if so, contact the Race Committee Chairman.

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

Be sure your VHF Channel 68 is in good working order. Although the MSSA does not require a radio, it is recommended that all boats have one for changes in the race or emergencies. Use Channel 68 to communicate changes in the race course such as race shortening or abandonment's. The Coast Guard will monitor Channel 9 for hailing, and Channel 16 for emergencies.

Arrange to have at least two people accompany you on board during the race. At the start, one person operates the clocks and calls out instructions. One person raises the shapes and watches for boats over the starting line early. One fires the gun or blows the horn. A fourth person could be used to handle late check-ins over the radio. Otherwise, one of the three must also handle that. We have found that the more crew, the more fun.

### 2.2 The Day Before the Race

Read or re-read all of this section. You never know it all. Synchronize your watch with a time service as a courtesy to the racing yachts. The less guessing the better. If you have any last-minute questions, contact the Race Committee Chairman or your Division Captain.

# Committee Boat Responsibilities - Cont . . .

## 2.3 THE DAY OF THE RACE

### 2.3.1 One and One-half Hours Before the Race...

Arrive at the harbor. In case of bad weather, consult members of the race committee who can usually be found around H, I, J Docks or at Old Man's Boat Yard. 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.

Hoist Committee Boat flag. This will help the racers recognize you. Also, untangle, hoist, and secure the apparatus that displays the shapes and flags. It can be hoisted from the jib halyard and guyed to lifelines.

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 crew arrives, assign jobs and talk them through as much as possible. If you need additional help, contact your Division Captain or the Race Committee Chairman.

### 2.3.2 At Least One Hour Before the Race...

Leave the mooring or 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** the harbor. (It may be different in the Sound.) **Pick a tentative course before you anchor.** The first mark **should** be to windward. If you want help picking a course, see the section, "Suggested Courses and Distances". Talk to the various Division Captains or a member of the race committee. Division 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.

Week-night races mostly use club marks and MSSA portable floats. The longer weekend races should make use of these plus government navigational marks.

All races should have downwind work, unless there is no other choice. Also, try to have courses that allows the finish before dark. Recommended courses for A, B, C, D divisions are provided in this yearbook. Some special races such as the Jackrabbit Race, Barrister Cup, or Middle Ground races have pre-selected courses. Reference the Sailing Instructions in this book for this information. Due to weather conditions, all special courses with the exception of the Jackrabbit race may be changed by a Committee Boat.

If there is no wind, don't be in a hurry to pick a course or anchor. Wait to see what the wind is going to do. If the published start time approaches and there is still no wind, consider a **postponement**. If you choose to postpone, hoist the "AP" flag and fire two guns at the listed start time. When conditions change and you are ready to start the sequence, fire one gun 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 picked a 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 division**. 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.

# Committee Boat Responsibilities - Cont . . .

**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.

Once you are anchored, post the course by hanging the signs on the lifelines. In **POSTING THE COURSE** do not post the starting mark. Post the other marks in order along with the red sign for marks to port or the green sign for marks to starboard. It is courteous to mount the signs on the side facing the start line if practical.

If conditions change or you have second thoughts about the course, you have the right to change it any time before the first gun. 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 not read the course, merely announce that it has been changed and let racers read it off the boat. You should have a reason for changing the course.

## 2.3.3 Half an Hour Before the Race...

The course should be posted, the shapes you hoist ready. The time and the starting procedure and most other matters are covered in this section or the yearbook. When a boat checks in, acknowledge it by name or sail number. Remember you're the Committee Boat and therefore managing the race. **YOU'RE THE BOSS**.

Position, secure, and load the gun, and have the horn ready as a backup. If you have GPS on board, use it to establish the starting time, so all yachts with a GPS can synchronize. 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.

## 2.3.4 Five Minutes Before the First Gun...

Position someone at the Flag/Shapes

Make sure the gun is ready. Consider donning earplugs.

Keep using one of the timers to time until first gun.

## 2.3.5 Ten Seconds Before Listed Start Time...






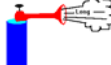


Begin verbal countdown.

## 2.4 STARTING RACES

The Racing Rules of Sailing 2005-2008 incorporated changes to Rule 26, *Starting Races*. As a result, most yacht racing venues have adopted the new start methodology. MSSA will begin to use this method for the 2002 racing season. 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 divisions. Careful consideration of the purpose of the rule change and how it can be adapted to MSSA weeknight and weekend series races, has led to some changes in this Race Committee Procedures Guide and the Sailing Instructions. 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 rule does allow for up to five combinations of "Preparatory" visual signals. 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.

# Committee Boat Responsibilities - Cont . . .

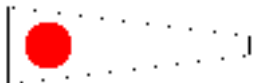
RACING RULE 26			
Title	Visual Signal	Sound Signal	Time to Start
Warning	Class Flag(s) Displayed	1  or 	5* minutes
Preparatory	 "P" Flag	1  or 	4 minutes
	Preparatory Flag Removed	1 	1 minute
Start	Class Flag(s) Removed	1  or 	0

\*or as stated in the sailing instructions  
The warning signal for each succeeding class shall be made with or after the starting signal of the preceding class.

## Class Flags:

First Class Starting

Second Class Starting:



y Flag:

Preparator

**Rule 26 allows for 5 different combinations of Preparatory Flags to be flown. MSSA will use the "P" flag.**

**P Flag** – used normally to signal yachts to be in preparatory phase of starting.



# Committee Boat Responsibilities - Cont . . .

## 2.4.1 The Starting Sequence

Raise Class Flag (All flags/shapes should be raised briskly.) The shape should reach the top at the exact start time. This is important because racers will be timing their starts from the shapes, not from the guns.

Fire gun. Try to make the gun fire at the same time as the shape reaches the top, but if they are not simultaneous, the shape determines the time. If the gun misfires, sound the horn to alert racers that a shape has been raised. A misfire is not cause to postpone the start. If the shape was correct, just continue the start sequence.

## 2.4.2 Time + One Minute...

Raise the Preparatory Flag AND fire the gun.

## 2.4.3 Time + Four Minutes...

Lower the Preparatory Flag and Sound a Horn

## 2.4.4 Time + Five Minutes...

Start of First Division

LOWER the **Class 1 Flag**, RAISE the **Class 2 Flag** and FIRE the **GUN**. (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, sound one long blast on the horn hoist the X flag, and announce sail numbers. They must start again. See section on **Individual recall**.

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 blasts on the horn or two guns and by hoisting the "First Substitute" flag. After a general recall that involves all divisions, 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 general recall is for one division, they will **start 5 minutes after the last division** in the normal starting sequences. If no boats are over early, it is courteous to say "all clear."

## 2.4.5 Time + Six Minutes...

Raise the Preparatory Flag AND fire the gun.

## 2.4.6 Time + Nine Minutes...

Lower the Preparatory Flag and Sound a Horn

## 2.4.7 Time + Ten Minutes...

Start of Second Division

LOWER the **Class 2 Flag** and FIRE the **GUN**. (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 division, then the Class 1 Flag will be raised with the start of the second division, and the sequence will proceed as described above.

# Committee Boat Responsibilities - Cont . . .

## 2.5 AFTER THE START

Assuming all boats are 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 or camcorder to capture the activity for your friends.

### 2.5.1 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 race, hoist the “N” flag and fire three guns. To shorten the course, hoist the S flag and position the Committee Boat at one of the marks and finish the race there. Don’t be afraid to do this. Think of what you would want as a racer. You’re the boss.

### 2.5.2 The Finish

If the race is not abandoned and the course is not shortened, position the Committee Boat for the finish. This usually means the boat must be moved so that the finishing mark can be crossed on the proper side and so the line is square to the last previous mark of the course. The finish line can be shorter than the starting line and should be if the finish will be after sunset. If it is dark, identify your position by hoisting, securing, and lighting the strobe light provided with the Committee Boat equipment.

### 2.5.2 Recording the Finishing Yachts

Place a light on the sail if necessary. Be ready to write its 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 sound the horn.

## 2.6 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.

Record its time under **clock time** on the race sheet . Start and finish times should all be **clock time**.

Fire the gun for the first boat in the Division crossing the line. Otherwise, sound the horn.

Watch for flags flying from the 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 in to you.

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

# Committee Boat Responsibilities - Cont . . .

## 2.7 AFTER THE FINISH

There is a bulletin board for race sheets in the MSSA Shed at Old Mans Boatyard. The results should be left there. The scorer will pick-up the results the following day. Remember to keep a copy of the results for a backup.

Your final task is to put the equipment back in order and see that it is returned to the MSSA Shed or transfer it to the next Committee Boat. Remember to mark down on the back of the race sheets any problems with it. Remember the quality of the race is the responsibility of the on-station Committee Boat. It is usually easiest to drop the equipment off at the shed on the way in from your committee boat assignment. This way you'll also have crew to help you tie up and carry it. The MSSA shed is located at Old Man's Boat Yard at the top of the ramp of the west dock. The combination to the lock is 1975 (the year the club was formed). We are all counting on you.

## 2.8 POSTPONEMENTS, ABANDONMENT, SHORTENING

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, you should attempt to shorten the race by moving your boat to one of the course's rounding marks. You should abandon the race if the wind is light, and even if you've shortened the race, no boats would finish within the time limit. An illustration of the relevant signals can be found in this handbook. Also see USSA 2005-2008 Racing Rules for additional signals.

### 2.8.1 Postponements

The Committee Boat should postpone the start of any race when wind conditions are such that a division cannot clear the starting line prior to the subsequent division start (usually 5 minutes). A postponement is signaled by hoisting the **code flag "AP"** and **two (2) guns**. The **"AP"** flag will be lowered and **one (1) gun** will signal the end of postponement and that the warning for the next division's starting sequence will be in one (1) minute .

### 2.8.2 Cancellation

The Committee Boat that has postponed a race due to lack of wind should wait a minimum of 1/2 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 from the Port Jefferson stacks etc..). If no signs of a filling breeze are visible, and the minimum time has been waited, the Committee Boat should then abandon the race.

### 2.8.3 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 division has rounded the first mark within half of the time limit; no boat from its respective division has crossed the finish line within the time limit (these times are taken from each division's start), because of a missing mark, etc. A **code flag "N"** and **three (3) guns** will signal all races abandoned with further signals and instructions (ie - 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) gun** will signal the end of abandonment and the warning for the first division'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.*

### 2.8.4 Shortened Course

The race course can be shortened by placing the committee boat at any turning mark and signaled by the **code flag "S"** . However, only one leg can not be considered a finished race. Shortening a race should be considered if boats (a majority) will not finish before dark, the race's time limit or unsafe conditions, etc. Be certain to note the shortened course on the Race Sheet, as it is important for the proper scoring of the yachts.

# Committee Boat Responsibilities - Cont . . .

## 3. DIRECTIONS FOR FILLING OUT A RACE SHEET

1. Fill out the top of the scratch sheet. The name of the specific race from the MSSA race schedule, the name of the committee boat, and your name and phone # so that the race committee can contact you if we need further information. The date of the race and the **SPECIFIC RACE COURSE** including the **STARTING MARK**. And lastly, the **EXACT TIME** of the start of the class. **Remember, we use a time-based handicapping system so all times must be accurate.**
2. Use the printed scratch sheets with the typical boats that race in each division. There are blank sheets and pre-printed sheets for each division (A, B, C & D). If you use the pre-printed sheets and a boat that is not listed checks in just write it at the bottom of the present list.
3. As the boats check in, just check off opposite the boat in the column.
4. If the boat is not pre-printed on the sheet, fill its boat's name and sail # in the appropriate column. If you are using one scratch sheet for all the divisions try to keep each division separate. If there are more boats than can fit on one sheet, then use additional sheets.
5. Don't worry about the handicap, this is only needed for the race results calculations.
6. Fill in the **EXACT STARTING TIME FOR EACH CONSECUTIVE DIVISION**. The time should be the same for each boat in its division. This will be 5 minutes after the first gun for the first division and 5 minute intervals thereafter for starts without recalls. Remember, **Clock time** should be recorded, examples: 19:05 p.m. and 19:10 p.m. If, for any reason, the sequence is broken, is recalled, etc., remember the exact starting time that the racing vessels should have crossed the starting line must be recorded.
7. Fill in the finish time of each specific yacht in the appropriate column marked "Finish Time". Please use **clock time** ( e.g. 21:05 p.m. instead of 2 hours.)
8. Write legibly !
9. Now copy the race results and leave them in the MSSA Shed if possible, or send the originals to our scorer within 24 hours. Envelopes, which have been addressed and stamped, are in the race equipment. Keep a copy in case the originals are lost and retain it to aid in answering any questions that might arise regarding scoring the race or timekeeping.
10. Thanks!

# Committee Boat Responsibilities - Cont . . .

## 4. COMMITTEE BOAT EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

### CLUB SUPPLIED:

- A. Apparatus to Raise Shapes and Flags**
- B. Box Containing the Following:**
  - 1. Starting Gun
  - 2. Shells (for more, contact Vice Commodore)
  - 3. One Set of Earphones
- C. Bag Containing the Following:**
  - 1. Race Mark Signs
  - 2. One Stopwatch
  - 3. Black Marking Pen
  - 4. One Air-horn
  - 5. Clipboard
- D. Bag Containing the Following:**
  - 1. Race Committee Flag
  - 2. General Recall Flag
  - 3. Abandonment Flag
  - 4. Postponement Flag
  - 5. Shorten Course Flag
- E. Waterproof Document Box Containing the Following:**
  - 1. Race Scratch/Check-in Sheets
  - 2. Committee Boat Equipment Checklists
  - 3. Protest Forms
  - 4. US SAILING Rulebook
  - 5. Race Committee Handbook
  - 6. Yearbook
  - 7. Stamped/Addressed Envelops to Mail Results
  - 8. Envelops for Copies of Race Results
- F. Course Boards**

### SKIPPER SUPPLIED:

- A.** Sufficient anchor line (300 feet minimum)
- B.** VHF radio
- C.** Extra air horn
- D.** Pens/pencils
- E.** GPS or Wristwatch for keeping time. Remember to have a backup.
- F.** Strong light to shine on sail numbers of finishing boats in dark
- G.** Binoculars to help identify boats
- H.** Snacks & Drinks for crew
- I.** Camera (worthy photo's can be published in newsletter)

## **Committee Boat Responsibilities - Cont . . .**