

# Committee Boat Responsibilities

## 1.0 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!*

## 2.0 Preparation

### 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 Vice Commodore.

Ensure your boat has all the “owner-supplied” equipment listed 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 racecourse such as race shortening or abandonment. 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 sounds 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 Vice Commodore or his/her designee.

## **3.0 THE DAY OF THE RACE**

### **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 the Committee Boat flag. This will help the racers recognize you. Un-wrap flags and ensure that you have the correct flags.

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 the Vice Commodore or his/her designee.

### **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 Vice Commodore or his/her designee. This person can provide advice and assistance to the committee boat in setting a course and the starting line. Remember, help is always available.

Weeknight races mostly use club marks. The longer weekend races should make use of these plus government navigational marks.

Our goal is to pick courses that are: "Windward /Leeward". Also, try to have courses that allows the finish before dark. Recommended courses for A, B, C, D divisions are provided in this yearbook. We encourage consulting with the Vice Commodore or his/her designee. 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, a Committee Boat may change all special courses with the exception of the Jackrabbit race.

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.

After picking a course, determine the correct side of the mark on which to anchor. 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.

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 have anchored, post the course by hanging the signs on the lifelines. 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 signal. 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.

### **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.

Test the horn. 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.

### **3.4 Five Minutes before the First Signal**

3.4.1 Position someone at the Flag/Shapes.

3.4.2 Keep using one of the timers to time until first signal.

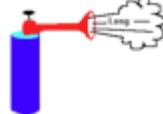
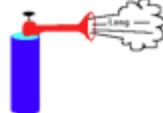
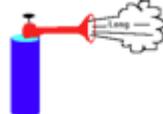
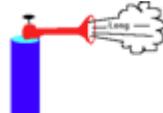
### **3.5 Ten Seconds before Listed Start Time**

3.5.1 Begin verbal countdown.

## 4.0 STARTING RACES

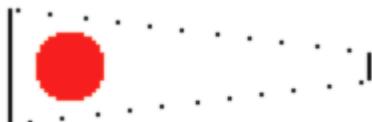
We use the Racing Rules of Sailing 2017-2020 Rule 26 to start races. We have included in this section an illustration of the signals and timing of Rule 26.

### RACING RULE 26

	Visual Signal	Sound Signal	Time to Start
<b>Warning</b>	Class Flag(s) <b>Up</b>		5* minutes
<b>Preparatory</b>	"P" Flag  <b>Up</b>		4 minutes
	Preparatory Flag <b>Down</b>		1 minute
<b>Start</b>	Class Flag(s) <b>Down</b>		0 minute

### Class Flags

First Class



Second Class



### 4.1 The Starting Sequence

4.1.1 Raise Class 1 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 signals.

4.1.2 Sound Signal. Try to make the signal sound at the same time as the shape reaches the top, but if they are not simultaneous, the shape determines the time. If the signal does not sound, it is not cause to postpone the start. If the shape was correct continue the start sequence.

#### **4.2 Time + One Minute**

4.2.1 Raise the Preparatory Flag and sound the signal.

#### **4.3 Time + Four Minutes**

4.3.1 Lower the Preparatory Flag and sound the signal.

#### **4.4 Time + Five Minutes - *START OF FIRST DIVISION***

4.4.1 LOWER the Class 1 Flag, and sound the signal. (The start line is between the race committee flag and the mark. No part of the racing boats may be over this line.)

4.4.2 **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 (III-F).

----- Intentional 5 minute delay -----|

#### **4.5 Time + Ten Minutes**

4.5.1 Raise Class 2 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 sound signal.

4.5.2 Sound the signal. Try to make the signal sound at the same time as the shape reaches the top, but if they are not simultaneous, the shape determines the time. If the signal does not sound, it is not cause to postpone the start. If the shape was correct continue the start sequence.

#### **4.6 Time + Eleven Minutes**

4.6.1 Raise the Preparatory Flag and sound the signal.

#### **4.7 Time + Fourteen Minutes**

4.7.1 Lower the Preparatory Flag and sound the signal.

#### **4.8 Time + Fifteen Minutes - *START OF SECOND DIVISION***

4.8.1 LOWER the Class 2 Flag and sound the signal. (The start line is between the race committee flag and the mark. No part of the racing boats may be over this line.)

4.8.2 **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 (III-F).

## 5.0 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.

### 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 sound the signal three times. To shorten the course, hoist the S flag and position the Committee Boat at any turning mark 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.

### 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.

### 5.3 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), and one or more people recording. The person watching the line and calling boats can also sound the horn.

## 6.0 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. (Not Elapsed Time).

Sound the signal for each boat crossing the line.

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. A protester as per the protest procedure explained in this yearbook must turn in completed forms.

## 7.0 AFTER THE FINISH

Following the race take a picture or scan of the race results and email to the club scorer, John Baker, at [jbaker2643@gmail.com](mailto:jbaker2643@gmail.com). Finally put originals on the board in the shed located in Old Man's Boatyard when returning the committee boat equipment. 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).

## 8.0 POSTPONEMENTS, ABANDONMENT, SHORTENING

If the wind is 3 knots or less and variable the race should be postponed or possibly canceled after waiting an appropriate length of 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 2017-2020 Racing Rules for additional signals.

### 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). Hoisting the code flag "AP" and sounding two (2) signals signals a postponement. The "AP" flag will be lowered and one (1) signal will communicate the end of postponement and that the warning for the next division's starting sequence will be in one (1) minute.

### 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.

### 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 sounding three (3) signals will communicate that all races abandoned with further signals and instructions (i.e. - new course, cancellation, etc.) to be made in the starting area. If the race is to be re-sailed that day, the "N" flag will be lowered and one (1) signal will communicate 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.

#### **8.4 Shortened Course**

The race course can be shortened by placing the committee boat at any turning mark or line the course requires boats to cross and signaled by the code flag "S". Two horn blasts should also be sounded and the committee boat should notify the fleet via channel 68. A finished race may not consist of one leg. 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.

### **9.0 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. Pre-printed scratch sheets should be included in the committee boat equipment. As the boats check in, check off opposite the boat in the column.
3. If the boat is not pre-printed on the sheet, fill in boat name and sail # in the appropriate column.
4. Don't worry about the handicap; this is only needed for the race results calculations.
5. Fill in the EXACT STARTING TIME FOR EACH CONSECUTIVE DIVISION. Time should be recorded in military time. As an example most weeknight races should be 19:05 or 19:15. If for any reason the sequence is broken or recalled note the adjusted starting times accordingly.
6. Fill in the finish time of each specific yacht in the appropriate column marked "Finish Time". Please use military time (e.g. 21:05 instead of 2 hours or 9:05 pm)
7. Write legibly!
8. Following the race take a picture or scan of the race results and email to the club scorer, John Baker, at [jbaker2643@gmail.com](mailto:jbaker2643@gmail.com). Finally put originals on the board in the shed located in Old Man's Boatyard when returning the committee boat equipment. Remember to keep a copy of the results for a backup.
9. Thanks!

## 10. Committee Boat Equipment Checklist

### CLUB SUPPLIED:

- A. Starting Flags (wooden poles and flags)
- B. Crate Containing the Race Equipment
  - 1. Other Race Flags on Clipboard with flag chart
  - 2. Purple Clipboard containing scratch sheets and yearbook
  - 3. Plastic letter signs for designating course
  - 4. Air Horn

### SKIPPER SUPPLIED:

- A. Sufficient anchor line (300 feet minimum)! YES 300 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 photos can be published)