

Race Duty: the basics of being a race officer in MSC club racing.

This document is NOT sailing instructions or MSC racing rules it is only a basic guide on how to run a race at MSC please check the MSC racing rule for your sailing instructions.

Racing sail boats is done in a precise manner. The management & initialization of a race requires specific and exact timing and is the sole responsibility of the race officer.

The committee Boat

The committee boat must be manned by two individuals at all times. The 'Race Officer' is principal (being a senior member in good standing,) and the 'Safety Officer'.

Duties:

The Race Officer:

- The race officer is responsible for setting the race course,
- setting the start line,
- starting the racing sequence,
- starting the race,
- monitoring the progress of the boats to insure safety,
- finishing the boats and recording their finishing positions by time.
- Finally, the race officer oversees the return of all competitors to dock and that all are safe on shore at the end of the event after which they hand in the recorded times of the contestants. The boat of the race officer is referred to as the 'Committee Boat'.

The Safety officer:

- The role of the safety officer is to make sure all competitors conform to club safety rules,
- are wearing life jackets,
- boats are buoyant
- determine the conditions of the racing environment don't present any concerns to the participants on the water.
- The safety officer has the right to call or cancel the race and event at his or her discretion. They over rule everyone where issues of safety are concerned.

In the course of the race the safety officer assists the race officer with signals and record keeping.

The Race Course

MSC designate course is an "Olympic triangle".

Standard path of the course and competing boats is referred to as "buoys to Port". **Port is left.** As boats go up the path of the course, they go around the marks with the mark on the left (port) side of the craft.

Similarly, the Race committee boat always anchors to the LEFT (Port) of the course (facing in the direction of the competitor's travel). Finishing position is also to the LEFT of the path of the competing boats in an upwind finish or downwind depending on the course design. In a downwind finish, race committee is on the side OPPOSITE the start position.

Setting the course

First determine the sailing area. Make sure the course will not cross any commercial shipping routes or interfere with harbor entrance/exits. Historically MSC recommended start location is 180° 1 nm from the clubhouse.

The race Course begins with an upwind path set directly up wind. A starting mark is laid and wind measurements are taken. Angle and strength are recorded from this position. Decisions need to be made at this point. What class boats are competing will determine what winds are safe (by wind speed). Certain fleets have wind speed limitations. Then considering the boats competing, the distance of the upwind leg should be about .75 miles. Wind angle at the start mark (leeward) is recorded and a compass heading based on that angle recorded. Given that angle, course and distance are known the race officer will set a course & head up wind to prepare the first leg of the race. (A GPS is a great asset for upwind course and distance, but not essential.). Once at the upwind point; distance & wind angle is checked and verified. Once this is done and accurate, the windward mark is laid.

Olympic triangle:

Once the windward mark is properly set, plot a downwind course traveling to the left of the windward mark. The third mark course needs to be 45° to the line of the windward leg. Before leaving the windward mark, an easy way to determine the proper course is to stare straight down the windward leg. Over your right shoulder is 90° to the windward. Bisect the angle to determine the new course and mark it with the compass. Continue on this course until the Leeward mark is at right angles over your LEFT shoulder.

Once arriving at the estimated point verify the position by looking directly at the leeward mark. If positioned properly the windward mark should be over your left shoulder. Set the Third and final mark.

Once the third mark is laid. quickly watch the marks to make sure they are all holding and not traveling. If they are all holding, then we move to the next step: start needs to be set.

The start line.

Head to the leeward mark. Take a count of the number of competitors & multiply this by the length of the largest competitor's boat. This determines the length of the start line. Remembering the course is 'Buoys to port' standing to the RIGHT of the leeward mark, apply the right angle again to the start line. With the windward mark off your LEFT shoulder, mark the compass and head to the RIGHT of the leeward mark to the distance you have calculated. Determine the reciprocal bearing and check your line. It should be on the exact opposite side of the first bearing. Once at this distance to where the boat needs to be anchored. Check your reciprocal bearing again. This is where you want to be for the start.

Anchoring the boat.

The committee boat will drift back wards by the pressure of the wind and waves. The committee boat needs to be at right angles to the upwind leg. Confirm your reciprocal bearing, determine a right angle course upwind from your committee boat position. After determining a compass bearing to the right angle course. Prepare the anchor and travel up that course roughly 150 feet. Stronger winds may require a greater distance. Once at distance, then let the anchor go and let the boat settle back by wind force. (The engine is usually off at this point.) Observe the Leeward mark as you settle back checking with the compass. Once you have achieved the reciprocal bearing taken earlier, you are in the proper

position and can tie off the anchor. Now you have a course and a start line established and are on station.

Prep to Start.

Once on station, gather the appropriate flags, timer and record keeping tools to prepare for the start. First action is to record sail numbers of competitors and count boats. (if more boats have joined the race than counted earlier, start line may need to be lengthened.)

If a race committee flag is on board this should be raised in an observable area amidships of the boat. This flag becomes the marker opposite the mark and defines the start line. The race officer must make all observations from this flag in a straight line to the mark.

Prepare and order the flags in their proper sequence. **DO NOT LET THE FLAGS BE SEEN OR FLY PREMATURELY.** Set the timer for a 5-minute countdown. Have the RED flag, horn & timer all coordinated to go simultaneously. Flag and timer **MUST** be accurate. If not, sequence must be restarted.

Timing

Recorded time of a race is mandatory. A timer that counts down and counts up is ideal. Time of all finishers must be recorded because of multiple class's in club racing. (Even if one fleet is racing, recorded times may have bearing on disputes or protests not covered here.) if a count up device is not available using a clock is also appropriate. Recording the start time and finish times by a standard clock are also valid. Finishing times will need to be recorded for all boats.

Flag, horn and timer sequence is as follows:

RED Flag	5 min warning	flag up Horn
Blue "P" Flag	4 min warning	flag up Horn
Blue "P" Flag	1 min warning	Flag down Horn
Red Flag	Start	Flag Down Horn

The start & over early boats rule 29 and 30.

When at a boat's starting signal any part of her hull, crew or equipment is on the course side of the starting line or she must comply with rule 30.1, the race committee shall promptly display flag 'X' with one sound. The flag shall be displayed until all such boats have sailed completely to the pre-start side of the starting line. As a courtesy **only**, Sail numbers are called out. It is the responsibility of "over early" boats to both return to the start line and restart. The flag shall be displayed until all such boats have sailed completely to the pre-start side of the starting line or one of its extensions

Should there be more boats than can be identified for individual recall, then a general recall flag is raised with two horns this is the substitute pennant (Blue field with yellow triangle) this flag remains up for one minute. All racers are to return behind the start line. Race is restarted at the end of the one minute by the sequence begun and red flag raised.

The race

Once all boats have started cleanly and are on their way race committee remains on station at anchor till all boats competing are over the line. Once all boats are past the start and heading up wind the race committee boat can pull up anchor and follow the fleet around the course.

The course

An Olympic triangle course is once around the triangle returning to the windward mark then downwind to the Leeward mark, twice, and up to finish.

At the finish

Display the **RED** flag. Finishing line can be upwind or downwind, depending on the circumstances, such as a shortened course. In either case, the race committee boat is positioned so that finishing boats will pass through the finishing line leaving the finishing line mark to port.

Windward finish: Olympic triangle: The windward mark for becomes a finishing mark when A competing boat is on the final leg of the course. The race committee boat needs to anchor at right angles TO THE WIND within $\frac{1}{2}$ the distance of the start (this is not exact but should be enough room $\frac{1}{2}$ the fleet to cross without contact) again, using the compass determine a right angle to the mark based on the wind angle. Mark the bearing and head upwind to lay the anchor in the same manner as the start. Let the boat settle back while reading the compass till the recorded bearing is met. Tie off the boat and raise the **RED** flag at an observable point in the committee boat and sight finishes between the flag and the mark. Be prepared to record boats and times signaled with a horn.

Leeward finish: In the case of a shortened course: For a downwind finish; the Leeward mark becomes the finishing mark and the above procedure is repeated on the downwind leg. With the committee boat on the PORT SIDE of the mark (left) to the course of the boats heading downwind. Tie off the boat and raise the **RED** flag at an observable point in the committee boat and sight finishes between the flag and the mark. Be prepared to record boats and times signaled with a horn.

Completed race: Stay on the finish line station till all boats have crossed. Once all competitors are recorded and have completed the course, take the blue flag down and return to start if another race is to run or pull marks and follow the fleet in. The committee boat should be the last boat at the dock sound a horn to mark the start of the 30 min protest period and note the time.

Take finish sheets to club house office door box or hand to Dave Tebbit or Mike Duncan for record keeping.

Shortened course: Wind dropping or worsening conditions may require a shortened course. The "S" flag is raised with two horns ahead of the fleet. The NEXT MARK in the path of the fleet will be a finishing mark. The race committee boat must set up a finish line with the "S" Flag and the **RED flag** flying will finish all boats as they pass between the red flag and the finishing mark.

Recommendation: All competitors should be in possession of a copy of the ISAF published Racing Rules as should the race staff.