

# —MSC RACING INSTRUCTIONS—

## “How to Run A Sailboat Race”

**Starting Times: Wednesday evenings, 6:00 for C-Boats; Saturdays, 1:00**

**The judges #1 job is to facilitate safety and a venue for sailors having fun racing. There is no #2**

Judges and Helpers: Be at the lake early, 40- to 50-minutes before start times to allow time to set up equipment, drive out on the lake to check wind direction and set racing marks. Adjust as necessary prior to and between races, due to wind.

Shifts and changes in velocity; use VHF Radios to communicate with your safety boat driver and to set and, if needed, later adjust the course.

### **-SAFETY-**

Fundamental Rule: A boat or competitor will give all assistance and all possible help to any person or vessel in danger.

Responsibility: A boat and its skipper and crew are solely responsible for deciding whether to start or continue racing.

Minnesota State Law: Requires that a Coast Guard-approved life jacket must be on board and immediately available for all persons in a boat. In all MSC boats, Coast Guard-approved life jackets must be worn shore-to-shore.

### **-RACE PLANNING-**

As previously mentioned, as Judge, be out on the lake early to determine wind direction, wind shifts and velocity before setting marks. Use the MSC VHF radios to stay in touch with your safety boat drivers(s) to lay or assist in laying racing marks. If weather conditions look unstable or threatening before or during a race,

sound three long signals and send the boats in to the nearest dock, or shore. There will be no races if the steady state of wind is above 16- to 18-mph. Regardless, a boat is solely

responsible for deciding whether to start or to continue racing. There is always another race or another day.

### **-EQUIPMENT-**

-Set up the Committee Boat going through the Committee Boat list making sure you have everything ready to go.

-If the Committee Boat is locked to its buoy, be sure to have a key to the Committee Boat lock prior to departure.

-Perform a radio check with your Safety Boat Driver.

-Check that you have a loud hailer on board, and that its batteries are charged.

### **-RACE COURSE MANAGEMENT-**

-Decide on length of the course; confer with a Fleet Captain before going out

-Display the course on shore if possible and on the Committee Boat Course Board. Hail the competitors before the race and let everyone know the course. The Start/Finish Line is Closed.

Check the wind in 3-5 places up the course, the direction will usually be different but average that out and decide a plan. You can always move marks up until the race starts. If you get out early you can get more and better readings.

-Lay the Windward Mark and the Leeward Mark well away from shore and well clear of the buoy fields, and also well clear of weed beds; observe lake and water conditions as you lay marks for the course. If MSC classes are in session on the lake, lay the course well below or well off the one side of instructional sailing.

-Looking straight upwind, sight in where to lay the Windward Mark; an Offset mark is a good idea, lay it slightly downwind of the Windward Mark, and about 10 yards to the left of the Windward Mark. An Offset Mark helps to safely separate boats as they round the Windward Mark. Use a smaller orange mark for Offset.

-Lay the Leeward Mark or Marks straight downwind of the Windward Mark, at an appropriate distance downwind of the Windward Mark, at your discretion but you can

check with the distance previously discussed with a Fleet Captain or Sailing Master of the dominant fleet

-Proceed to lay the Start/Finish Line midway between the Windward Mark and the Leeward Mark (splitting the distance), and at 90-degrees, right-angle, to the imaginary line sighted between your Windward Mark and Leeward Mark as you sight up the course. Use the wind indicator to help find 90 degrees. Move the boat up the course about 2-3 boat lengths and drop the boat anchor. Let the line out until the bow of the boat is directly across the wind from the flag. The most important thing is to have the line perpendicular to the wind. The Committee Board flag staff is one end of this line, and a mark (usually white) is the Port end of the line, about 50-75 yards long. 30- 60 seconds sailing time.

-The “Line” is the imaginary line sighted between the Port Mark and the Committee Boat flag staff, both for Start and for Finish. The line is closed for racing, meaning no competitor can sail between the committee boat and the star/finish buoy. Remember that the line may not be directly downwind from the upwind buoy but that is ok if the start line is perpendicular from the wind it will be a good/fair start.

-Communicate as well as possible to the racers what your intentions are when you know them. Who is going when and anything else to keep them informed on the water. Keep the loud hailer handy.

If you make a mistake or think you did, it’s OK, everyone does; blow three horns and start over. Change the start line or course as quickly as you can and restart. If you let people know what is going on and do it everyone will be happy to get a good fair race going.

-Check off the boats that start on the clip board list

-Use the automated horn system for signals, use the manual Horn button to signal the first-place finisher in each fleet. Flags may also supplement horns. Blue is raised for the first three-minute segment and lowered after two minutes; Red is raised at the Start Horn Signal. If more than one fleet is racing, a separate three-minute sequence may be used to start the next fleet. Usually the faster boats (scows) start first to clear the line, followed by Ensigns, then other fleets.

-Note that no verbal signals are to be given, your Horn and Flag signals control. Friendly reminders never hurt and remember you are there so that racers are learning and having fun.

- Call out the premature starters as soon as you can by voice and on the radio.
- A premature starter must clear the line and re-round one end of the Start Line before that boat can count as a starting boat
- On the Scoresheet, be sure to record the Start Time of each fleet, and the Finish Time for the first boat in a fleet to cross the Finish Line
- Record sail numbers for scows, and either sail number or hull number for other fleets, as they cross the Finish Line
- If a Protest is to be heard on shore, a written Protest Form must be filled in and filed with the Race Director or Fleet Captain within one-half-hour of returning to the dock.

#### -AFTER-RACE PROCEDURE-

Make sure all boats are safe and off the lake at the end of racing or the weather conditions get bad and your forced off.

- Bring Scoresheet to the Boathouse, place in the top-most, clear sheet holder just inside and left of the Boathouse door
- Return the automated horn timer, loud hailer, your life jacket and/or backpack to the Boathouse.
- Tow the Committee Boat to its buoy, secure the cover all around the boat. Lock the Committee Boat to its buoy, also loop the white tow rope several times between the buoy and the boat and tie the end using a good knot at the boat end.
- Be sure to cover the outboard motor and secure the cover around the motor and to the back end of the Committee Boat
- Leave the Committee Boat in a neat state, remove knots from lines and clear anchors. This is important, so that the next judge does not waste time reorganizing the boat when he or she could be checking wind direction and laying a good race course.
- Report any incidents or issues to the Race Director or to the Sailing School Director immediately upon return to shore and to the Boathouse. Update them on how racing went, and regarding any equipment issues. Return equipment to the Boathouse.

# Committee Boat Equipment List

- Check for Life Jackets for all people on board.
- Boat Keys
- Check gas tank and fuel hoses hooked up and not leaking
- Battery box and Automated Horn box
- VHF Radio
- Buoys and Anchors
- Boat Anchor
- Flags if you are going to use them
- Wind indicator (can be on radio antenna)
- Clip board and pen/pencil with competitor list or arrangements to get list before the start
- First Aid Kit
- Water bottle
- Cell Phone to check weather