

Who is on the Race Committee?

Chair of Race Committee

Normally this would be the Principal Race Officer/SailComm but preferably not for big events.

Principal Race Officer

This position only exists if there are multiple courses. The PRO has responsibility for the overall 'on the water' management of the event and may also act as RO for one of the courses. The PRO liaises with the RO on each course. If there is only one course, it is managed by a Race Officer and there is no PRO. The PRO keeps an overview of all courses and is the ultimate decision maker on the overall conduct of the event. The PRO also supervises the onshore aspects of race management, ensures that signals are displayed correctly and that notices are placed on the official notice board. The PRO liaises closely with the Chair of the Race Committee/Event Director.

Race Officer

If there is more than one course, they are sometimes called the Course Race Officer (CRO). The RO is responsible for the actual conduct of the racing on their course. Ideally, the RO is an 'on the water' manager, who lets the team get on with their jobs whilst keeping an overview of what goes on around the entire course. The RO will liaise closely with the Principal Race Officer. The RO and key assistants should record all their actions on voice recorders for later reference. The recorders should be left on during all start, recall and finishing procedures. As the responsible person on a course, the RO will usually represent the Race Committee at hearings for protests or redress requests, although, exceptionally, this role may be delegated.

Deputy Race Officer

The Deputy Race Officer (DRO) works on the main committee vessel with the RO and should be capable of taking over as RO in an emergency. Under normal operating conditions this person would organise the committee vessel personnel to ensure that everyone is in position and ready to proceed. The DRO ensures that all systems on the race committee vessel are ready and operational.

Assistant Race Officer

The Assistant Race Officer (ARO) is on the pin end line vessel and/or the finish vessel and is in charge of the procedures on that vessel. Close liaison with the RO is essential.

Timekeeper

After the RO, this is the most important position on the Race Committee Vessel. It is easier to lose a start sequence should the timekeeper become distracted than any other single cause. It is a position that requires single-minded concentration and a good clear voice.

Visual Signals Officer

The Visual Signals Officer will be responsible for ensuring the visual signals are ready for display and removal at the appropriate time. All timings are taken from the Timekeeper.

Sound Signals Officer

The Sound Signals Officer works closely with the Visual Signals Officer. They have responsibility for all the sound signals that accompany the visual signals. The Timekeeper may also be the Sound Signals officer if the equipment allows. However, if the Timekeeper is also tasked with giving timing signals by VHF then the extra pair of hands is necessary.

Recorders

The Recorders are responsible for the paperwork on the water. They record:

- Sail numbers of competitors that report at the start
- A log of actions and communications
- Wind direction and strength
- The course(s) used
- Sail numbers of all the boats identified as being OCS
- Sail numbers of boats not sailing the course • Sail numbers of the boats incurring penalties
- Sail numbers of boats correcting errors
- Sail numbers of boats retiring from the race (this requires an input from the Course Safety Leader)
- Sail numbers of the boats being finished on the course area (where the SI's allow for a W flag or Whisky finishing)

A back-up recorder is advisable on the pin-end vessel and the finish vessel.

A good recorder compiles a diary of the whole race day after leaving the dock.

Digital voice recorders should also be used to record finishing positions as they are called while crossing the finishing line. Where a lot of boats finish in a close group this equipment is essential for sorting out conflicts in the results.

Video Recorder

Common practice is now to have a person dedicated to video recording the starts and finishes. This can be a great help in sorting out sail numbers of OCS boats and sorting the finishing order when many boats finish overlapped.

Pin End Vessel Crew

Usually the person in charge of the pin end line vessel is an Assistant Race Officer (ARO).

The ARO is required to judge the starting line and to very quickly communicate with the RO what has been recorded relating to boats 'On Course Side' (OCS) at the start. It is important to emphasize that the ARO acts in an advisory capacity only. The decision as to which boats are over, or if the line is 'clear' (no boats over), rests solely with the RO. Communication with the RO is best by mobile telephone but if this is impossible, then by VHF.

Mark Layers

A good mark layer is a tremendous asset to the race team. They can also provide the RO with wind information at various points on the course. Mark layers must be able to measure the wind strength and angle at any time and report this to the RO, working from a vessel which should be a fast powerboat equipped with a GPS. Normally there would be two mark laying vessels per course. This facilitates the fast adjustment of the course to a new wind. Should the equipment and personnel be available, one mark laying vessel per mark is optimal.

Mark layers may also be used as additional patrol/safety vessels when circumstances demand, although their main task is always to stand by for alterations to the course in the event of a wind change.

Beach Master

A beach master (appropriate to dinghy and board racing) ensures the orderly and systematic launching of boats and retrieval on their return. Important safety checks such as noting who has and has not gone afloat, and similarly, who is still to return must be completed by the Beach Master. A system of signing in and signing out (or a tally system) should be adopted. The Beach Master communicates, usually by VHF, with the RO giving the time that the last boat left the beach and the expected number of boats in the starting area.

Event Safety Officer

In dinghy and board racing the Event Safety Officer deals with safety and rescue operations under the guidance of the RO. In practice, they both work together very closely although the RO is ultimately responsible for the safety of the event. The Event Safety Officer must be familiar with the event venue, the characteristics of the class(es) competing, the class rules and, of course, the SIs. Cooperation with local rescue organisations is highly recommended. In the case where there are multiple courses some of the duties would be delegated to a Course Safety Leader.

Source:

<https://www.rya.org.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/Racing/RacingInformation/RaceOfficials/Want%20to%20be%20a%20race%20official/Training%20modules/RYA%20Race%20Management%20Guide.pdf>