HANTS & DORSET AMATEUR ROWING ASSOCIATION

RACE OFFICIALS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Version 1 – Nov 2025

1. STARTER

1.1. As a Starter you will normally be shore based in a tent or covered tower. Currently Officials officiating at Newport 4s and Small Boats will be afloat on a Starters Boat and starting officials at the South Coast Championship Regatta may also be afloat. Where the Starters are afloat it is likely boarding and disembarkation to and from the Starters Boat will be from a beach, shoreline, jetty via an inflatable rib or similar vessel. All starting officials shall ensure they have appropriate footwear and adequate clothing and protection for the transfers and the elements on the day.

1.2. Those starters going afloat will be supplied with and shall wear a H&D supplied lifejacket.

1.3. Starters are responsible for starting a specific race and act as Umpire until the race is handed over to the Umpires, ensuring the following:

- There are the correct number of crews in their correct positions taking into account any scratching or late entries. Any boat taking up a position other than as advertised in the programme or direction by the starter or umpire shall be liable to be disqualified.
- Crews are wearing the approved club and blade colours of their respective clubs and that they show the correct lane draw number and that they start in their correct lane draw position.
- All Coxswains in coxed Fours events are wearing correctly fitted lifejackets.

1.4. The Starters shall be responsible to ensure that any boat, Coxswain or crew changes agreed by the Starters shall be subject to the 5 Minute Rule. The Starters shall locally agree who will monitor and act as timekeeper where the 5 Minute Rule is invoked. The Timekeeper shall inform all other officials on the start of the time taken normally after 4 minutes and state when 5 minutes have passed. The Starters shall then make a collective decision to disqualify the crew or wait further, depending on local circumstances and conditions.

1.5. Each crew is responsible for being at the start and ready to race at the scheduled time of the race or, if the regatta races are ahead of scheduled time, then by race order or as directed by any boat marshal or race official.

1.6. The Starter shall announce the race and may also call over crews competing crews and lane numbers if clarification is needed.

1.7. The Starter will call crews to the start line using the PA/Starters megaphone.

1.8. On acceptance of the above conditions and with other Starters the race can be started using the following procedure in accordance with the H&D Rules for Boat Racing:

1.9. **The Start**

- The Starter shall raise a red flag to notify crews to come under starters orders and any boat not at the start at the signal being given shall be liable to be disqualified or the race started in its absence.
- Each boat must race in the position they are drawn. Any boat taking up a position other than as advertised in the programme or direction by the Starter or Umpire shall be liable to be disqualified.
- When the Starter is ready, they shall lower the RED flag and replace it by raising a YELLOW flag. Instructions shall be given to each crew to align them across the Start line. In some instances, crews will be asked to back down or turn around if the Starter considers they have gone too far over the start line. When the Starters are happy with the line the race shall be started by the dropping of the YELLOW flag which may be accompanied by a verbal "Go" the "Go" to coincide with the dropping of the flag which is the overriding signal.
- Any boat failing to obey an instruction to get back behind the starting line from the Starter or Umpire or starting over the line or starting to row before the dropping of the YELLOW flag shall be liable to disqualification.
- The Starter shall have control of the start with the power to disqualify and if they consider the start false, they shall at once recall the boats to their stations and any boat refusing to start again shall be liable to disqualification.
- The raising of an arm by a crew member or coxswain on the start is an indication to the Starter that the crew considers it is not ready to start for some reason but the decision when to start rests entirely with the Starter.
- If after the YELLOW flag has been raised the line shall become unsatisfactory or an obstruction shall appear on the course the RED flag will be re-hoisted and the YELLOW lowered to indicate that the start is delayed, and crews must obey any instructions given by the Starter or Umpire or may be liable to disqualification.

1.10. **Instructions on the Start.**

- The Starter will try to give each crew a fair and equal start and the following instructions are given as guidelines where # is the crew number or club.
  '# Touch ' – arms only to be used to touch (bow pair only in Fours).
  '# Stroke' – light full stroke to be taken to stroke (bow pair only in Fours).
- Instructions may be clarified further by the Starter such as –
  '# All crew one touch' where the starter will expect the whole crew to take one an
  arms only touch.
  '# All crew one Stroke' – where the starter will expect the whole crew to take one light stroke.
- The Starter has to be flexible in terms of achieving a straight start line. This depends on many factors such as, wind, tide/stream, water conditions and time. Fair racing is paramount but all factors must be considered to ensure the Regatta runs smoothy and where possible to time. The fairest line may be slightly before or after the prescribed line but again fairness will be the deciding factor in allowing the race to commence.

1.11. **After the Start.**

- The Starter shall have control of the start with the power to disqualify. If after the start of a race a racing incident occurs (e.g. Jumping the start, bad or deliberate steering resulting in clash of blades/boats) or an obstruction appears on the course, the Starter may stop the race by raising a RED flag and by the sounding of a signalling device. Crews on seeing the flag or hearing the sound signalling device should stop racing and return immediately to the start and await instructions from the officials.
- Once the race has started to the satisfaction of the Starter, they will watch the race for infringements usually until about half way to the turns and formally hand the race over to the turn Umpires via a radio transmission.

1.12. Regatta Control will throughout the day inform the Starters, Umpires and Finish Judges (All Stations) with the lane draw for the qualified crews in each event final following completion of the heats.

2. UMPIRE

2.1. As an Umpire at coastal or estuary regattas you will normally be afloat in a boat normally stationed midway along and behind the turning buoy line. For regattas such as Christchurch, Coalporters, Itchen Imperial and Poole Umpires are shore based on a balcony or a pier/jetty overlooking the turns.

2.2. Where Umpires are afloat it is likely boarding and disembarkation to and from the umpires boat will be from a beach, shoreline or jetty via an inflatable rib or similar vessel. All umpiring officials shall ensure they have appropriate footwear and adequate clothing and protection for the transfers and the elements on the day.

2.3. Those Umpires going afloat will be supplied with and shall wear a H&D supplied lifejacket.

2.4. At some regattas, where visibility of the course is difficult for the Starters and turn based Umpires, the regatta may be required to provide extra Umpires either along the course or following the races from a boat. For example; Christchurch (afloat/following) and Itchen Imperial (shore based Mid-Course Umpires),

2.5. Umpires will confer and may ask the views of all other officials on the day before agreeing on and informing all stations of their decision on any incident during the event.

2.6. The Event Organising Committee (EOC) should supply the Umpires with a RED flag, a working megaphone and an audible device for stopping races at the turn if the Umpires decide to do so. If the EOC require the Umpires to start any events from the turns, they should also supply the Umpires with a YELLOW flag.

2.7. On arriving at station, the Umpires will assess the alignment and spacing of the buoys. They may request buoys to be adjusted with the help of safety launches and boat marshals. Once the Umpires are happy with the buoy alignment and spacings and are themselves in a fixed position, they will inform all stations by radio and indicate that racing can commence.

2.8. In multi lane races, the Umpires should determine between themselves which area of the turning line they will watch to ensure that the whole turning line is covered by at least one Umpire.
2.9. Once a race has been started to the satisfaction of the Starters and at a suitable distance from the start line, the Starters will formerly hand the race to the Umpires who will acknowledge the message.
2.10. The Umpires, having been handed the race from the Starters, shall assume responsibility for any course infringements including obstruction when approaching or shaping into and out of the turning buoys.
2.11. Umpires shall identify and confirm any crew failing to turn correctly or miss their buoy along with any race infringement or safety incident.
2.12. Should a foul or incident occur, the Umpires will confer to determine:
    - Who was at fault.
    - Steering/course prior to incident.
    - Conditions.
    - Did the incident affect the result of the race (If the incident is between crews who are not in a race qualifying position or not contending a leading finals position by a significant margin i.e. not likely to affect the race result (as determined by the Umpires on the day) it is likely no action will be taken and deemed a racing incident.
2.13. In the event of an incident, it is likely the crew off station will be disqualified. Should both crews be 'off station' the result of the race, causality, and any avoiding action taken need to be considered and it may be deemed as a racing incident.
2.14. All crews should turn the buoy corresponding to their lane number. It is at the Umpires discretion to penalise any crew that fails to take its correct buoy. If no foul or incident has occurred and no protest is registered from any other crew the result may be allowed to stand. This is particularly more relevant to pairs and sculling races.
2.15. Having conferred and reached a decision on any rule infringement, racing or safety infringement or a possible protest indication, the Umpires will agree on a decision and will inform the Judges of their decision. They may also choose to withhold their decision from the Judges pending the confirmation of a receipt of a protest when they will then inform the Judges of their decision. In most cases the Judges or Regatta Control will request confirmation from the Umpires of any decision.
2.16. The Umpires may take the decision to stop a race at the turns by the raising of a red flag and by the sounding of an audible device. The race may either be sent back to the start for a re-row or the Umpires may start the race again from the turns by using the same start procedures as detailed under the Starters role above.
2.17. The Umpires will satisfy themselves that all crews have turned the buoy correctly and where possible will note the order the crews turned.
2.18. If all crews correctly turn their buoys the Umpires will confer/agree and inform the Judges that all crews have turned successfully and where possible the order in which they turned.

2.19. After all crews have made their turns and after a suitable distance towards the finish line, the Umpires will formerly hand the race to the Judges who will acknowledge the message and umpire the race to the finish line.
2.20. For any safety incident, Umpires will request assistance from the designated safety boats immediately.
2.21. H&D Umpires/Assistants officiating at Southsea Regatta should be aware that both the H&DARA Rules of Racing and the Coast Amateur Rowing Association (CARA) Rules of Boat Racing shall apply. Whilst both Association's rules state that each boat shall keep its own water throughout the race, parallel with the course of other competing boats and its station. Crews may only cross the path of another competitor providing it allows at least 1 length clear water and does so at its own risk. History has shown the CARA officials can be more liberal with these rules when crews take incorrect buoys. However, Umpires may disqualify without protest any boat turning the wrong buoy or otherwise infringing the rules.

Starting races from the turns (Umpires).

2.22. Some EOCs require some events to be started from the turning buoy (half course) e.g. Junior J14, J15 & J16 events.
2.23. In these instances, the Umpires will confirm all the crews are present and will instruct crews via a megaphone where they require the crews to marshal and approach the start line and it is usual that the crews will approach and align themselves off the umpires boat. To help with the alignment they will line up either all on one side or both sides of the boat depending on the number of crews.
2.24. Umpires shall start these events using the same start procedures as detailed under the Starters role above.
2.25. Following a successful, incident free, start and at an appropriate distance away from the start, the Umpires will hand over the race to the Judges who will acknowledge the message and umpire the race to the finish line.

Protests.

2.26. A crew wishing to register a protest regarding an incident during the turn may signal so by raising an arm to the Umpire at the turn but should continue to race to the finish unless the Umpires stop the race at the turns by raising a red flag and sounding an audible device. If the Umpires stop the race at the turns, they shall notify the Judges they are doing so and why as soon as practical.
2.27. If a crew registers a protest the Umpire may decide to let the race continue but the Umpires will inform the Finish Judges that a Protest has been registered and the race has been allowed to continue.

3. JUDGE

3.1. As a Judge you will be responsible for judging and recording the finishing order for each crew along with any infringements/incidents or dead heats.

3.2. Judges may also disqualify crews if crews cross the finish line outside the course inner or outer markers.
3.3. For regattas where races start and finish on the same line the Judges role may be shared by the Starters and Judges on the day.
3.4. The Judges will umpire races once the race is handed over to them from the Umpires to the finish and confer on any incident or infringements with the Umpires to aid their decision. In addition, they shall record the finish order.
3.5. The Judges shall signal to each crew that they have crossed the finish line by sounding an audible signal or say ‘OVER and the Club name’ via megaphone or PA system to let the crew know they have finished.
3.6. At the end of the race the Judges shall only announce their agreed decision on the race finish order after –
    - Received confirmation form the Umpires that they are satisfied with the proper conduct of the race.
    - Any protests received have been considered and decided on.
3.7. In the event of a ‘Dead Heat’ the Judges shall decide the course of action as follows.
    - **In an Event Heat:** Should space exist in the final and in agreement with Regatta Control and the Umpires it is likely both crews will progress to the final. Should there be no space for an additional crew (i.e. not enough buoys) a re-row between the involved crews will be fitted into the race programme as soon as practical and ideally before the crews involved come off the water. The Judges will inform all stations of their decision via radio.
    - **In a Final:** The Judges will confer with Regatta Control and the Umpires and agree where a re-row between the involved crews will be fitted into the race programme which should be as soon as practical and ideally before the crews involved come off the water. The Umpires will confirm the decision agreed upon to all stations via radio.

Protests.

3.8. A crew wishing to register a protest regarding an incident during the race may signal so raising an arm to the Judges as soon as they have crossed the finish line and should immediately come to the shore where the stroke will make his protest to the Judges who shall communicate the same to the Umpire for their decision.
3.9. Should a club wish to register a protest then the Club Captain or other senior official of the club concerned should notify the Judges immediately who shall communicate the same to the Umpire for their decision.
3.10. If the crew member or club member is or appears under 18 years of age the Finish Judges shall request the member is accompanied by their Club Captain or Club Welfare Officer.
3.11. Depending on the nature and complexity of the protest the Finish Judges may decide to suspend racing until the protest is resolved.
3.12. If any Starter/Finish Judge is approached for comment by any individual who is or appears to be under 18 years of age or receives any protest that involves any Club

Member who is or appears to be under 18 years of age The Finish Judge shall make no comment or action but shall summon the Event Welfare Officer to be present.

3.13. Any protest made by a race competitor or club member and accompanied by abusive language or other improper conduct to any Finish Judge will be rejected without consideration, The Umpire shall record the names of individuals and crews responsible and report to the H&D Executive Officers who will automatically impose a fine on the Club.

3.14. Any other protest shall be considered by the Judges who may refer it to the Umpires and/or Event Committee as appropriate who may make decisions subject to H&D Rules for Boat Racing rules that the decisions of the umpires and judges are final and cannot be overruled.

4. BOAT MARSHALL

4.1. Where employed and the number of Officials and launches available allows Boat Marshalls to help ensure the regatta can run to time.

4.2. As a Boat Marshall you will be afloat and most likely have to wet launch boarding and disembarkation from the Marshall Boat off a beach, shoreline or jetty. All Officials shall ensure they personally have appropriate footwear and adequate clothing and protection for the transfers and the elements on the day.

4.3. Each Boat Marshall afloat will be supplied with and shall wear a H&D Lifejacket. In addition, they shall take with them a H&D Safety Kit and Megaphone for use in Emergencies.

4.4. The Boat Marshalls will assist the Umpires to confirm the Turning Buoy alignment and spacing. Alignment checks and adjustments are to be carried out as necessary throughout the day or at the request of the Umpires at the turn.

4.5. The Boat Marshalls stationed at the start line will monitor crews as they arrive and liaise with the Starters as to which crews are present to start for any race and may instruct crews (orally or by megaphone) where crews are required to marshal and when to approach the start line.

4.6. The Boat Marshalls stationed at the turns will monitor crews as they arrive for any events being started from the turns (e.g. Junior J14, J15 and J16 events) and will liaise with the Umpires as to which crews are present to start for any race and may instruct crews (orally or by megaphone) where crews are required to marshal and when to approach the turn line for starting.

4.7. Boat Marshalls can also provide additional information and confer with the Umpires in the event of an incident or clash as they maybe. closer to the incident.

5. BEACH MARSHALL

5.1. Where employed and the number of Officials available allows Beach Marshalls to help ensure the Regatta can run to time.

5.2. Beach Marshall can assist in any H&D Boat Safety Inspection required at random Regattas throughout the season.
5.3. The Beach Marshall shall inform the Clubs where it is safe to unload/load and locate their boats, equipment and tents, highlighting areas to be kept clear.
5.4. They shall inform crews in good time to go afloat for their race although responsibility for ensuring that crews are afloat and at the start line in good time for their race remains with the club. The Beach Marshall provides useful information on the regatta running to time etc. It is each Club's responsibility to react to the information provided by the Beach Marshall.
5.5. To assist in their role Beach Marshalls may wish to record on their programmes/documentation supplied when crews have boated in accordance with the 'dynamic' Programme of Events.
5.6. Beach Marshalls at times identify with Club Captains potential delays. They shall ensure Club Captains report to Regatta Control in every instance. Any delay should be noted and the initial impact assessed with Regatta Control. Any solution or change to minimise or alleviate any delay shall be only be taken with the approval with the Starters, Umpires & Judges as required.
5.7. Ensure any boat embarkation/disembarkation routes are adhered too and any Emergency Access routes remain clear.

6. SAFETY & WELFARE

6.1. It is the responsibility of all officials to keep a watch on the Regatta Safety and Welfare on the water or land and to report any issues or concerns to the Event Safety or Welfare Officer. Any concerns shall be detailed in the Officials Regatta Report along with action taken on the day. Additionally, Officials may suggest any improvement for the safety and welfare and smooth running of the Regatta.
6.2. All Officials shall ensure that all H&D and Regatta Safety Equipment along with any other items supplied to ensure the effective and safe running of the Regatta i.e. Radios, Life Jackets, Megaphones, Flags, & Safety Kits are to be returned to Regatta Control at the end of the days racing.

7. DOCUMENTATION

7.1. All Officials should keep an updated copy of their programme including any notes, race results, changes, incidents, safety concerns etc. This information can then be used to complete the online H&D Regatta Racing Official Report Form https://www.cognitoforms.com/Jump1/HDRegattaRacingOfficialsReportForm
7.2. Copies of the PDF version of the report form and the programme may become part of the Officials personal records or part of the Assistants Personal Portfolio Folder. In addition, the Official may at a later date be asked to or wish to review any incident that may be subject to further investigation.

7.3. Where time allows the Officials normally have a short post Regatta Washup Meeting. A Regatta Summary Report Form will be completed and forwarded to or handed to the H&D Secretary.

7.4. At the end of the season the reports are reviewed and a consolidated report is sent to each Regatta Secretary from the H&D Secretary for review and action where necessary.