Point Roberts Yacht Club Racing Program

Race Committee Instructions

Revised and updated October 2026. This version supersedes all versions prior to this date.

These instructions are a guideline for race committee conduct and are intended to complement, not replace the Sailing Instructions. The Sailing Instructions override this document in the event that there is a discrepancy between this document and the Sailing Instructions.

1. PRE-RACE DAY PREPARATION

- Arrange for crew. A minimum of three people are required to committee the race.
- Ensure that all Race Committee equipment is available. Starting shapes, marks and ground tackle, and code flags are in the large shed on PRYC's Club float on N-Dock. The Race Committee crate contains the course placards, a calculator, horn, scoring worksheets, a rule book, and protest forms. Check horns for sufficient propellant.
- Ensure that you will have two watches/timers on board.
- Touch base with the Fleet Captain for any last minute information.
- **Re-read this information and the race instructions**.
- Check the tides and the weather forecast so that you can take this into consideration when laying out a course.
- There are multiple anchor/rode combinations of different lengths, residing in matching buckets. Each anchor has a coloured zip tie and its' bucket has a matching coloured zip tie on its' handle. This makes it easy to select an appropriate tackle for any given mark location.
    - *It's important at the end of the day to ensure same colour buckets/anchors end up back together, organized and ready for next race day*.
        - Red -60'
        - Purple -70'
        - White -160'

2. RACE DAY PREPARATION

- **Be early.** Leave enough time to inflate and set the marks and be on station ready to display course information 15 minutes before the race start. It will take you approximately an hour to travel between the mark locations. You may enlist help from other racers.
- All VHF communications are on channel 68.
- A tentative course should be communicated at the skippers meeting at 09:15; either on the Club float, or over VHF for non-N Dock boats.

- **Lay out a course** that will give the racers a good variety of sailing, with the length of course matching the conditions. All yachts should be able to finish within the time limit specified in the race instructions. Leave yourself options -- a long course with many short legs allows the option of shortening at any mark if the conditions fade. You may never lengthen a course. The goal is to have a race length of 1.5-2 hours. The time limit allows you options if the wind gets light.
- **The race committee will start a second race if possible on Saturdays. No start will take place after 1300 hours on these days. The race committee will not abandon a race day until 1300 hours.**

Mark locations (see also Appendix B)

Although lat/long listings in Appendix B are listed, there's flexibility in the setting of non-permanent marks for given conditions.

- Mark 1 is set off the last house on the beach. See the Race Diagram, Appendix B.
- Mark 2 should be in 30' of water and off shore.
- Mark 3 should be in 90-120 feet of water. Use a sounder to confirm. Use the entire length of the 160' rode. This mark will drift if it is not set properly.
- Mark 5 (the international mark) should only be used if there is at least a 9 foot tide at the anticipated time of rounding(s) during the race (see Tsawwassen Tidal Station: https://tides.gc.ca/en/stations/7590/?unit=ft). Mark 5a is available as a deeper water alternative.
  - Mark 5a is set SSW to Mark 5. It allows for both a slightly shorter (approx. 0.4NM SSW of Mark 5) course, is set deeper, and avoids the shore-side shallows of Mark 5 for low tide use.
- If it is impossible to set a beat with regular mark positions, you may use Mark A as one end of the starting line.
- Mark Y may be used to create a proper length course and this mark may be placed where a defined mark is unsatisfactory for position or course length.

- **Check the latest weather forecast, tide information, etc.** If weather is severe, or you have boat problems and a boat based start is not possible, see the Beach Start procedures in the Race Instructions.
- **Set a starting line** that is long enough for all boats (approx. 1½ times the sum of the fleets length). This is only a guide to prevent the line being too short. The line should be square to the wind. Allow enough room on either side of the line for boats to maneuver prior to the start. If possible the committee boat should always be on the starboard end of the line. It should be rare to be on the port end of the start line.
- Ensure that the Start Line is square to the wind, and that there is not a favoured end to the start line. The position of the committee boat may be adjusted to change the alignment of the start line at any time prior to the 5-minute Preparatory Signal. Any change to the alignment of the start line after the Preparatory Signal requires a postponement of the start.
- If you have no option but to set an off-wind start line, set it square to the course to the first mark. Mark A should allow you the opportunity to set a windward start.

- Clearly identify the point on your vessel where you will be sighting the line; from the **mast for sailboats**, or from a point identified by hanging a red life jacket or flag on the side for powerboats.
- You may adjust the position of the line only until you issue the first 5-minute warning
- If a separate Starting and finishing line is in use, the start line will be from the RC boat to the Orange tetrahedron. The finish line will be from the RC boat to the yellow ball. The Yellow Ball will always be the “A” mark if used. All Lap times will be between the A mark and the committee boat if used.

3. PRE-START PROCEDURE

- **Assign duties among the crew. One person should be recorder and shape raiser, another should be timer, and another as horn blower and to sight the line to watch for any boats over early.**
- Where possible, base start times on GPS time.
- Ensure that timers are synchronized.
- Have boats racing, check in (preferably by sailing past RC stern, or optionally by VHF). Record the boats that are preparing to race.
- Broadcast course over VHF 15 minutes prior to race start.
- Ensure that the **course placards are displayed 5-10 minutes prior to the first 5 minute warning**. Placards should be placed to the inside of the start line (typically port-side). If conditions require a last-minute change of course, Committee may change the placards at any time prior to the 5-minute warning. Any change after the 5-minute warning requires a postponement of the start.
- Verify that your marks are in proper position. Draw a course diagram so you can ensure you have the correct placards, in order, and boats can finish correctly. Strive to use port roundings as much as possible. If you are having difficulty understanding the course you have set then this is normally an indication there may be some confusion in the fleet.
- Organize code flags that may be necessary after the start, postponement, general recall, individual recall, abandonment and one minute rule.

- **If the One Minute Rule is in effect during the starting sequence raise the code flag Z:**

- **If you need to communicate with all the racers raise the Come within Hail (code flag L) flag:**

- You have an option of giving verbal instructions ONLY when you raise the Come within Hail. Except when this flag is flown, the Race Committee should not give verbal information to any competitors.

- **If any of the above conditions are not ready, postpone the start of the race by raising the Postponement Flag** (red and white striped flag) with one sound signal:

- When ready to continue, lower the postponement flag with one sound signal 1 minute before the 5-minute warning.

4. START PROCEDURE

Approximately 6 minutes prior to the start

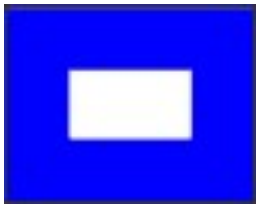
- Sound the horn with several short blasts to capture the attention of the fleet. If the start is from shore, ensure your horn blasts are transmitted on the radio. If you are trying to get the fleet together for the start you may use the horns to get their attention. But if you are not going to continue the sequences then go to postponement.
- You may combine starts for divisions, or start all divisions together; otherwise by default the Sailing Instructions specify a reverse order start by division. If you combine starts, display both or all division flags simultaneously.
- Prepare the Division flags, they will normally start in this order:
  - Division 3: GREEN
  - Division 2: WHITE
  - Division 1: RED

5 minutes prior to the start

- Prepare to raise the **Division flag.** The timer should count down, 10, 9, 8. . . . .2, 1, NOW at which point the division flag goes up and a single horn is sounded.

4 minutes prior to the start

- Prepare to raise the **Preparatory Signal Flag - Code Flag P.**
- The timer should count down, 10, 9, 8. . . . .2, 1, NOW at which point the Code Flag P goes up and a single horn is sounded.



1 minute prior to the start

- Prepare to lower the Code Flag P.

- The timer should count down, 10, 9, 8. . . . .2, 1, NOW at which point the Code Flag P comes down and a single horn is sounded.

At the start

- Prepare to lower the Div Flag.
- The timer should count down, 10, 9, 8. . . . .2, 1, NOW at which point a single horn is sounded.
- If there are two or three starts, then this is the 5 minute signal for the second start and the Division flag is lowered and the next one is raised immediately. The process continues for the second and third divisions as described above.

5. OVER EARLY

- If boats that are over early can be identified, the spotter should raise the **Individual Recall flag**, and sound 1 horn.
- Hail boats that are over early so they can restart if possible. When all premature starters have restarted, the individual recall flag is lowered or the next race in the sequence starts.
- Boats failing to start correctly will not be given a horn at the finish. Take their time and record what happened and report to the Fleet Captain upon completion of your duties.

• 6. GENERAL RECALL

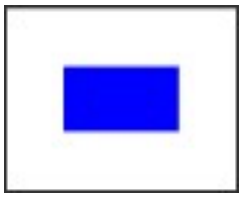
- In the event that a large number of boats are over early and it is impossible to identify the offending boats, then raise the **General Recall Flag** and issue two sound blasts.
- When all boats have returned, lower the General Recall (with one sound signal) one minute before a new Preparatory Signal for the offending division (5 minute Preparatory).
- Perform a general recall if the race committee makes any errors in the starting sequence.

7. DURING THE RACE

- Record the start time on the Scoring Worksheet.
- Monitor race progress and consider options for shortening the course if it is necessary. Take interim times where possible in elapsed time. Remember to take into account the different start times of each division.
- Remember that you cannot speak with the competitor.

- If necessary reposition the committee boat at the finish line of the course and raise the BLUE shape to signify that you are on station at the finish.
- Do not respond to inquiries by participating boats unless they involve a safety or emergency.

8. SHORTEN COURSE



- If it becomes obvious that boats will not finish in the time limit of the race, you should shorten course by raising the **Shortened Course Flag:**
- The course may be shortened at any mark of the course by relocating the committee boat, flying the shortened course flag and issuing two sound signals when the lead boats approach the finish line.

9. THE FINISH

- A boat which does not cross the finish line in the direction from the last mark is not given a finishing signal, and is scored DNF. If the boat realizes her error, and crosses the line in the right direction, a finishing signal can be given. Remember that you cannot speak with the competitor. If a boat fails to sail the course correctly she will not be given a finish signal.

- If the RC witnesses a rule infraction she shall protest the boat committing the rule infraction as soon as it is apparent that no other competitor is protesting the infraction. For this reason RC is allowed a slightly delayed notice of intent to protest. Every effort must still be made to inform the protested boat as soon as possible by all available means of the protest. RC will conspicuously fly a protest flag in accordance with RRS 60.1 and 60.2.

- The timer calls the time, the spotter gives the finish signal (one horn) as the first part of the boat to crosses the finish line in its normal position for that point of sail, and the recorder notes the finish time on the score worksheet. A boat is still racing till it has cleared the finish line.
- Record any indications of intent to protest, and note whether a protest flag is displayed on the boat when she finishes.

10. POST RACE CLEANUP

- Retrieve marks -- this job can be assigned to the first boats finishing, but you are responsible to see that all of the gear is returned to the dock box on the dinghy dock.

- Notify the Fleet Captain of any missing or broken gear.
- Return the Scoring Worksheet to the Fleet Captain or a member of the race organizing committee.

11. NOTES

Courses:

- The thing to remember is setting a course is to leave you options. You need a course that considers and addresses the following factors.

Fair for the boats racing.

- There is a handicap range of over 100 seconds per mile in the fleet. A course that has a a variety of legs -- windward, leeward, and reaching -- will help even out the fleet. Courses that are all reaching legs tend to end up with boats with a longer waterline length leading a pack around the course, and there is not much opportunity for tactical decisions to be made by the racers. Courses that are all windward/leeward legs favour the lighter boats with higher pointing angles. The objective of the Race Committee is to have every crew member on every boat going back to the clubhouse thinking “I know where that 30 seconds went, and I know how to get it back next week!”.

A challenge to the crews.

- Courses that offer more opportunity for tactical decisions -- you want each crew asking questions like “Do we go out and catch the current or stay inshore for the wind?” Mark roundings that call for challenging sail changes to keep up boat speed add to the excitement of the race.

A match for the conditions.

- Each crew is dedicated to spending the Saturday on the water. A shorter course that only takes an hour to complete, or a longer one that mainly involves drifting with the tide does not satisfy the racing appetite. See the time and distance chart in Appendix A to help you decide on a proper length of course. The goal is to have a 1.5-2 hour race.

Interaction between boats.

- This relates to the fairness, but extends to the situations that will be encountered during a close race -- particularly at mark roundings. Avoid situations, which can result in confusion. If the same mark rounding is used on several occasions during the race, ensure that the instructions call for the same direction of rounding. Consider the conditions that can occur when to boats approach a mark. Who will have rights? How much room is there around the mark (particularly the ones closer to shore) for maneuvering?

- Bearing this in mind, set a course, which attempts to meet all of the conditions above. Remember -- give yourself options! You can always shorten a course, but only at a mark!
- Courses that have been used over the past few years are available from the Fleet Captain.

Appendix A

The distance boats can travel per hour taken from the slowest boat in each division:

Wind	Div 1	Div 2	Div 3
5 knots	2.25	2	1.8
10 knots	4.5	4.3	3.65
20 knots	6.7	5.4	5.0

This would mean that in a 2 hour race, the course should be 8 miles for Div 2 in 10 knots of wind from the south east, an example course could be:

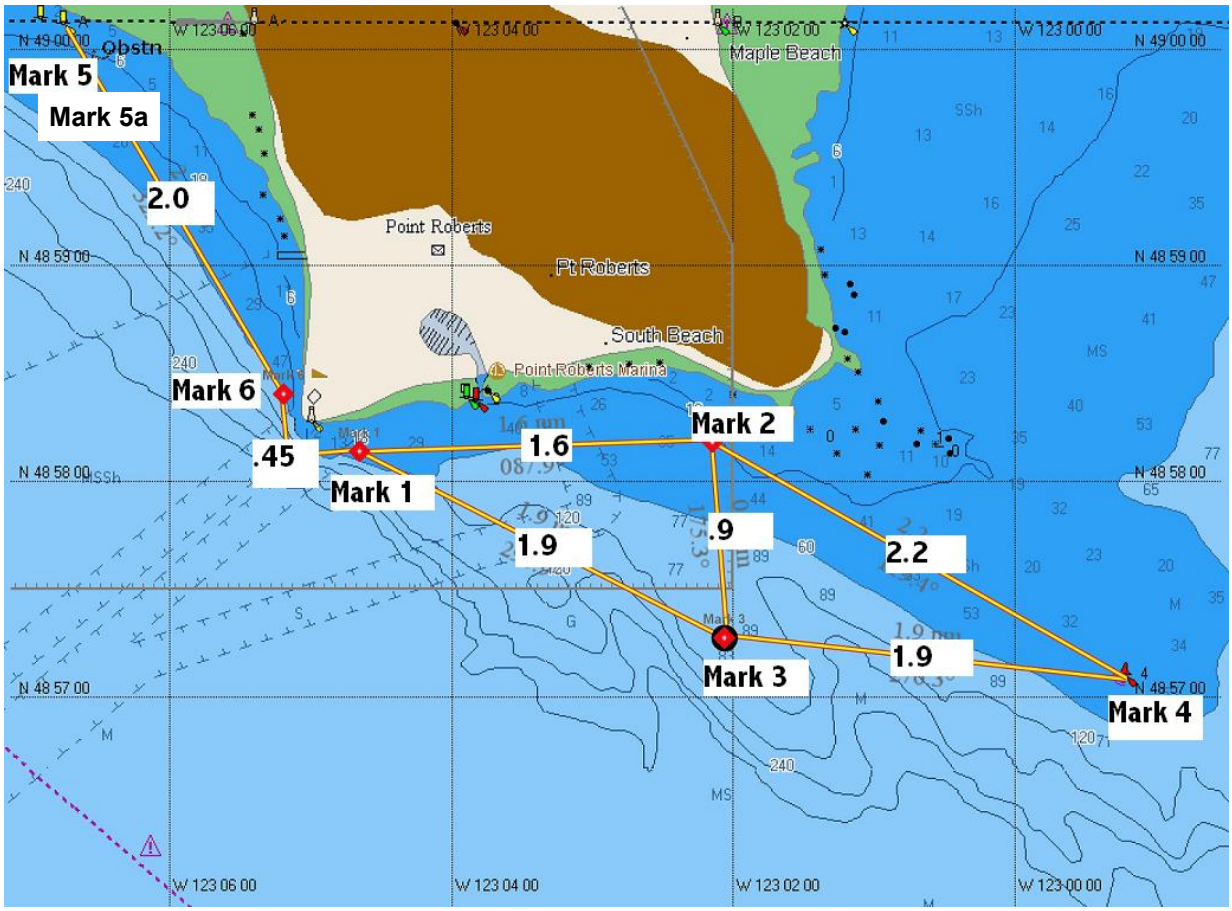
Start from Mark 1
Div 2: 3,1, x2 with numbers in red for a Port rounding.

It's ok to send Div 1 and 2 on the same course as div 3, but you should consider how long the course is.

Appendix B

1. Be advised that mark positions provided on course diagrams are approximate positions only, and may not be used for purposes of protest or navigation. Mark positioning is ultimately completed at the discretion of the Race Committee.

2. Racing Marks are indicated on the diagram below.
   - Mark 1: Non Permanent Racing Buoy, Approximate position 48º 58'08" N, 123º04'39" W
   - Mark 2: Non Permanent Racing Buoy, Approximate position 48º 58'11" N, 123º02'09" W
   - Mark 3: Non Permanent or Seasonal Racing Buoy, Approximate position 48º 57'16"N, 123º02' 04" W
   - Mark 4: Point Roberts Bell Buoy, Approximate position 48º 57'31" N, 123º01' 08" W
   - Mark 5: International marker, located approx. Approximate position 49º 00'07" N, 123º06'44" W
   - Mark 5a: SSW of Mark 5. Non Permanent or Seasonal Racing Buoy, Approximate position 48°59'45" N, 123°06'31" W
   - Mark 6: Non Permanent Racing Buoy, Approximate position 48º 58' 24" N, 123º05' 11" W

Mark 5a

- Mark A: Non Permanent Racing Buoy, Positioned in the vicinity of the Race Committee at the Start Line. Mark A is an Orange ball.
- "/" Mark: Non Permanent Racing Buoy, Positioned opposite of the Race Committee at the Start Line. "/" is an Orange ball.
- Mark Y: Non permanent Racing Buoy, Positioned at the discretion of the Race Committee to provide a shorter course on the weather beat for designated divisions. Mark Y is a Yellow tetrahedron.