**Objective**

The purpose of these notes is to enable members who have never run a race to appreciate that it is not mystical or rocket science. Race Officer (RO) duties are fairly straightforward, there is a procedure to follow, and these guidance notes should help to keep it fairly simple. Numerus members have requested this training via the annual blue forms, so this session is geared to potential first time ROs for normal club races organised on Weekends or on Wednesday evenings.

Note that for races with larger fleets, open meetings and regatta weeks etc. experienced race officers shall be selected and so such events are beyond the scope of these notes.

These notes should be self-explanatory and can be presented at training sessions held at the club or read independently. The supporting diagrams are attached for information.

Once a member is familiar with the RO procedure in theory, then practical experience on Andromeda should follow as an assistant RO to see how it is done and gain knowledge and familiarization to be able to run races next year.

Please note that Committee Boat driving and use of Club VHF radios are covered in separate training sessions.

**Course setting**

Complete setting the course in the Club House an hour before race time

Check wind direction strength and visibility, if gusting more than force 5 cancel the race, also need to be able to clearly see boats on the other side of the estuary.

Don’t use the navigation buoys and avoid setting marks in the navigation channel. For simple life avoid setting courses in adventurous parts of the estuary, so initially don’t cross the ferry transit, or enter into the ski area or use the outer bay area etc.

Check that rescue boats and crews are in preparation for the race, identify the lead rescue boat driver and note which boat for prime radio contact.

Convention encourages the first leg to windward as this would be a beat which tends to spread out the fleet before approaching the first mark. Running and reaching starts are also OK, but can be tricky particularly if down tide in light airs.

The windward mark is best if set to port (to minimise the risk of collision and protests), and use a yellow buoy for the first mark. Use geographical names for marks to indicate the approximate location, letters or numbers are more appropriate when out at sea where there are few landmarks.

Typical small courses are triangle, square, trapezium, figure of eight, sausage & triangle etc. Specify through the line on each lap. Set plenty of laps for a race of about one hours duration. Note that the race can be shortened but not lengthened.

Put out sign-on sheets and pens, course to be written up on the board in the crew room.

**Andromeda**

Check starter’s kit in the yellow box, it should contain: Time sheets & Pens, several Stopwatches, also take Flags, Binoculars, VHF Radio, and Andromeda ignition key.

Once afloat on Andromeda drop anchor, a good place is at the starboard end of the start line. Then Communicate with the rescue boats over the radio to position the buoys.

Set the start line (flag) across the wind, a good bit of port bias at the pin end is useful as this can help to spread the fleet along the line. No need to fuss excessively over the precise location of the start line or buoys as starting reasonably on time is more important.

When the course is all set give the “on station” signal (hoot and hoist the orange flag)

**Race Control**

Starting sequence for 2019 onwards (signals at 5, 4, 1, 0 minutes), use several stop watches!

For Wednesday and Week-End races there are normally only one or two starts in the sequence as shown in the sailing programme, handicap fleet followed by shrimpers (or all in one handicap fleet)

5 min Class flag up - one hoot (general Handicap V, Shrimpers W)

4 min Preparatory flag P up – one hoot

1 min Preparatory flag down – Whistle

Start Class Flag down – one hoot, Next class flag up for a repeat 5,4,1,start sequence

During the race record each boat completing a lap and the time taken

Shortened course S flag up – Two hoots normally signalled when the leading boat commences the final beat. Finishing one hoot when each boat crosses the finish line, note the elapsed time.

Individual Recalls X flag up – one hoot, keep flag up for a minute, if the offenders do not return and restart then disqualify.

General Recall First Substitute flag up – two hoots, remove when boats return to starting area – one hoot, then in multiple starts the recalled fleet goes to the back of the queue.

Race postponed hoist Answering Pennant – two hoots, when lowered – one hoot then commence start sequence I min later

Race Abandoned hoist N flag – Three hoots

**Race Time record**

Complete the result sheet with finished elapsed times, showing number of laps for “Scottish Handicaps”. Note on the timing sheet whether 5 or 10 minutes are to be deducted to reveal the race durations. Hand the time record to the club of entry on the computer.

Finally check that all boats have signed off or are accounted for safely ashore.