Downs Sailing Club

Operational Policy

This policy to be read in conjunction with the Club Rules, the club programme of events, the list of officers duties, and information on the club website at www.downssailingclub.co.uk

Club Organisation

General Introduction

Downs SC is a sea based club that has been operating from its present location of the Green, Walmer, for over 75 years. It is a member's run club with a Club Coach & staff for cleaning. It is open to all and has a set of club rules outlining the structure and management of the club. The management is in the hands of the Executive Committee with an elected Commodore in post for a two year term. The sailing & racing programmes are organised by the Sailing Committee that reports to the Executive Committee. Training is planned and organised by the Training Committee that is also responsible to the Executive Committee.

Who is who

The main Executive Committee consisting of Commodore and 11 other officers are listed in the club programme and is also displayed on the club wall to the left of the bar. The Sailing Committee & Training Committee are also in the club programme. The Training Committee also involves Martyn Styles as Training Centre Principal, Chris Shelton as Chief Sailing Instructor, Chris Danican as Chief Power-boat Instructor, and Ian Sheppard as the Training Co-ordinator. The Chief Racing Coach is Simon Cory, John Cass is Boson, and John Sharvill is Chief First Aid Instructor.

Duty Officers

Whenever the club is open there is a rota of Duty Officers. This will include an Executive Officer (EO) who is in overall charge, Patrol Boat helm(s) and crew(s), a Race Officer, an Assistant Race Officer, a Lead Canteen person and an Assistant Canteen person. Decisions about going afloat will be made by these Officers in conjunction with the Sailing Committee members available on the day for club racing events and by the senior Instructor / Coach for Training activities.

The specific duties & responsibilities for each club officer and the above roles are in the Annual Club Programme booklet.

Health and safety - see RA 1-11

Prior to any activity afloat, there will be a “huddle” on the beach-head including the Executive officer for Racing or the senior Instructor / Coach for Training, together with other senior club personnel and the patrol boat skippers to consider the conditions on the day and assess any risks for the planned activity. The outcomes of this discussion will be recorded on the DSC Decision to Sail and Signing on Sheet.

A general risk assessment of the club & its activities is made annually also prior to special events where any hazards are highlighted and where possible removed. Those hazards that remain are subjected to an action plan to reduce the risks. There is a monthly health and safety inspection reported to the Executive Committee.

Emergency Plan

The club has an Major Incident Plan kept on the bridge and on the DSC Website . The club policy is for the Duty Officers on the bridge to alert the Coastguard and Emergency services by phone. A major incident is to be declared in the case of any injury likely to need outside assistance and any on the water problem likely to need support. For the duty officers on the bridge they need to be aware of the location of the Major Incident file and the contents of action cards 1 and 2. Their main role is to contact the Emergency Services and call for help from experienced club members initially via the day’s Executive officer for club racing or the senior Instructor / Coach for training events. Annual training takes place with the local branch of the RNLI & there is close liaison with the HM Coastguard at the MRC, Langdon Battery, Dover.

Child Protection / Safeguarding

The club has a Safeguarding Policy & Guidelines (see club website) which is inline with the RYA guidance for Affiliated Clubs and Training Centres. Those members working closely with children other than their own, are requested to have a DBS check. All senior instructors have checks and the DSC Commodore is the clubs designated Child Welfare Officer together with Sara Sheppard. The club has a photograph policy regarding the taking and use of photographs at the club and during events. The club aims to be family centred and though individual Cadet members are welcome most events where children are present their parents are also present.

Club boat hire

Club boats are used for training. They are also available for hire by club members. To hire a club boat a member must have demonstrated competence and skill to use the boat in the prevailing conditions. There is a small charge for boat hire in non training events. The boats are maintained by the Training Committee.

Club boats may be hired online via the Club Dutyman system and any damage to the boats reported online by the Club Boats QR code which is displayed on the main club noticeboard and with the Club boats section of the DSC website

First aid - see RA 10

First aid kits are kept in all the patrol boats. There is also a first aid kit mounted in the hall of the club. A list of first aid certificate holders is displayed on the notice board beside the bridge stairs and RYA First Aid training is available to all members. For open meetings there is a designated duty First Aider. The accident book is situated in the rack at the base of the bridge stairs and should be filled in following any accident or injury - “near misses” should also be included.

Disability

The club has a no discrimination policy (see Club Rules 5.1). We welcome all sailors whatever their ability or disability. The club has disabled changing and toilet facilities. A specific risk assessment is needed for those with disability to ensure the club can provide safe access to the sport. The topography of the Club with a steep shingle beach and an unprotected shoreline make reasonable adaptation difficult for those with severe mobility problems. Each person is assessed on their individual needs, disability and strengths.

Food hygiene - see RA 1

The club runs a small galley staffed by volunteers under the control of the House Committee. The club runs nationally accredited Food Hygiene Certificate courses and the canteen is inspected by the local authority.

Insurance

The club has an insurance policy appropriate for its activities. This is overseen by the Club Secretary

Records

A record of training will be maintained. All RYA recognised qualifications for training will be kept by the Principal / Training Committee. A record is kept of those who have seen and understand the club Operational Policy documents.

Affiliations

The club is affiliated to the RYA, “KSSA - supporting youth sailing in Kent” and to Kent Youth and Community Service. It has close working connections with the RNLI and HM Coastguard.

Preparations Ashore

Beach Winches - see RA 6

Downs SC is fortunate to have 4 electric beach winches.

Key points in their operation are - have a winch operator and a lookout who can see the boat being winched and be able to communicate with the winch operator - use the winch operation signals displayed on the winch locker box - keep people away from the stern of boats being winched up steep slopes - ensure that the noticeboards are deployed alerting the general beach strolling public to the winching operations

Safety cover - see RA 7 & RA 11

The club operates a fleet of 4 rigid inflatable patrol boats. No dinghies shall go afloat until the patrol boat is on the water, and the patrol boat(s) remain(s) afloat until all sailing boats are ashore. All people afloat must wear appropriate buoyancy and protective clothing. The number of patrol boats afloat is determined by the number of boats sailing, the type of activity and the weather. On the day this decision is made by the duty Executive Officer for club racing and by the senior Instructor / Coach for training events in consultation with the Race Officer and the patrol boat skipper(s). The Club patrol boats are all equipped with VHF radios and are in communication with the 'bridge' (race box) on channel 37 (M1) which is also manned whenever the club is operating. The boats undergo professional servicing annually and the engines are replaced on a rolling programme.

Fuel - see RA 4

We are fortunate that generally DSC runs 4 stroke engines without the need for petrol & oil mixing. The petrol is stored in the fuel locker and fuel cans removed from all boats before the boathouses are locked. Refilling of any fuel cans is to be undertaken by senior staff members.

Club boats - see RA 8

The club owns six Topper dinghies with full and training rigs. A Dart 16 with spinnaker, three Laser 2000s, two Hartley 12's, one Feva and two Lasers. The club Dart 16 and the Laser 2000's must only be sailed with mast-head flotation to prevent total inversion after capsize when involved in basic instruction.

Action Afloat

Sailing area - see RA 2

This is to the south of Deal pier, to the north of Walmer castle and inshore of the Deal Bank buoy. Sailing outside this area for organised events is pre-planned and a specific risk assessment made for the event with extra safety cover laid on. In summer months the club has 3 fixed yellow marks that can further define areas for use.

Launching & Recovery - see RA 2

The likely conditions on the waters edge should be carefully considered by the Executive Officer or the senior Instructor / Coach together with the Duty Team before the agreement to sail is made. See the Decision to Sail & Sign-on Sheet a supply of which can be found in the DSC Race box

Key points for uneventful beach-work should be - One boat at a time - Help onshore ready to assist - Avoid getting people directly between boat & beach and possibly trapped in rough conditions

Activity afloat

The DSC organised activity afloat - guided by the “Event Briefing Notes” at the end of this document - takes one of four forms :-

- **Recreational sailing & racing opportunities** are offered throughout the year. These events are managed by the Sailing Committee and operated by qualified and / or experienced members. Safety cover is always provided and arranged to suit the conditions on the day with a ratio around 1:10 / 1:15 of RIBs to dinghies afloat.

- **DSC Training & Development events** are organised throughout the main sailing season. These structured events are managed by the Training Committee and where available follow the RYA recommendations for equipment, staff qualifications and safety cover. The events cover all aspects of club life and make use of experienced members, our qualified coaches & instructors, or invited specialists from outside of DSC. Additionally, the Friday Sailing and support from the DSC Club Coach(s) are key facilities that allow members to practice and develop.

- **RYA Courses and qualifications** - Members who hold RYA Log Books are encouraged to manage their own development throughout the year in conjunction with the qualified DSC coaches & instructors and the Training Centre Principal. There will also be formal structured RYA Courses managed by the Training Committee and delivered by RYA qualified staff. For these events, equipment, qualifications and safety cover, RYA recommendations are followed.

- **Developing Racing Skills -** At DSC this takes a number of forms
  - RYA Racing Courses - For these events; equipment, instructor / coach qualifications and safety cover; RYA recommendations are followed.
  - Formal Race Coaching - We usually operate with a minimum of 1:6 RIBs to dinghies afloat but we strive for a minimum of two RIBs afloat to allow for effective race management without compromising the coaching. Such sessions would be lead by qualified Racing Coaches
  - Personal Race Training - we encourage the more experienced sailors to self manage sessions with a minimum of two sailors afloat, provided they have appointed a shore-based observer.
  - In-Race Coaching Support - when there are Rookie racers we offer an additional support boat staffed by experienced racers or Racing Coaches or Racing Instructors to guide and assist the Rookie Racers

Capsize and Entrapment - see RA 8

All patrol boat crew need to be aware of the danger of entrapment, especially the awareness of lack of air pockets in many boats. The aim should be to prevent entrapment by provision of mast head flotation where applicable. In the event of a capsize immediate identification of the boats crew should be made by the patrol boat and the bridge look-out. Patrol boats should proceed to the capsized boat at best speed no matter what the perceived skill level of the sailors. In the event of inversion the patrol boat crew should aim to immediately right the boat by getting on the centreboard in the standard way. In some circumstances lifting the bow may also be considered (other techniques are available – see RYA Safety Boat Course material). Any trouble whatsoever in this potentially lethal scenario should result in immediate call for help.

DSC Executive Committee 2007 - reviewed ‘25

“Event” Briefing Notes

For events at DSC from informal training ashore to major events on the water there will be a Briefing. This worksheet will be for the ‘staff’ running the event - Exec Officer or the senior Instructor / Coach or Event Organiser

The ‘On the Day’ Briefing notes could include:-

- Arrival early with weather reports.

- Initial site observation looking for any safety issues.

- Unlock the building - shut off the alarm - Equipment preparation
- Staff Meeting/briefing -
    - Organisational staff --- especially Safety watch / Bridge operation - Helpers
    - Expected participants - numbers and skill level - Health & Safety issues for individuals - cold, sun, dehydration.
    - Site Safety issues
    - Outline programme - weather and tide related - Decision to Sail & Sign on Sheet
    - Equipment check - rigs / reefing / mast head floats / harnesses
    - Confirmation of the suitability of all arrangements and conditions to proceed with the planned programme
    - Confirm Emergency procedures process - (liaison with HM Coastguard)
- Final preparation --- staff / equipment inc patrol boat / radio checks.
- Participants Reception --- contact details / in loco parentis, medical update, (money)
- Participants Event briefing --- general.
    - Site security including valuables - Local hazards including vehicles / cycle path.
    - Clothing & personal buoyancy - Medical matters esp First Aid contact inc cold, sun, dehydration
    - Weather & Tide for the day - Beach / foreshore including winches and fishermen - Launching and recovery advice.
- Activity / Coaching groups defined / allocated.
- Activity briefing including operational area – beach and sailing limits.
- Final end of day debrief arrangements.
- Closedown, staff day’s programme review, damage reports, Lock-up