DOWNS SAILING CLUB

SAILING INSTRUCTIONS

CLUB RACING (revision March 2026)

1.0 RULES

Racing shall take place under the World Sailing Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS) 2025 – 2028), the prescriptions of the RYA, these Sailing Instructions and the appropriate Class Rules.

2.0 CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

2.1 Safety

The safety of a boat and her entire management, including insurance, shall be the sole responsibility of the owner/ competitor racing the boat who must ensure that the boat and crew are adequate to face the conditions that may arise during the race. Neither the establishment of these sailing instructions nor the inspection of the boat under these conditions in any way limits or reduces the absolute responsibility of the owner/competitor for his crew, his boat and the management thereof. The race organisers shall not be responsible for any loss damage, death or personal injury howsoever caused by the owner / competitor, his skipper or crew as a result of their taking part in thet.e race or races. Moreover, every owner / competitor warrants the suitability of his boat for the race or races.

Boats shall not proceed on to the water in order to race until rescue facilities are available and shall return to shore before those facilities are withdrawn. Competitors shall obey the instructions of rescue boat crews and abandon boats if necessary.

2.2 Boats and Competitors in Difficulty

When the race committee considers that a boat or competitor is in difficulty it may instruct the boat or competitor to accept outside help, retire or sail ashore.

2.3 Outside Help

When a competitor has been recovered from the water and no significant advantage has been gained by this action the competitor may continue racing. This instruction forms an addendum (e) to RRS 41 (Outside Help)

2.4 Eligibility to Win Trophies

The eligibility of club members to win Trophies for Club Racing events is set out in the Club Rules.

2.5 Measurement or Rating Certificate

Competing boats shall comply with their current class rules and documentary evidence of compliance may be required to be presented to the Sailing Committee prior to presentation of prizes for any Club Racing event or series of races.

2.6 Distinguishing Numbers

Boats shall display class boat number on their sail. Changes to sail numbers are at the discretion of the Race Officer.

2.7 Personal Buoyancy

Each competitor shall wear a personal flotation device except briefly while changing or adjusting clothing or personal equipment. Wet suits and dry suits are not personal flotation devices (RRS 40.1).

2.8 Safety Log / Sign on Sheet

Competitors must indicate their intention to race by entering the required details on the Safety Log / Sign on Sheet provided adjacent to the course board. Any boat which fails to complete the Safety Log / Sign on Sheet will be penalised by a requirement to pay a (minimum) £5.00 fine to the RNLI provided that the OOD records them as a starter. **Note:** Any boat that fails to "sign on" and is subsequently not recognised, as a starter by the OOD will not be entitled to redress.

2.9 Signing Off / Declaration

Signing off / Declaration is not required.

When boats cross the finish line at the end of each race they are assumed to have completed the race within the Racing Rules of Sailing and should then proceed ashore before rescue facilities are withdrawn. Boats retiring for any reason should inform the race officer as soon as possible.

3.0 NOTICES TO COMPETITORS

Notices to competitors will be posted on the official notice board, which is positioned, adjacent to the entrance to the male changing room. Additional race information may also be written on the course board.

4.0 CHANGES IN SAILING INSTRUCTIONS

Changes in sailing instructions will be posted on the Official Notice board at least 30 minutes prior to the advertised start time of the race or races concerned and will be indicated by displaying international code flag "L" from the Club Flagpole. Any major revision of these Club Sailing instructions or changes to the sailing fixtures contained in DSC Programme of Events document will be posted on the Official Notice Board in good time but at least one week prior to the date of the race or event in question.

5.0 THE COURSE

Courses will be displayed on the Course Board. Diagrams indicate the number and description of marks together with the order of rounding. Distances and angles between marks are approximate only.

6.0 THE START

6.1 Start Times

Start times are as published in DSC Programme of Events booklet. Amendments to start times will be posted on the Official Notice Board at least one week prior to the date of the event in question.

6.2 Start Line

The Start Line is defined as the extension of an imaginary line drawn through the Club Flagpole and a moveable transit pole situated on the beach, the outer limit of the line being defined by a marker buoy or "Distance Mark". The Distance Mark may not necessarily coincide with the line.

6.3 Starting Procedure (Pursuit Races)

Races will be started using the Electronic Countdown Display Board together with sound signals, each yacht starting at the display of its allotted number. The Electronic Countdown Display Board will be the only visual signal used for starting Pursuit races. Sound signals will be made at 10, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 minutes etc. whilst boats are starting. Times shall be taken from the visual signals; the failure of a sound signal shall be disregarded. To assist the race officers, competitors are requested to avoid crossing the start line in either direction prior to their allocated start time.

6.4 Starting Procedure (Handicap Races)

Handicap races will be started by using RRS rule 26 with the following changes:

a) Warning and preparatory signals for each class will be as per Club S.I. No. 6.5
b) When two starts are scheduled, the warning signal for the second start will be 4 minutes after the warning signal for the first.

6.5 Starting Signals

Except in the case of equipment or power failure, coloured lights will be used instead of code flags for starting signals.

Class	WARNING SIGNAL	PREPARATORY SIGNAL	Flag
General handicap class	Red	Red	E

All DSC club races are single start with one set of results published, were Series are split to Fast and Slow Handicap these results and overall series results will be published online.

7.0 INDIVIDUAL RECALL

7.1 Pursuit Races

Recall signals will not be made for Pursuit races. Any boat which starts before its allocated start time and which does not return to re-start correctly will be deemed to finish one lap behind its actual finishing position on the water. This changes RRS 29.1

7.2 Handicap Races

Premature starters will be warned by displaying Code flag "X", accompanied by a sound signal. Boats which fail to return to re-cross the start line will be docked one lap when calculating the results. This replaces RRS 29.1.

8.0 GENERAL RECALL

A General Recall will be warned by displaying Code Flag 1st Substitute, accompanied by two sound signals.
(Note: If there is a General Recall for the first class of a two class start sequence, then the 2nd class waits and does not start until the first class has started correctly).

9.0 ABANDONMENT

If it is decided to abandon the race, either flag "N", "N over H" or "N over A" will be flown and three sound signals will be made. If flags "N over H" or "N over A" are displayed all boats must proceed ashore immediately and report to the Race Officer.

10.0 THE FINISH

10.1 Finish Line

The finishing line is defined as an imaginary line drawn between the Club Flagpole and the Distance Mark.

10.2 Shortening Course

Shortening course for a class will be signalled by displaying the combination of Code Flag S and the warning signal light of that class accompanied by two sound signals.
Boats will finish when they next cross the lapping/finish line. A lap which has been started, must be completed.
This changes RRS Race Signals.

10.3 Finishing Procedure (General Handicap races)

Rolling finishes will be used.
The Finishing Procedure will be as per the Shortening Course procedure (Club SI 10.2).
The Race Officer will commence the finishing procedure after the approximate advertised race duration. The Race Officer will also aim to arrange where possible, that boats of the same class complete equal numbers of laps and that the whole fleet finishes within the shortest possible time span.

10.4 Finishing Procedure (Pursuit Races)

At 2 minutes before the advertised race duration has been reached Flag “S” will be raised by the Race box followed by two sound signals to warn competitors of imminent finish. The method of finishing will be (a) Blue flag raised by the race box at advertised race duration, all competitors complete current lap and finish on club line OR (b) Blue flag raised by patrol boat at advertised race duration which has followed the leading boat throughout the race; the patrol boat motors back through the fleet noting positions of competitors. In the spirit of fair sailing and sportsmanship all boats upon reaching advertised race duration should try to maintain their current position in the fleet until finished by (a) or (b). Notice of method of finish will be written on the course board prior to race. (This changes RRS 32)

11.0 RACE DURATION

General Handicap Races – Approximately 60 minutes.
Pursuit Races – 75 minutes.
Other races – As advertised.

12.0 TIME LIMITS

The time limit will be the nominal race duration plus 30 minutes. If one boat finishes within the time limit then all other boats finishing within 45 minutes after this boat’s finishing time, will be scored. If no boats finish within the time limit the race will be abandoned. This changes RRS 35.

All Pursuit races will be completed 45 minutes after the advertised race duration. When a significant number of boats have not received a finishing position, the result of the race will be referred to the Sailing Committee for a decision on its validity.

13.0 ALTERNATIVE PENALTIES

Touching a mark – As per RRS 31, 44.1 and 44.2(One turn including one tack and one gybe).
All other infringements – As per RRS 44.1 and 44.2 (Two turns including two tacks and two gybes).
A boat which is witnessed by the race organisation to have not "Sail The Course" shall be scored NSC by the race committee without hearing. The competitor in question at completion of race can also notify the race committee of infringement and be scored accordingly. This is in addition to Appendix A5.1 of RRS.

14.0 SCORING

14.1 Scoring System

The Low Point scoring system, RRS Appendix A4.1, will apply. Scoring for all club series races will be in accordance with RRS A10, i.e. DNS, DNF, RET, DSQ or NSC boats shall be scored points for the finishing place one more than the number of boats entered in that race. Non-entered boats (DNC) will be awarded points equal to the largest number of entries plus one in any one race in the series. This changes RRS A10.

14.2 Average Points for Duties

Each helmsman who performs an OOD / Patrol Boat / Galley duty in lieu of a race during the main Club series races shall be awarded average points for each such duty. It is incumbent on the helmsman to check that the Race Officer of the day has recorded his or her details on the race results sheet.

14.3 Average Points for Open Events away from DSC

Any helmsman who is a sailing member at DSC and who is away competing in a National or Open event for his or her class of boat shall be entitled to claim average points for one day's racing per series missed at DSC.
Any member attending RYA conferences or training events for the benefit of Downs SC shall be entitled to average points for the races missed. Claims shall be submitted to the sailing secretary within 10 days of the event and are subject to approval by the sailing committee.

14.4 Average Points Definition

Average points awarded as in 14.2 and 14.3 above will be the average of the boat's race scores, whether finished or not, excluding discard scores and scores for races while on duty. Average points will not be awarded for more than 50% of the races that the boat will count in the series. Any boat that is awarded average points will rank as a starter.

14.6 Changing Crews

Points are normally awarded to the helmsman sailing a single class of boat, however, helms and crews who normally sail together may swap roles and still retain a single set of points. When one person is unavailable, the remaining person must sail in the boat to qualify for points. All above crew changes are at the discretion of the sailing Committee.

14.8 Results

Overall results published after each race session are preliminary until the end of the series.
A discard ratio of 35% of sailed races or nearest lower whole number will be used for each Points Series.
Ties will be broken as per RRS A8.

15.0 BOAT HANDICAP NUMBERS

15.1 Club Handicap Numbers

All Handicap Numbers used will be based on those allocated by the RYA Portsmouth Yardstick scheme but modified by the Sailing Committee as necessary to suit local conditions. Handicap numbers are published on the Official Notice Board.

15.2 Fast and Slow Handicap Races

Boats with a PN of 1113 and lower shall be Fast Handicap and boats with a PN higher than 1113 shall be Slow Handicap.

16.0 EXONERATION PENALTY AND RYA ARBITRATION PROCEDURES

The Exoneration Penalty [and the Advisory Hearing and RYA Arbitration procedures] of the RYA Rules Disputes Procedures will be available. See the Official Notice Board for details.

17.0 PROTESTS

The intention to lodge a protest must be notified to the Race Officer verbally within 15 minutes of the protesters finishing signal. Protest forms are available from the Racebox.