

RYA GUIDANCE

CLUB NOTICE OF RACE

The Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS) identify two key documents that are required to run racing, the “Notice of Race” and the “Sailing Instructions”. Instructions on the content of these are stated in RRS Appendix J, with sample templates in RRS Appendices K and L.

Clubs generally have little difficulty in adapting Appendix L to prepare Sailing Instructions that suit their circumstances. However many Clubs consider that the Notice of Race guidance is aimed rather towards the large, formal, event and that it is inappropriate or difficult to adapt for normal weekly Club racing, small open meetings, etc.

This Guidance Note offers some suggestions that Clubs can consider. It is important that Clubs recognise that if they are running racing, the RRS requires them to publish a Notice of Race and by failing to comply could leave them exposed in the event of a redress claim and more seriously, to legal liability.

Purpose of the Notice of Race

The Notice of Race (NoR) exists to set out the conditions under which the racing will be run. It allows a competitor to decide whether they wish to participate or not and to understand (and therefore plan) the general structure of the racing. It should not duplicate detailed matters contained in the Sailing Instructions, but should have sufficient information to allow potential competitors to make a sensible assessment of whether they wish to compete or not.

Technically, it is a formal offer of contract to a potential competitor with the conditions under which he or she will be allowed to participate in the regatta. The competitor must be assured that these conditions will not vary.

As an example of one type of content, a NoR might say that racing will not begin before 11:00hrs and will be finished by 17:00hrs. A competitor could use this information to make transport bookings or other domestic arrangements, and would have a valid complaint if the racing actually took place outside these times.

Clubs typically run a variety of racing through a season: different trophies at different times of the year, weekly “points” series, single day special events, etc. It would be difficult in terms of administration, and probably confusing for competitors, to publish a separate NoR for every event in the Club calendar. However, it is acceptable for Clubs to publish a single NoR for a complete season, with reference to appropriate information that might be elsewhere in the Club documentation. This approach can be used, if Clubs prefer, in conjunction with having a specific NoR for certain events (e.g. the annual Club championship weekend, or an Open Meeting) that do not conform to the general pattern of the Club racing.

To comply with RRS Appendix J, there are five items that **must** be included in a NoR, and a number of other items that should be included if they apply. Full details are in RRS Appendix J. The following tables summarise these items and suggest how Clubs could approach them:

The mandatory five items

Required Item	How Clubs could approach these
(1) Title, place and date, and name of organising authority	By stating that the XXX Sailing Club will be the organising authority and referring to the published Club calendar for times and dates
(2) Racing governed by RRS	Simple statement to this effect
(3) List of other documents governing the racing	This will vary between Clubs and types of racing, but in general are likely to be very limited for Club racing. At some Clubs it may be appropriate to cross refer to the Club handbook if this contains "standing" rules about racing, such as wearing wet or dry suits between certain dates, etc.
(4) Classes, handicaps and conditions of entry	By referring to the published Club calendar or other Club information (for example, the Club handbook may list eligibility for specific annual trophies). This should include reference to handicap splits/rating bands.
(5) Times of Registration and Warning Signals	By referring to the published Club calendar for times of racing and by saying that sailors must sign on (or whatever the preferred Club procedure is) no later than [X] minutes before the first race of the series and the sign out procedures

The Additional Items

Required Item	how Clubs could approach these
(1) any RRS rules that will be changed	Brief summary with cross reference to the standard Club Sailing Instructions. Can be omitted if does not apply.
(2) advertising	May well not be appropriate for most Club racing and can be omitted, if this does not apply. A useful default statement would be that advertising as permitted by class rules may be displayed.
(3) competitor classification requirements	May well not be appropriate for most Club racing and can then be omitted. However if it applies for specific races/regattas this must be included including a reminder that the competitors and their crew require to have an ISAF classification.

Required Item	how Clubs could approach these
(4) entries from other countries	Unlikely to be relevant to most Club racing and can be omitted, if not relevant
(5) entry procedure	As required by the Club, or by referring to the Club handbook, etc. if the information is elsewhere
(6) entry form	There are a variety of acceptable ways of achieving this, without needing an entry form as part of the NoR, such as a "signing on" sheet or online entry. There should be a brief mention here of the method being used.
(7) equipment inspection, measurement certificates etc.	Detailed information may well not be appropriate for most Club racing and can either be omitted, or by having a simple statement that boats racing must have a valid measurement certificate appropriate to their class, or by stating arrangements by which the Club will verify boat eligibility. It could also be appropriate here to include a reminder that many classes require membership of the class association to race that class of boat.
(8) time and date that sailing instructions will be available	Most Clubs will have a standard set of Club sailing instructions, so a simple cross reference to these is all that's needed, but if not this information should be included
(9) changes to class rules	Include in the NoR if relevant (they can be changed only if the class rules permit, which is not often the case)
(10) courses to be sailed	This could vary considerably between clubs - for example an inland club might simply state that racing will be around club fixed marks depending on the conditions on each day of racing, whereas a coastal club running cruiser racing might want to state that races will take place in [xxx] estuary using courses that will be announced at the briefing and which will be designed to give races of approx [x] hours duration.
(11) penalties that amend the RRS	Only include if appropriate - examples include many classes where a one-turn penalty is used instead of a two-turn penalty

Required Item	how Clubs could approach these
(12) denial of right to appeal	This is unlikely to apply to the vast majority of club racing and can be omitted. (If it is being considered for a specific event, note the RYA prescription to RRS 70.5.)
(13) scoring system	either include a general statement about this here, or cross refer to (say) the Club handbook if that details particular types of scoring for particular trophies
(14) chartered boats	may well not be appropriate for most Club racing and can be omitted
(15) prizes	either include a general statement (e.g. "prizes will be awarded to those in the top [x] places in each series") or refer to (say) the Club handbook for details of prizes

EXAMPLE - SIMPLE NOR FOR CLUB RACING

This is a fictional NoR for a small club, designed to indicate a straightforward and pragmatic approach. It can be tailored as necessary for individual club requirements.

NOTICE OF RACE BLANKSHIRE SAILING CLUB CLUB RACING - 2014 SEASON

1. Blankshire Sailing Club will be the Organising Authority for racing on Blank Reservoir during the 2014 season. A racing programme giving the details of the races, including dates and times, will be published with the Winter newsletter to all members.
2. Racing will be governed by the rules as defined in the Racing Rules of Sailing.
3. Club Handbook section X contains general requirements for racing on Blank Reservoir, including dates when wet or dry suits are mandatory. These general requirements apply to all Club racing during the 2014 season.
4. Racing is open to all full Club members. Club Handbook section Y defines the specific eligibility criteria for specific series and trophies that will be run during the season, including the scoring arrangements for each series and the prizes that will be awarded. With the exception of class racing, handicaps will be used. The handicaps approved by the Club Committee for 2014 have been published on the official notice board, and copies are available from the Club office. For the Bliggins Memorial Trophy series, personal handicaps will be used in place of boat handicaps - these will be calculated using the procedures in the Club Handbook section Y.
5. The racing programme identifies the start time for each race. Sailors intending to participate in a race shall complete the signing on sheet for that race no later than 15 minutes before the published start time in the racing programme.
6. The Club Standard Sailing Instructions 2014 change the following rules of the RRS:
 - a. The preamble to Part 4 and Rule 40 such that personal flotation devices must be worn at all times.

- b. Rule 26 to use an alternative starting procedure when a number of classes are being started in sequence.
7. Full Club members do not need to enter for a race or series in advance, but shall sign on before participating in each race. The signing on sheet will contain specific statements that sailors:
 - a. agree to be bound by the Racing Rules of Sailing, the Sailing Instructions, and the relevant parts of the Club Handbook, and
 - b. have valid insurance to participate in the racing of not less than £3,000,000
8. Sailors are reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure their equipment is in compliance with their class rules. For classes such as Lasers that do not have measurement certificates, sailors who “sign on” for a race shall be deemed to be confirming that their boats conform to class rules. All other boats competing in club racing shall have a valid measurement certificate issued under their relevant class association procedures.
9. The Club Standard Sailing Instructions 2014 have been published on the Club website. Hard copies are available from the Club office.
10. Courses for racing will be around the fixed club marks. Sailors can obtain a laminated copy of the Blank Reservoir layout from the Club office.
11. The penalties for breaking a rule of Part 2 of RRS will apply, with the exception that boats of the following classes need only take a one-turn penalty in place of a two-turn penalty:
 - a. class xxx
 - b. class yyy
12. Scoring will generally be in accordance with RRS Appendix A, but different series have different requirements for the numbers of races to count - these are described in Club Handbook section Y. Sailors allocated to Club duties during a series may claim average points for the race(s) they are unable to participate in. Average points will be calculated at the end of the series on the basis of all races in the series that the sailor sailed in, irrespective of whether or not these races are subsequently discarded.
13. Risk Statement

Rule 4 of the Racing Rules of Sailing states: “The responsibility for a boat’s decision to participate in a race or to continue racing is hers alone.”

Sailing is by its nature an unpredictable sport and therefore involves an element of risk. By taking part in any of the events covered by this notice of race, each competitor agrees and acknowledges that:

- a. They are aware of the inherent element of risk involved in the sport and accept responsibility for the exposure of themselves, their crew and their boat to such inherent risk whilst taking part in the event;
- b. They are responsible for the safety of themselves, their crew, their boat and their other property whether afloat or ashore;
- c. They accept responsibility for any injury, damage or loss to the extent caused by their own actions or omissions;
- d. Their boat is in good order, equipped to sail in the event and they are fit to participate;

- e. The provision of a race management team, patrol boats, umpires and other officials and volunteers by the organiser does not relieve them of their own responsibilities;
- f. The provision of patrol boat cover is limited to such assistance, particularly in extreme weather conditions, as can be practically provided in the circumstances.