

Sussex Yacht Club - General Keelboat Sailing Instructions – 2026 **DRAFT v3.2**

1. Rules
 - 1.1. These Sailing Instructions shall prevail in the absence of alternative Sailing Instructions (SI).
 - 1.2. Racing will be governed by the current version of:
 - a. World Sailing Racing Rules of Sailing 2025-2028 (RRS), to download a copy go to the World Sailing website <https://www.sailing.org/racingrules/> ;
 - b. The prescriptions of the RYA Racing Charter (Racing Overview section of this Handbook);
 - c. The prescriptions of IRC;
 - d. SYC Safety Equipment Rules;
 - e. These sailing instructions;
 - f. Notice of Race together with any supplementary sailing instructions.
 - 1.3. Where safety rules of the above-named organisations conflict, the higher specification shall prevail.
 - 1.4. A boat's sail number shall be consistent for all races of the series unless written permission is granted from the Race Committee. No boat will be permitted to display different sail numbers on any part of the boat at the same time.
 - 1.5. Where a conflict between languages exists, the English language will take precedence.
2. Safety
 - 2.1. Boats may be measured or scrutinised before or after any race at the discretion of the Race Committee.
 - 2.2. Any boat found not to comply with a relevant SI may be referred to the Race Committee and may be disqualified from the race without a hearing. This changes RRS Rule 63.1.
 - 2.3. An SYC inspection does not confirm a boats' compliance with the World Sailing Offshore Special Regulations. Compliance is the sole responsibility of the individual skipper and or owner of the boat concerned.
 - 2.4. RRS 40.1 Personal Flotation Devices, applies whenever Flag Y is displayed afloat or ashore or if stated in the Notice of Race for that race.
3. Conditions of Entry
 - 3.1. Attention is drawn to:
 - a. Racing Rules of Sailing 2025-2028 – Part 1 - Fundamental Rules - Rule 3;
 - b. World Sailing Offshore Special Regulations 2026-2027.
 - 3.2. Neither Sussex Yacht Club nor individual race organisers shall be held responsible for any loss, damage, death or personal injury, howsoever caused.
 - 3.3. All boats shall be covered by Third Party Liability Insurance for a minimum of £5,000,000 and be covered for racing risks.
 - 3.4. All boats shall be entered by and have on board whilst racing, an "active" member of the Sussex Yacht Club (rather than a "shoreside" member), except by invitation or by way of a race being designated an Open Event.
 - 3.5. For a boat to be eligible to race, she shall have a valid IRC rating, unless otherwise permitted in supplementary sailing instructions.
 - 3.6. Where a boat's IRC rating includes weight of cushions, these may be removed and replaced by an equivalent weight whilst racing.
4. Start Times and Delaying Races
 - 4.1. All classes shall start at the time prescribed in the Racing Overview section of the Handbook 2026 unless amended by supplementary sailing instructions sent by WhatsApp to registered owners/skippers.
 - 4.2. Any change to the sailing instructions will be sent to the "SYC Race Management" WhatsApp group to registered owners/skippers before 09:00 on the day it will take effect or two hours prior to the prescribed start time, whichever is the earlier, except that any change to the schedule of races will be sent by 20:00 on the day before it will take effect.
 - 4.3. Any changes to the sailing instructions will be communicated to owners/skippers via WhatsApp so it is vital that all owners/skippers ensure that they can be received.
 - 4.4. The RO may delay the start by displaying AP and making an announcement on VHF.
5. Course Marks and Signals
 - 5.1. Course marks, which are not navigation buoys, will be either:
 - a. Yellow or orange cylindrical buoys;
 - b. Yellow spar buoys;
 - c. Black, orange, pink or yellow spherical buoys;
 - d. Inflatable marks of any colour.
 - 5.2. For names and positions of fixed marks see the racing chart and check for updates on the Race Mark status section of this handbook.

- 5.3. Details of courses not previously published will be communicated by VHF, 20 minutes prior to the start time. When practical to do so, a provisional course will be communicated earlier via the "SYC Race Management" WhatsApp group. However, the course transmitted via VHF will be the confirmed course and may contain amendments.
- 5.4. Where a committee boat start is used, she will be identified by flying a large SYC burgee.
- 5.5. No sound signals will be made from the beach. Attention to Race Signals may be given by VHF. This changes World Sailing RRS Nos. 26, 27, 29, 32 and 33.
6. Class Identification Flags
 - 6.1. Unless otherwise advised in supplementary sailing instructions all boats competing under IRC shall fly a code flag 1 pennant from the backstay if fitted, or other suitable highly visible point at the stern of the boat. All boats competing in Pursuits should fly a code flag 2 pennant from the backstay if fitted, or other suitable highly visible point at the stern of the boat.
7. Racing Area
 - 7.1. Inshore and Pursuit racing will take place in the English Channel between the western arm of the port of Shoreham to the east, Worthing Pier to the west, and five miles offshore to the south. The start area will be within two miles of the western arm of the port of Shoreham. Long Inshore, Offshore and Club racing will use a racing area defined by the individual race descriptions and Notice of Race.
8. Obstructions
 - 8.1. The main shipping channel to the south of the entrance to the port of Shoreham is designated as an obstruction.
 - 8.2. The Swimming Area, when active (marked by yellow buoys) to the south of Shoreham beach is designated as an obstruction.
 - 8.3. The area covered by a radius of 200m adjacent to the entrance to Shoreham Harbour is excluded from the race area in order that general marine traffic may navigate the approach to Shoreham Harbour.
9. Starting and Finishing Procedures
 - 9.1. Unless otherwise stated in supplementary sailing instructions, races will be started from either a committee boat or the club starting mast situated approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ mile west of the harbour entrance. A large SYC burgee will be flown from the mast. The start line will be a line extending seawards from the mast through an orange (or similar) transit mark set on the beach and there will be an ODM. When the West (W) mark is used as the ODM the line will be referred to as Lancing. When the East (E) mark is used as the ODM the line will be referred to as Old Fort. An alternative ODM may be laid. The ODM may or may not lie on the start line.
 - 9.2. All starting procedures will be in accordance with World Sailing RRS No. 26. Attention may be drawn to signals via VHF Ch37 (M1). A verbal countdown may also be given.
 - 9.3. Unless otherwise stated in supplementary sailing instructions, the start line is a line extending seawards from the club mast through an orange (or similar) transit mark set on the beach and there will be an ODM. The ODM of the finish line may not necessarily be the same as the ODM of the start line. When the West (W) mark is used as the ODM the line will be referred to as Lancing. When the East (E) mark is used as the ODM the line will be referred to as Old Fort. An alternative ODM may be laid. The ODM may or may not lie on the start line.
 - 9.4. Course shortening Inshore races.

A course set to finish on the Lancing Line or the Old Fort Line may be shortened upon passing between the SYC Mast and SYC W or SYC E (the beach mark is not relevant). The shortened course finish line must be crossed in the same direction that that mark of the course would have been passed in the original course.
 - 9.5. Alternative courses for Long Inshore or Long Offshore races, (Long Inshore/Offshore courses cannot be shortened once started).

The Race Officer may elect to use a published Alternative course if for reasons of weather or safety it is deemed appropriate. The Alternative course will be announced before the start via the WhatsApp "SYC Race Management" group and prior to the start on VHF. The Alternative course will be used for the course announcement on VHF. Alternative courses are published in the Notice of Race.
10. Gate Starts
 - 10.1. A gate start shall not be used where the wind angle is greater than 45 degrees either side of a line drawn between the Gate Buoy and the First Mark of the course. The First Mark of the course shall be to windward of the Gate Mark.
 - 10.2. The Gate Boat may be a boat competing in the race.
 - 10.3. The Race Officer shall make clear the Gate Buoy via the Course Announcement.
 - 10.4. The Start Line shall be a line formed between the Stern of the Gate Boat and the Gate Buoy after the Start Signal.
 - 10.5. The Gate Boat shall time her approach to the Gate Buoy to coincide with arriving at the Gate Buoy at the Start Time. To facilitate timing of arrival at the Gate Buoy at the Start Time the Gate Boat may take advantage of using engine propulsion under World Sailing RRS No. 42.3(i) up to the time of the Start Signal.

- 10.6. At the Start Time, the Gate Boat shall adopt a heading Close Hauled on a Port tack and maintain such heading until the Start Period has expired.
- 10.7. During the Start Period competing boats shall keep to leeward, and keep clear, of the Gate Boat.
- 10.8. The Start period shall be defined as commencing at the time of the Warning Signal and ending at such time as all competing boats have crossed the Start Line, or 2 minutes after the Start Signal, whichever is the lesser time.
11. Time Limits
- 11.1. There will be no time limits except as indicated on supplementary sailing instructions.
12. Declarations
- 12.1. In races where supplementary sailing instructions indicate the finish is either not at the club finish line or the Race Officer has stated that all boats are to take their own time, the Race Officer may nominate a boat to act as the designated boat. Where a Boat is required to take their own finish time, they should record this as GPS generated UK clock time, so either UTC or BST (depending on the time of year). This should be shown in 24hr format, together with the Boat's name and posted to the "SYC Race Management" WhatsApp group directly after the finish. Any boat not finishing the race must inform the Race Officer, or designated boat, and post to the WhatsApp group.
- 12.2. The time limit for such a declaration will be within two hours after the boat finishes.
- 12.3. Competitors not returning to Shoreham or the set destination must inform the Race Officer, or designated boat, and post to the WhatsApp group.
13. DNF and Retirement
- 13.1. A boat failing to finish or retiring from a race shall draw the attention of the Race Officer to their DNF or retirement.
14. Penalty System
- 14.1. The provisions of RRS Appendix P shall not apply. A boat may take a One-Turn Penalty when she:
- may have broken one or more rules of Part 2 of RRS in an incident while racing;
 - may have broken RRS rule 31.
- This changes RRS Rule 44.1.
15. Race or Series Validity
- 15.1. A race shall be valid if at least three boats rank as starters.
- 15.2. Where less than three boats rank as starters, races may be abandoned or postponed.
- 15.3. Three races are required to be completed to constitute a series.
16. Results
- 16.1. A list of results, which may be subject to protest, will be posted on the [Sussex Yacht Club website](#) as soon as possible after the race, clearly marked Provisional. These will then be subject to ratification by the Keelboat Race Committee.
- 16.2. Races, which finish at an away port, will be calculated by a designated Race Officer at the finish and be posted on the [Sussex Yacht Club website](#) at the earliest opportunity.
17. Scoring
- 17.1. All races will be scored using the low points system as prescribed in Appendix A of the World Sailing RRS, including Appendix A 8.1 and 8.2 for series tie resolution. Rule A5.3 will apply (so rule A5.2 is changed so that a boat that came to the starting area but did not sail the course, retired or was disqualified shall be scored points for the finishing place one more than the number of boats that came to the starting area, and a boat that did not come to the starting area shall be scored points for the finishing place one more than the number of boats entered in the series).
- 17.2. For IRC races, where a boat does not compete in a race in a series because of Race Officer duties that boat will be awarded her average points scored per race in that series.
- When 4 or fewer races have been completed, a boat's series score will be the total of her race scores.
 - When 5 or 6 races have been completed, a boat's series score will be the total of her race scores excluding her worst score.
 - When 7 or more races have been completed, a boat's series score will be the total of her race scores excluding her two worst scores.
- 17.3. For Pursuit races,
- When fewer than 4 races have been completed, a boat's series score will be the total of her race scores.
 - When more than 4 races have been completed, a boat's series score will be the total of her best four race scores.
 - Where boats are racing under a Pursuit handicap this may be adjusted after every race. An adjustment in handicap number is not grounds for redress, this changes RRS 61.1.
18. Use of Engine
- 18.1. Engines may not to be used for propulsion after the preparatory signal.

- 18.2. An engine or power pump may be used to charge batteries or operate bilge pumps.
- 18.3. An engine may be used to assist in the recovery of a man overboard, to render assistance or in any other emergency. Full details to be reported in writing with the race declaration.

19. Rendering Assistance

- 19.1. If, during the course of a race, a boat ceases racing, temporarily or otherwise, to go to the assistance of another vessel or person, redress may be requested in accordance with World Sailing RRS No. 61.1(a).

20. Alteration to Keelboat Sailing Instructions

- 20.1. The Keelboat Race Committee reserve the right to amend these instructions and any published supplementary instructions in accordance with World Sailing RRS No. 90.2.
- 20.2. In the event of an alteration whilst boats are at sea and prior to the start of a race, International Code Flag L will be flown from the flagstaff or committee boat. It is the competitor's responsibility to ensure he is aware of the alteration by VHF or hailing.

21. Waste Disposal

- 21.1. Boats shall not put rubbish or waste in the water.
- 21.2. Boats must remove rubbish and waste from Southwick moorings for disposal at home.

22. Radio Communication

- 22.1. The race channel shall be VHF Ch37 (M1) when the Race Officer is shoreside and VHF Ch77 when the Race Officer is afloat.
- 22.2. During the race, the Race Officer call-sign shall be SYC Race Control.
- 22.3. General announcements to competitors shall be announced using the call-sign SYC Race Fleet.
- 22.4. Except in an emergency, a boat shall neither make radio transmissions while racing nor receive radio communications not available to all boats. This restriction also applies to other communication channels or equipment.

23. Disclaimer of Liability

- 23.1. Competitors participate in the race entirely at their own risk. See World Sailing RRS Rule 3, Decision to Race. The organising authority does not accept any liability for material damage or personal injury or death sustained in conjunction with or prior to, during, or after the race.

24. Behaviour

- 24.1. Skippers of all boats associated with the Sussex Yacht Club and or sailing under the SYC banner will be held responsible for the behaviour and actions of their crew at all times during such events. Any misbehaviour that is deemed likely to bring the name of the Sussex Yacht Club into disrepute will result in immediate action, which could result in that boat being banned from taking part in any event associated with the Sussex Yacht Club.

25. Use of Self Steering

- Boats sailing with only 1 or 2 persons on board may use any type of self-steering gear.

SYC Keelboat Mandatory Safety Equipment

All SYC boats participating in races must comply with the following safety equipment requirements.

1. Where a race is classified by the Club as Inshore or Long Inshore, World Sailing/ORC Special Regulations 2026-2027, Category 4 (see section 2.01.5 etc) requirements will apply except for such boats of a recognised one design having a Class Association that provides safety regulations of an equivalent standard and relevant to the design; in such a case the boat must comply fully with the Class Association's safety regulations; in addition, the skipper/owner(s) must hold current membership of the Class Association.
2. Where a race is classified by the Club as Offshore, World Sailing/ORC Special Regulations 2026-2027, Category 3 (see section 2.01.4 etc) + life-raft requirements will apply, as stated in the notice of race.
3. A boat may be inspected for compliance with safety requirements at any time by a Scrutineer appointed by the Keelboat Race Committee for that purpose.
4. All equipment should be suitable for the use intended as defined by the relevant ORC regulation.
5. Full ORC details can also now be found at <https://www.sailing.org/inside-world-sailing/rules-regulations/offshore-special-regulations/>

Group MMSI Number

SYC Group MMSI Number (023200100) for VHF/DSC radios

Most members are using DSC radios (those fitted with an emergency DISTRESS button) but few are aware that the Club has been allocated a Group MMSI number (023200100) by OFCOM/Radiocommunications Agency which alerts all of the Club rescue boats when called.

Club rescue boats are often crewed afloat to support courses, races and other activities. For emergencies you should follow the emergency procedures, but should you just need a little assistance and think they, or other SYC competitors, could help then using the DSC Group identity will alert whichever is afloat.