

Role of Responsible Officer (RO) at Gate Start Events

The Events Organiser, Joe Coulson, will appoint a member to be responsible for each event at Farmoor. His role will encompass both Officer of the Day and Race Officer.

1. The Responsible Officer will use WhatsApp to give a reminder one week ahead of an events with a final confirmation no later than the preceding Tuesday evening. If the weather forecast is unfavourable the RO will provide an alternate date or venue, in consultation with the Events Organiser.
2. The RO will be responsible for arranging signing on and collection of entry fees from competitors at the beginning of the event. He will brief the competitors before racing, record the results of each race in consultation with competitors, calculate the results for the day, and manage the Prizegiving.
3. The course for the first race will be decided by the RO. If possible Seavets preferred 'M' Course will be used, but efforts should be made to liaise with organisers of any other events or training sessions so as to give them priority on the water. It is possible that the buoy used as a start buoy may not subsequently be part of the course. The RO is free to vary the course and finish as appropriate.
4. The target time for race duration should be about 30 minutes. ie. 20 - 25 minutes for the leader.
5. For subsequent races the course may be changed and this may be decided by the RO and communicated to participants by word while on the water between races.
6. The SSIs will apply apart from the starting procedure. The starts will be Gate Starts as described in the Appendix to the SSIs, reproduced below. There will be no visual signals. All signals will be by whistle or voice.
7. If possible, send one sailor out to sail from the start buoy on port tack and check that one minute is sufficient to set the start line. Extend the time if necessary.

Briefing Checklist

1. Welcome and check that all have signed on and paid. Particular welcome to newcomers
2. Weather conditions and forecast, if appropriate.
3. Remind competitors that they should give priority to other users of the water, especially if they are on training courses.
4. Number and timing of races - usually four, but sometimes five.
5. Check that all are familiar with the Gate Start procedure, and that they must cross the start line which has been created between start buoy and stern of the Pathfinder. The Pathfinder may tack after one minute, but is free to carry on his course for as long as he likes. Touching the Pathfinder or starting beyond the position he reaches after one minute will result in disqualification. In light winds the one minute period may be extended by the RO.
6. Course and number of laps. Remind competitors that course changes may be made on the water and communicated by word between races, so competitors should not stray far from the start area.
7. Ask competitors to make a mental note of who they followed across the finish line so that accurate results can be recorded when ashore.

Appendix: Gate Starts

The Pathfinder sailor for the first race is a volunteer or nominee; for the second race it will be whomever comes third in the first race. For subsequent races it will be the highest finisher in the previous race who has not yet been the gate boat.

Signals. The Pathfinder sailor will give warnings at three minutes, one minute, at the start time and finally one minute after the start, by whistle or a shout. There will be no visual signals.

Starting.

1. The Pathfinder will give a signal by whistle or a shout, sail away from the Start Mark on port tack and the 'Gate' will start to open. All competitors shall start on starboard tack between the Start Mark and the stern of the Pathfinder. Touching the Pathfinder or starting in front of him will result in disqualification.
2. The Pathfinder will give a signal by whistle or shout after one minute. He may tack onto starboard after one minute, or when the last starter has passed astern prior to the one-minute limit. The Pathfinder may choose not to tack after he has given the one minute signal, but there is no extension to the start line after one minute, whether the Pathfinder has tacked or not.
3. In light winds the time may be extended from 1 minute at the Race Officer's discretion.