

RNZYS RACE MANAGEMENT CLUB RACING POLICIES 2026-2027

These policies are about how the race management team is going to behave when applying the RRS. Failure to observe these guidelines are not grounds for redress.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	DEFINITIONS	2
2.	GENERAL PRINCIPLES	2
3.	TIMES/TIMING/CHANGES IN SCHEDULE	2
4.	DECISION TO RACE	2
5.	COURSES	5
6.	STARTING LINE.....	5
7.	STARTING PROCEDURE	6
8.	POSTPONING A RACE DURING THE STARTING PROCEDURE	6
9.	SIGHTING THE LINE/TIMING/SIGNALLING/RECORDING	6
10.	CALLING OCS.....	6
11.	GENERAL RECALL.....	7
12.	STARTING PENALTIES (FLAGS U, I, Z AND BLACK FLAG)	7
13.	SHORTENING THE COURSE.....	7
14.	ABANDONMENT	7
15.	ADJUSTING A WINDWARD/LEEWARD COURSE TO A NEW WIND SPEED OR DIRECTION	8
16.	RACE COMMITTEE PROTESTING YACHTS	9
17.	GPS	9

1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.1. *RNZYS Race Officer* - Is the person in charge of running races. They shall be a YNZ qualified Club Race Officer or National Race Officer. They set the course, administer and score the races ensuring they are run fairly, safely, and in accordance with the YNZ racing rules and any event-specific instructions. They are normally on the committee boat or in the start tower ashore.
- 1.2. *Race Management Team* – The RNZYS Race Officer and all on-the-water volunteers responsible for managing racing, including all boat drivers and mark layers.
- 1.3. “*Will*” means the intentions of the race management team.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 2.1. The role of the race management team is to conduct the races and to facilitate racing as directed by the organising authority as required by the Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS).
- 2.2. These policies are applicable for any RNZYS Club Racing Events.
- 2.3. A shortage of time or completed races is not a basis for variance from these policies.
- 2.4. The driver of a race management team vessel will promptly advise the Race Officer if he/she believes his/her vessel has substantially affected one or more boats racing.
- 2.5. The RO is responsible for conducting a briefing with the RM team.

3. TIMES/TIMING/CHANGES IN SCHEDULE

- 3.1. Times will be based on GPS time.
- 3.2. Starts will not be delayed for competitors to reach the race area if they could have arrived with reasonable diligence.
- 3.3. To alert boats that a race or sequence of races will start soon, the orange starting line flag will be displayed (with one sound signal) at least five minutes before a warning signal is displayed.
- 3.4. The orange starting line flags will be removed (with no sound signal) four minutes after the starting signal unless the race management team intends to make the warning signal for the next fleet to start within ten minutes of the previous start.
- 3.5. The race management team will use the entire day if necessary to complete the schedule.
- 3.6. For Major Events, if the weather forecast suggests it is unlikely that racing will be possible on an upcoming day (too much or too little wind) the schedule may be changed to sail more races in a day.

4. DECISION TO RACE

- 4.1. The race will be started at the scheduled time if the wind conditions and visibility are within the parameters outlined in these policies. Waiting for ‘better’ conditions may be unfair and will be avoided.
- 4.2. The race management team will not wait for the wind to ‘stabilize’. Competitors can compete in “shifty” conditions.
- 4.3. The start may be postponed if a major wind shift is expected based on a known pattern or other reliable information (example: sea breeze can be seen in the

distance and is expected to fill in). Otherwise, the race management team will start the race. The wind shift may not occur, the course can be corrected, or the shift may occur after the race is completed.

- 4.4. Wind will be measured from drifting boats when possible.
- 4.5. Average wind speed will be determined over a five-minute period.
- 4.6. Windward Leeward races will not be started in less than an average of 4 knots of wind. This lower limit may be higher if there is strong current in the racing area.
- 4.7. There is no lower wind limit for starting harbour and distance races. Races may be postponed if it is unlikely boats will make any progress after the starting signal and the race committee cannot see any change in the current wind conditions then the race will be abandoned. Races will be postponed due to lack of wind on the following basis:

SERIES/MAJOR EVENT	LIGHT OR NO WIND
Rum Race	Always started on time, abandoned if no progress after 30min.
Weeknight racing	Always started on time, abandoned if no progress after 30min (excluding Sprint Series).
Commodores Cup: Tarahiki, Round Rangitoto and Haystack Races.	If there is no wind at 0900 for 1000 start and not forecast to build, the race should be postponed one hour. If there is no wind at 1100 the race should be postponed on the water; if no wind by 1300 race should be postponed for the day (AP/A). Tide strength and direction should also be taken into account.
Night Race To Kawau	Always started on time, abandoned if no progress after 60min
Kawau Island Race	If no wind at 1200 race should be postponed on the water, if there is still no wind at 1400 race should be postponed for the day (AP/A). Abandoned if no progress after 30min.
Major Event	Postponed on water or at discretion of the RO.
Winter Series	If no wind 2 (two) hours prior to the start and not forecast to build, the race should be postponed for one hour. If there is no wind at the new start time and boats will not make forward progress, race should be postponed on the water. If the boats will not make forward progress by 1500 race should be postponed for the day (AP/A). If started, the race should be abandoned if no progress after 30min.
Winter Series W/L	If no wind 2 (two) hours prior to the start and not forecast to build the course should be changed to a harbour course.

**Whenever a start is delayed the course should be shortened where possible so yachts would still have a similar finish time to that if the race was started on time.*

- 4.8. For longer distance races if all boats have not made any progress after 60mins the race committee may consider abandoning the race taking into consideration the forecast and distance of the race.

- 4.9. Windward leeward Races will not be started in more than an average of 25 knots. Harbour races will not be started in more than an average of 30 knots. These limits may also vary for all classes depending upon sea conditions, current and gusts.
- 4.10. Racing in more than an average of 20 knots shall be under the Y flag, all race management team on the water shall also wear life jackets.
- 4.11. Race Officers will check the official Auckland region weather watches, observations and warnings in addition to other forecasts.
- 4.12. If the wind is looking close to the maximum wind strength Race Officers will use the [Race Management Risk Assessment matrix](#) to assess risk. The first decision to postpone the race will be made in the timeframe in the table below. If the wind is clearly averaging over the wind limit (a constant average 5 knots over the limit) and is not forecast to decrease, then the race will be postponed at this time. If the wind is close to the wind limit and/or forecast to decrease, now casting will be monitored, and a decision will be made at the second time in the table below.
- 4.13. If sailing should go ahead, it is still the responsibility of each yacht to decide whether to start or not.

SERIES/MAJOR EVENT	FIRST DECISION	SECOND DECISION	WIND LIMIT - Knots (average over 5mins)
Rum Race (Spring, Summer)	1200	1530	25
Rum Race (Autumn, Winter)	1200	1430	25
Weeknight racing	1200	1630	25 W/L, 30 Harbour
Commodores Cup	0630	0830	30
Major Event	0630	0830	30
Winter Series	0900	1130	30
Winter Series W/L	0900	1030	25

- If the wind increases beyond the wind limits after the second decision timeframe and before the start the race will be postponed.
 - As a 'rule of thumb' wind against tide will add 2 knots to the average wind strength
 - If a Wednesday night race is postponed because the wind is over the wind limit there will be no more racing that day (AP/A).
 - A competitor's decision to either race or withdraw, will have no bearing on the decision of the Race Officer to start a race. *'The responsibility for a boat's decision to participate in a race or to continue racing is hers alone'* (RRS3).
- 4.14. Races will not be started if reduced visibility prevents the race management team from sighting the starting line and identifying premature starters. The fact that the first mark cannot be seen from the starting area is not, in and of itself, a reason to postpone racing.
 - 4.15. Where possible the race management team will postpone ashore (AP, or AP/Numerical pennant) or send competitors ashore (AP/H) if current weather conditions that are not suitable for racing are likely to continue.
 - 4.16. Harbour Racing will not be postponed due to shipping movements; it is the skipper's responsibility to check the shipping movements and to keep clear of shipping.

- 4.17. The RNZYS Race Officer will check the shipping movements and harbour master notice to mariners before each Harbour race. Courtesy broadcast of shipping movements for the day may be made via VHF prior to the warning signal. However, the RO is not responsible for early, late or unexpected shipping movements
- 4.18. When racing back-to-back, the interval between the finish line closure and the new warning signal for that group will normally not be less than 5 minutes. This may be varied according to conditions.

5. COURSES

- 5.1. For Windward leeward
 - a) The race management team will attempt to set the longest possible first leg within the constraints of the course area and the target time.
 - b) The course length will be laid to give the first boat of each fleet the best chance of achieving the target time.
 - c) Gates will be approximately 6 – 8 boat lengths for a smaller fleet, 8 - 10 boat lengths for a larger fleet and 3 boat lengths for match racing wide, generally laid square to the sailing wind. Variations in width and angle may be appropriate to adjust for current or other prevailing conditions. It is the race officer intention to make as even as possible for boat rounding either mark, considering the tide and wind, this may mean the gate marks are not square to the wind.
- 5.2. For Harbour courses
 - a) Courses will be selected of the RNZYS course sheet, depending on the wind strength, wind direction and target times.
 - b) Race officers will use the RNZYS Course Cheat Sheet as a guide for selecting courses.
 - c) Efforts will be made to vary the courses throughout the season however basic principles of wind strength and direction are the priority.
 - d) Competitors shall be notified of the course to be sailed no later than 30 minutes prior to the first warning signal

6. STARTING LINE

- 6.1. Windward/Leeward starting lines will generally be laid square to the median wind direction. The current, favoured side of the course, expected wind shifts and other variables may justify variation from this guideline. If the tide is running with the wind the intention of the RO will be to lay a starboard bias, if the tide is against the wind the intention is to lay a pin bias.
- 6.2. The length of the start line shall be the number of boats times 1.5 of their hull length. In mixed fleets the RO shall use the longest hull length.
- 6.3. For Harbour courses starting off the RNZYS, the Committee boat will always be stationed to the south of the pin end.
- 6.4. For Harbour courses it is the intention of the Race Committee to lay an even start line in respect to boats starting at either end of the line having an even chance to reach the first mark in first position. For a Northerly wind direction this will result in the pin end further west, in a southerly direction this will result in the pin end further east.

7. STARTING PROCEDURE

- 7.1. RRS Rule 26 will be used, except for Elliott 7 and MRX sprint series where a 3min system will be used.
- 7.2. Occasionally a Mark Foy/Pursuit start will be used. This will be specified in the event race documents.

8. POSTPONING A RACE DURING THE STARTING PROCEDURE

- 8.1. For windward leeward racing, the race management team will postpone the race during the starting procedure if the mean wind shifts more than 20 degrees and the RO believes this is a persistent shift or in the event other influences cause boats to bunch at one end of the start line. In rapid oscillations, the race management team will endeavour to lay a starting line based on the mean oscillations expected.
- 8.2. The race management team will consider postponing the start for any of the following reasons:
 - a) a drifting mark,
 - b) a significant error in the timing of signals,
 - c) other boats interfering with the competing boats,
 - d) inappropriate starting line length or angle,
 - e) the positions boats are taking on the starting line indicate a line bias,
 - f) a reduction in visibility preventing the race management team from sighting the starting line or identifying premature starters.
- 8.3. For a postponement that the race management team anticipates will be longer than ten minutes, the orange starting line flag will be removed (with no sound signal) and then displayed (with no sound signal) at least five minutes prior to the warning signal. The postponement flag will be removed (with one sound signal) 1 minute before the warning signal.

9. SIGHTING THE LINE/TIMING/SIGNALLING/RECORDING

- 9.1. The Race Officer will sight the starting line with another member of the race management team.
- 9.2. Each line sighter will use a hand-held voice recording device and record, without stopping from at least 60 seconds before the starting signal until after anything of interest after the start. A commentary of anything of interest will be recorded (such as boats getting close to the line, bunching, etc.).
- 9.3. In no circumstances will an individual recall be broadcast later than 5 seconds after the starting signal.
- 9.4. The race management team will not signal an individual recall and then a general recall.
- 9.5. It is best practice for a Race Officer to make an audio or visual recording of the start.

10. CALLING OCS

- 10.1. The race management team will not permit a race to continue if it believes that unidentified boats were over early. A General Recall will be broadcast.
- 10.2. If the race management team is satisfied that all boats over the line have been identified, an Individual Recall will be signalled.

- 10.3. Except after a black flag general recall (when the requirements of RRS 30.4 will be met), sail number of boats recorded as OCS, UFD or BFD will broadcast over the VHF when possible.

11. GENERAL RECALL

- 11.1. When the race management team is not satisfied that all boats over early (or that have broken RRS 30.3 or 30.4) have been identified, a General Recall will be signalled.
- 11.2. If a race management error is discovered after the starting signal (e.g., timing), the race management team may abandon the race (by using flag N). In these circumstances, the race management team will not signal a general recall.
- 11.3. When using RRS 30.3, if a general recall would result from unidentified boats on the course side of the starting line early in the minute prior to the starting signal, a postponement will be signalled immediately. If the race management team is satisfied that the starting line was fair, then the next start will use RRS 30.4.

12. STARTING PENALTIES (FLAGS U, I, Z AND BLACK FLAG)

- 12.1. Flag I (RRS 30.1) and Flag Z (RRS 30.2) will not be used.
- 12.2. Flag P will be used for the first attempt of every race.
- 12.3. In the event the start has been postponed, or a General Recall has been caused by the length or angle of the starting line, the race management team will adjust the starting line and make another attempt using the same preparatory signal.
- 12.4. If the race management team is satisfied that a General Recall was not the result of the starting line, it will use the U flag for the next attempt.
- 12.5. If under the U flag and the race management team is satisfied that a General Recall was not the result of the starting line, it will use the Black Flag for the next start.
- 12.6. An important principle followed by the race management team is that the U flag and black flag will only be used when general recalls are caused by the boats themselves, or rapid oscillations of the wind, and not by actions of the race management team.
- 12.7. The race management team will make every effort to signal a postponement in the event of any problems with the starting line.

13. SHORTENING THE COURSE

- 13.1. The course may be shortened at any mark using RRS 32 to meet target times.
- 13.2. In a Mark Foy race, the Race Committee may shorten the course so that the first finisher is as close as possible to the target time for that race.

14. ABANDONMENT

- 14.1. For windward leeward courses, on the first half of the first leg, the race management team may abandon the race in the event of a major, persistent, wind shift (more than 20 degrees). After that, the race management team will let the race continue if it is able to adjust to the changed conditions. Harbour races will not be abandoned due to wind shifts.
- 14.2. Visibility: The race management team will consider abandoning a race if it is satisfied that a reduction in visibility affects its ability to safely manage racing. The

fact that boats cannot see the next mark from the prior mark is not, in and of itself, reason to abandon the race.

- 14.3. Collapse of wind: The race management team may abandon the race when it is unlikely that the leading boat will complete the course within the overall time limit given the wind conditions at that point in time, and it is unable to shorten the course.
- 14.4. For windward leeward courses, the race management team may abandon the race when a significant wind shift causes the fleet to invert.
- 14.5. Once a race has been started, the race management team will not abandon the race simply because the average wind speed increases beyond the stated limits. The race management team will consider abandoning the race if it is unable to safely manage racing.
- 14.6. The race management team will consider abandoning the race if it determines that an outside influence has made the race unfair.
- 14.7. If a mark is missing and the race committee are unable to shorten the race or replace the mark in time; or if there has been a significant error made by the race committee which will affect the boats score the race committee will consider abandoning the race, this may be after all boats have finished the race.

15. ADJUSTING A WINDWARD/LEEWARD COURSE TO A NEW WIND SPEED OR DIRECTION

- 15.1. Change in wind direction for windward leeward courses:
 - a) With a persistent wind shift of 10° or less the course will not be changed unless necessary to adjust for current or to provide a square run.
 - b) Between 10° and 15° consideration will be given to adjusting the course to the new wind provided that the race management team is confident that the shift is likely to persist.
 - c) With a persistent wind shift of more than 15°, the race management team will attempt to change the course to the new wind.
 - d) With a persistent wind shift of more than 45°, the race management team will consider its influence on the race. Under these circumstances, the race management team may either change the course or abandon the race.
 - e) Frequent and violent oscillations: Under these circumstances the race management team may not be able to adjust the course sufficiently or quickly enough to maintain a race of the required standard. In this case the race may be shortened or abandoned.
 - f) Changes in current or a difference in the angle of the current relative to the wind may justify variations from these guidelines.
- 15.2. Changes in length of legs windward leeward courses:
 - a) The race management team will attempt to minimize the number of changes in leg length to achieve target times. In general, changes in length will only be made if it appears that the time for the first finisher will be more than 20% outside the target time.
 - b) Change in leg lengths will not be made to reduce a leg to less than 50% or increase a leg to more than 150% of original leg length.
 - c) Changes in current may justify variations from these guidelines.

16. RACE COMMITTEE PROTESTING YACHTS

- 16.1. The Race Committee will lodge a protest in the following situations
- a) When it witnesses an apparent breach of good sportsmanship (RRS 2);
 - b) When it witnesses a boat failing to take a penalty after knowingly touching a mark (RRS 31);
 - c) When it witnesses a boat failing to sail the course (RRS 28)
 - d) When it witnesses, or hears a report from a third party with no conflict of interest, a boat failing to keep clear of shipping movements in the Harbour or sailing into a restricted area
 - e) Failing to monitor VHF channel 17 or 77
 - f) Failing to wear lifejackets while the Y flag is flown
 - g) Failing a safety inspection
 - h) Failing to make contact with the Race Committee or the RNZYS Sailing Office after withdrawing/retiring from a race.
- 16.2. The Race committee may not protest a boat from a report from a person with a conflict of interest other than the representative of the boat herself.

17. GPS

All race management boats (signal, pin, finish and mark boats) will be equipped with a GPS.

- 17.1. All GPS units will be set up to display as follows:
- a) Distance in nautical miles (nm)
 - b) Time to local time zone in 24-hour format
 - c) Compass bearing in magnetic
 - d) Latitude and Longitude in degrees, minutes and decimal minutes (example: 39° 27.928 North, 034° 17.464 East)