

GUIDANCE ON MINIMISING THE RISK OF REGATTA TIME OVERRUNS



THE SKIFF RACING ASSOCIATION

Revision-01, April 2018

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Regattas that have large time over-runs can have the following potential detrimental effects for the Skiff Racing community:

- Clubs, individual competitors and Umpires may be disinclined to attend future regattas at the host club again.
- There may be a loss of good will from the host club's team of volunteers leading to a lack of willingness to help at the next regatta, and hence an increased risk of time over-runs at future regatta.
- May give the wrong impression to regatta sponsors, or prize givers, who are often local dignitaries.
- Reduced enjoyment of the regatta for all involved.

1.2 Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to collate a "best practice" from the Skiff Racing community on how to minimise the risk of time over-runs of Skiff regattas. It can then be used as an aid memoire for Regatta Committees.

2. COMPILATION OF BEST PRACTICE

2.1 Description of methodology

The methodology for capturing lessons learned and best practice is as follows:

- **The focus is primarily on the time delays that can reasonably be foreseen by and which are under the control of the Regatta organising Committee only. (e.g. a competitor arriving late to a regatta is not under the direct control of the organising committee, but Umpire Launch failure is a foreseeable cause of regatta time delay for which the Regatta Committee may reasonably be expected to have a contingency plan in place.)**
- A draft of this document has initially been compiled with a pre-populated list of potential causes of time delays at regattas and some examples of actions that might be considered for minimising the risk of and length of delays.
- This has been issued to all skiff clubs and skiff regatta organising committees to review and include their input on any reasonable foreseeable causes and the actions that they put in place to ensure smooth and efficient running of their regattas.
- The input and feedback has been assimilated and refined into a review document
- The review document WAS re-issued for a final round of comments and any textual issues to all clubs and regatta committees.
- The final review comments received and document was updated as a final version and re-issued as guidance to all clubs and regatta committees and published on the SRA Website.

2.2 Clubs and Regattas Committees Contacted For Input

Input and feedback has requested from the following:

NAMES REMOVED FOR WEBSITE PUBLICATION

Club or Regatta	Contact Names
Thames Valley Skiff Club	
Granta Skiff Club	
Dittons Skiff & Punting Club	
The Skiff Club	
Wraysbury Skiff & Punting Club	
Sunbury Skiff and Punting Club	
Wargrave Boating Club	
Walton Reach Regatta	
Chertsey and Shepperton Regatta Association	
Hampton Court & Dittons Regatta	
Wraysbury and Old Windsor Regatta	
Skiff Championships Regatta	
Singles & Doubles Marathons	
Sunbury Regatta	

2.3 Feedback Received

Feedback was received from the following:

NAMES REMOVED FOR WEBSITE PUBLICATION

Club or Regatta	Contact Names
Sunbury Skiff and Punting Club	
Skiff Championships	
TVSC Regatta	
Dittons Skiff & Punting Club	
Chertsey and Shepperton Regatta Association	
The Skiff Club	

3. REFERENCES

- Ref. 1 SRA Handbook and Rules of Racing, downloaded from SRA Website,
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4. CONCLUSIONS

- There will always be some level of residual risk that time over-runs will occur due to the nature of the sport, and the environment in which it operates. However, the risk of time over-runs can be minimised by following a check list of actions during the regatta planning stages.
- The checklist of recommended actions compiled from the views of the Skiffing Community is presented in Appendix A of this document.
- The recommended actions may not necessarily be applicable or practical for all regatta situations, but are provided for consideration before rejecting.

Appendix A
Regatta Timing Issues Checklist

RACE SCHEDULING			
What are the hazards	What might be the consequence?	What actions should be considered?	Done
<p>Competitor Conflicts (Doubling Up) The inclusion of a points system has encouraged competitors to race in more than 1 event.</p>	<p>There is potential for competitors to be scheduled in races close to the same time and hence delaying the racing.</p>	<p>Regatta Committees should consider limiting competitors to entering a set maximum number of events, at the time of issuing the Notice for regattas. (Depending on the Regatta this may normally be 2 or 3 events).</p>	
		<p>Doubling-Up should be accounted for as far as is practical when scheduling races, by employing a “Doubling-up” Coding system or similar during the regatta Draw.</p>	
		<p>Consider scheduling in some additional time between races where there is potential doubling up conflicts.</p>	
		<p>The events with the largest numbers of entries scheduled to start early in the race schedule, and subsequent rounds also held as early as practical.</p>	
		<p>Not leaving all Finals until the end of the day. The events with smaller numbers of entries may be considered for an early Final.</p>	
		<p>Events that are not conventional SRA events (e.g. other than skiffs, and particularly with more crew members, like gigs etc) should be scheduled during lunch or tea breaks or after skiff races are completed, to minimise crew member clashes.</p>	

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RACE SCHEDULING			
What are the hazards	What might be the consequence?	What actions should be considered?	Done
<p>Lack of boats Insufficient boats of the required type available when boating</p>	<p>If there are not enough boats of the right types and spare boats available there is likely to be delays in changing over crews and getting to the start.</p>	<p>Consider starting the events with the largest number of entries earliest within the race programme, as they will require more rounds and races to complete.</p>	
		<p>Consideration should be given to the total number of races required for each boat type, i.e. number of doubles races and number of singles races. E.g. If there are twice the number of doubles races compared to singles races then consideration should be given to alternating 2 doubles races with 1 singles race.</p>	
		<p>Consideration should be given to ensuring there are spare sets of matched boats already on the water or close to hand, ready for use if there are any delays of returning crews, e.g. due to a re-row or boat damage. This may require arranging that matched boats are borrowed from other clubs for the period of regatta.</p>	
<p>Cox allocations Doubling-up of coxes is not normally considered by Regatta Committees when scheduling races</p>	<p>If coxes are involved in more than 1 event there is potential for them to be scheduled in races close to the same time and hence delaying the racing.</p>	<p>Regatta Committees could consider demanding that all coxes be named on entries, so that doubling up of coxes could be accounted for within the regatta schedules. <i>However, it should be recognised that historically the availability of the number of competent race coxes compared to number of race crews has always been unbalanced, so placing this demand on Clubs may be too onerous.</i></p>	
		<p>In Notice for Regatta, sent to Clubs, it is suggested that a note is added that “Club Captains should consider allocation of the same cox for competitors who are doubling-up, where practical.”</p>	

RACE SCHEDULING			
What are the hazards	What might be the consequence?	What actions should be considered?	Done
Race Intervals	Intervals between races within the race programme which are very short give too little time for crew change-overs. Intervals which are very long can induce a “lack of urgency” to competitors. Both can cause time delays.	Consideration should be given to estimating a reasonable turn-around time of the umpire launch or launches to allow for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the communication of the race start preparation to crews, the start, the race itself the communication of the race result for recording and; the time for the umpire launch to drive back to the start. This will provide an estimate of the minimum possible race interval, ignoring skiff crew turn around.	
		Consideration should be given to the number of sets of skiffs available, and the estimated turn-around of crews to get back to the start. This should set the minimum race interval.	
		Consideration should be given to variable intervals at “ pinch-points ” where doubling-up may become an issue, e.g. normally towards the end of a regatta there is potential for doubling-up of competitors to become an issue, so a longer interval between races may be more suitable in the last few races. i.e. Estimate a reasonable minimum target time to get to the Start, get attached, race, return to raft, recover and be ready to go out for next race.	
		Consideration should be given to providing slightly longer time intervals between the first few races to allow for any start-up / familiarisation issues.	

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RACE SCHEDULING			
What are the hazards	What might be the consequence?	What actions should be considered?	Done
<p>Integration with Punt Racing Punt Races are often running at the same event with participants also skiff racing.</p>	<p>Clashing in the times of races with same participants in both punting and skiffing has the potential to cause time delays.</p>	<p>Arrange that Punt Racing first race time is different to the Skiffing first race time, to ensure that there is not a simultaneous pressure on the Regatta resources. It is suggested that a minimum 1 hour gap between first race time of Punting and first race time of Skiffing is set, if practical.</p>	
		<p>Always attempt to do the punting and skiffing draws together, in order to highlight if there are any competitor race clashes that can be rectified at an early stage, i.e. at the same place and time.</p>	
		<p>Where possible, take account of punting activities, such that competitors who chose to punt and skiff should be prioritised to skiff outside the time of punting events.</p>	

COURSE SET UP			
What are the hazards	What might be the consequence?	What actions should be considered?	Done
Course layout issues Are there any moored boats or overhanging branches etc. that may affect the regatta course.	If there are any obstructions to the regatta course on the day of the regatta, then they may take time to resolve and delay regatta start.	Regatta Committee to arrange inspection of the planned course in the weeks or days before the regatta to allow time to resolve any issues ahead of the regatta course set up.	
		Consider a work day/evening to clear tress, cut grass etc in the days or weeks before the regatta, to reduce the number of actions on day of the regatta.	
Course layout issues Course Equipment not adequately secured overnight prior to the regatta.	Potential for loss due to theft or inadequate mooring and subsequent delay to regatta start.	Ensure that all equipment is adequately secured.	
Course layout issues Difficulty in positioning anchors, stake boats and buoys with team who may only be carrying out course laying on an infrequent basis.	Delay to regatta start.	Regatta Committee could arrange for the production of a drawn plan of the course and pre-regatta set up check list to aid the course set-up team and for their briefing on the course layout by an assigned course co-ordinator.	
		Regatta Committee could arrange for a “Master Class” on stake-boat anchoring for the course laying team in the weeks or days prior to the regatta, to practice their technique.	
		Aim for continuity in course set-up team with a course co-ordinator who has successfully been involved previously.	
		Assess if use of GPS for positioning buoys is suitable / practical.	

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COURSE SET UP			
What are the hazards	What might be the consequence?	What actions should be considered?	Done
Course layout issues Has the course been laid out in accordance with the current Buoyage and Signage required by the river authorities?	The regatta could be delayed if the river authorities object to the course buoyage and signage.	Regatta Committee should ensure, before regatta notices are issued to clubs, that they have available the correct current Buoyage and Signage and have defined how it should be laid out and have a clear plan for doing so.	
		Regatta Committee should have boat and sufficient personnel available at short notice to make adjustments to the course and stake boat positions.	
Course layout issues Has the course been laid out for fair racing to take place taking account of the river shape, current and prevailing wind?	The course may need to be adjusted to allow for fair racing at any stage during the regatta as the prevailing conditions can change.	Regatta Committee should have boat and sufficient personnel available at short notice to make adjustments to the course and stake boat positions.	
Late running of course set-up Setting a course is an activity that a club will do once or twice each year, so is not well practiced, whereas moving boats out of the boat house and onto the water is a regular activity and can be conducted by many members with minimal supervision.	A delay to the start of racing due to the course not being in place will cause a late regatta from the start. Regaining lost time is then an uphill and difficult task.	Plan to prepare all buoys and stake boats, signs and anchors and anchor lines fully ready for rapid and easy deployment, the day before the regatta.	
		Sufficient time with a very generous time contingency should be set for laying the course as there a number of variables which can affect the deployment of the course, e.g. target the course completion as a prime activity and for say two hours before the regatta start time.	
		The Regatta Committee may wish to consider compiling a check list to confirm that all course equipment, all officials and their equipment is in place and a briefing of officials has taken place prior to starting the racing.	

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COURSE SET UP			
What are the hazards	What might be the consequence?	What actions should be considered?	Done
External effects – disruption by other boats	Other boats could interfere with the smooth running of the regatta if they encroach on the course.	Regatta Committee should ensure, before regatta notices are issued to clubs, that they have available the correct current Buoyage and Signage and know how it should be laid out and have a clear plan for doing so.	
		Regatta Committees should consider informing the lock keepers of the regatta and issuing with printing a poster for display at the locks for other boat users	
		Regatta Committees should consider sending a reminder to other boat/canoe clubs and boat services on their reach of the regatta, e.g. a week prior to the regatta, along with a one page Notice for display at their club, so that they are fully aware.	
		Regatta Committees should consider providing hand-outs to craft moored on the course telling them what the regatta is about and to be aware of races and skiffs if they are leaving their mooring.	
Movements of buoys and anchors through wind and current	Anchors and buoys may need to be moved and adjusted, thus delaying regatta.	Sufficient time with a very generous time contingency should be set for laying the course as there a number of variables which can affect the deployment of the course, e.g. target the course completion as a prime activity and for say two hours before the regatta start time. Any initial issues with wind and current will therefore have time to arise and be dealt with prior to racing.	
		Regatta Committee should have boat and sufficient personnel available at short notice to make adjustments to the course and stake boat positions.	

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COURSE SET UP			
What are the hazards	What might be the consequence?	What actions should be considered?	Done
<p>Racing Craft deployed at launching / unloading area Lack of boats at the boat loading / unloading area</p>	<p>If not all boats are available for the first boating times then the first races will be delayed</p>	<p>Regatta committee should ensure that there are sufficient people available to deploy the required boats to ensure availability to crews for the first boating times.</p>	
<p>Boat Loading / unloading area Crew turn-rounds can be affected if the location of this area involves crossing the course or is congested.</p>	<p>Delay to turn round of crews causing time delays.</p>	<p>If possible, site the boat loading / unloading area outside of the course.</p>	
<p>Catering, toilet, tentage set-up Non club based regattas require additional facilities to be organised and set-up which entails additional time and resources.</p>	<p>Lack of sufficient resources for both set-up of regatta course and additional regatta facilities can cause time delay to first races.</p>	<p>Regatta Committee should consider if they have arranged enough assistance at an early stage of their organisation to account for the time and effort required for a non-club based regatta.</p>	
		<p>It is suggested that the Regatta Committee give priority to activities that affect the start of racing.</p>	

EQUIPMENT			
What are the hazards	What might be the consequence?	What actions should be considered?	Done
<p>Borrowed Boats Boats are often borrowed from other clubs and there have been occasions that those boats have been in an unfit condition for racing.</p>	<p>Borrowed boats may be out of commission until repair carried out, hence a delay in racing.</p>	<p>Race Committee should confirm with the club from whom boats are being borrowed that the boats have been checked as fit for racing. <i>The onus should be on the lender of the boat to ensure that the skiffs are delivered in good order and fit for racing.</i></p>	
		<p>Race Committee should try and arrange that the borrowed boats are delivered to regatta site (if possible) a few days prior to the event and check the skiffs are fit for racing. i.e. thole pins, strings, stretchers etc are sound and fit for racing</p>	
<p>Boat damages Boats can be damaged at any point during the regatta, and as boats are matched this means that two or more boats are effectively out of action when one boat is damaged.</p>	<p>A set of boats may be out of commission until repair carried out, hence a delay in racing.</p>	<p>Consideration should be given to whether there is a need for the availability of spare sets of matched boats already on-the water or close to hand and ready for use, <i>especially if there are a large number of races.</i> This may require arranging that matched boats are borrowed from other clubs for the period of the regatta.</p>	
		<p>Regatta Committee should consider reviewing the condition of their boats prior to issue of Notice of Regatta to ensure that any essential maintenance has been carried out.</p>	
		<p>Tools should be available close to hand for minor boat repairs, e.g. screw drivers (and thole pins, etc</p>	
		<p>Competent persons to action minor repairs identified by name on the on the Officials Rota</p>	

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EQUIPMENT			
What are the hazards	What might be the consequence?	What actions should be considered?	Done
Boats not properly marked with Colours for stations (Blue, White, Red)	Incorrect allocation of boats to crews, causing delay due to need to rectify.	Ensure that each set of boats are consistently marked or identified with colours (Blue, White, Red) for a set of three.	
		Include the Colours for each station / lane within the Race programme for aiding Raft Stewards and Umpires	

BOATING OF CREWS			
What are the hazards	What might be the consequence?	What actions should be considered?	Done
<p>Crews late to boat Crews not arriving on time for their race are at risk of being disqualified.</p>	<p>The crew may be disqualified from racing. Late boating can cause time delays to race schedule.</p>	<p>The Regatta Committee should consider including within the Notice of the Regatta, a Map of the Venue, parking details plus stating the earliest likely time for the first crews to boat so that participants can take this into account before submitting an entry.</p>	
		<p>The Regatta Committee should consider including a Boating Time associated with the First Race times, when First Race Times are sent to the participating Clubs.</p>	
		<p>The Regatta Committee should consider including a reminder within the Notification of First Race Times that the onus is on Club Captains to ensure their crews are at the boating raft in good time for their race and to make themselves known to the raft stewards. Club Captains should in particular make this clear to those crews new to racing. The above could be published on the Regatta Website, if there is one, so that it is available to competitors and officials.</p>	
		<p>Regatta communication system should be in operation early, say 30 minutes prior to first race start time and used to inform the first race competitors that they should present themselves to the raft steward well in advance of their race time.</p>	
		<p>The Regatta Committee should ensure Regatta Programmes are advertised and available for participants before racing starts.</p>	
		<p>Where the boating raft is remote from the regatta area it may be desirable to have an addition raft marshal (in communication with the boating raft) in the regatta area to round up crews.</p>	

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BOATING OF CREWS			
What are the hazards	What might be the consequence?	What actions should be considered?	Done
Raft Marshals not adequately briefed	Incorrect allocation of boats to crews, causing delay due to need to rectify. Lack of urgency to boat from crews can cause time delays. Especially at Regatta Start, all boats should be filled and sent to start. Situations where one crew has reached the start and then has to be called back if there is a problem with the second boat, causes time delays.	Ensure that Raft Marshalls are individuals who have a sense of urgency and are adept at organising re-scheduling of races with race control.	
		Ensure that Raft Marshalls have an up to date Race Programme and are briefed on the boat Colouring and allocation of appropriate colour for each lane / station.	
		Include the Colours for each station / lane within the Race programme for aiding Raft Stewards and Umpires.	
		Ensure Raft Marshalls are briefed to load crews for the same race at the same time and proceed to the start at the same time, to avoid situations where one crew has reached the start and then has to be called back if there is a problem with the second boat.	
Raft Marshals without direct communication to Race Control i.e. where the boating raft is remote from the location of Race Control	Lack of communications especially where there are changes to the race programme during the regatta will cause confusion and time delays	The Regatta Committee should consider the use of radio communications to keep Raft Marshals informed of any changes to Race Programme or crews. Also, for efficient resolution of any Raft Marshal queries on crews and events.	

AT THE START			
What are the hazards	What might be the consequence?	What actions should be considered?	Done
Insufficient Stake boat crews	A lack of sufficient stake boat crew and/or their late arrival on station prior to the first race will put the full racing programme at risk of delay. It is then an almost impossible task to catch up this time.	Sufficient numbers of stake boat personnel (and contingency) should be confirmed at an early stage of planning the regatta, i.e. at the same time as confirming Umpires. It is imperative that that there are named and confirmed stake boat personnel in position prior to the start of the first racing session.	
		The Regatta Committee should ensure all officials (including stake boat personnel) are supplied with an Officials Rota immediately after the draw and before the Regatta day, clearly stating their role and required reporting location and time of arrival.	
Lack of Start Marshal and Race officials A lack of a sufficiently informed Start Marshal organising crews for the start and sufficient race officials at the finish.	This will put the full racing programme at risk of delay. It is then an almost impossible task to catch up this time.	Sufficient numbers of Start Marshalls and other race officials (and contingency) should be confirmed at an early stage of planning the regatta.	
		It is suggested that all start Marshalls and other race officials (and contingency) should be re-confirmed say, 2 weeks prior to the Regatta date to allow time for any cancellations and re-scheduling or additional resourcing. Also, provide Officials Rota and get confirmation of availability after the draw.	
		The Regatta Committee should consider the use of radio communications to keep Start Marshalls and other race officials at the finish informed of any changes to Race Programme or crews. Also, for efficient resolution of any queries on crews and events.	

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AT THE START			
What are the hazards	What might be the consequence?	What actions should be considered?	Done
		The Regatta Committee should ensure all officials are supplied with an Officials Rota before the Regatta day clearly stating their role and required reporting location and time of arrival.	
Insufficient Umpires, Launches and Launch Drivers	A lack of sufficient Umpires, Launches and Launch Drivers or their late arrival on station will put the full racing programme at risk of delay. It is then an almost impossible task to catch up this time.	Sufficient numbers of Umpires, Launches and Launch Drivers (and contingency) should be confirmed at an early stage of planning the regatta. An ideal allocation of Umpires is 4 per 3 hour session (1 as Finish Judge, 2 on the water and 1 back-up to cover for late arrival, allow rotation on the water and for availability to be on call to the Judges' tent at all times to help make a Quorum of the of the Race Committee, as the other Umpires may be on the water).	
		It is suggested that all Umpires, Launches and Launch Drivers (and contingency) should be re-confirmed say, 2 weeks prior to the Regatta date to allow time for any cancellations and re-scheduling or additional resourcing.	
		The Regatta Committee should ensure all officials are supplied with an Officials Rota immediately after the draw and before the Regatta day clearly stating their role and required reporting location and time of arrival.	

DURING THE REGATTA			
What are the hazards	What might be the consequence?	What actions should be considered?	Done
Late arrival of launches and drivers	Full race programme is put a risk of delay. It is then an almost impossible task to catch up this time.	Plan the timing of arrival of launches for the day prior to the regatta, if possible.	
		Consideration could be given to Umpiring from the bank, if this is possible for the regatta course, until arrival of launches and drivers.	
Late arrival Umpires	Full race programme is put a risk of delay. It is then an almost impossible task to catch up this time.	Plan to include having number of umpires in excess of the minimum required in attendance, to enable re-organisation of Umpire rota.	
Launch Failure	Full race programme is put a risk of delay. It is then an almost impossible task to catch up this time.	Confirm with those supplying launch in the week prior to the regatta that the launch is delivered in a usable state and with a supply of fuel.	
		Plan to have a spare launch or dory available, (if possible and practical).	
		Plan to have a spare engine (if possible and practical), but as a minimum some spare fuel and oil available.	
		Consideration could be given to Umpiring from the bank, if this is possible for the regatta course, until launch repaired.	
Lack of Single point of Contact for Regatta issues It is desirable to have one person with overall responsibility for running the regatta who can initiate solutions to problems.	The lack of a single named point of contact for issues arising during the regatta can lead to inaction or un-coordinated actions which cause time delays.	Normally the Regatta Secretary is the point of contact for issues arising during the regatta. The Regatta Secretary or their delegate, should be named on the Officials Rota and in Racing Programme, and should be readily available during the time of the regatta for initiating solutions to arising problems.	
		Race Control (Judges tent) provided with Mobile phone number of Regatta Secretary or their delegate.	