



Guidance For Race Officers

Derbyshire Youth Sailing

Document Updated January 2026

Thank you for volunteering to be Race Officer for a DYS series event. We hope you have an enjoyable and successful day. Here is some guidance on our ethos, aims and procedures, to help you plan the day and to ensure that each event is run in a similar way, in order to be fair to all sailors and to keep the format familiar.

DYS is open to all school age Derbyshire sailors. Our aim is to provide fun racing and learning experiences for all abilities and ages; from young sailors who are just starting out and experiencing their first event away from their home club, to the older, experienced sailors who are competing for one of our many trophies. The format, therefore, needs to be simple and familiar for the less experienced, but also fair and competitive for the more experienced.

Here is our advice based on previous experience and the requests of our sailors:

Three races during the day. One before lunch (11am start), two (maybe back-to-back) after lunch, but this is weather/circumstances dependent. Only one race is required to constitute an event. If more than 1 race is sailed, only two results count towards the event.

Keep the course simple. A simple race course is best, rather than criss-crossing the water, as the fleet will spread out a lot and novices can become lost. However, try and avoid a triangle course and use at least 4 buoys. Have a clear start and finish line and go through a gate every lap. On large bodies of water, using a trapezoid course is a good way for the sailors to gain experience ready for National Circuits.

Risk Assessment. Please complete and sign the risk assessment in conjunction with your club rep.

Briefing. Please provide a short brief at the start of the day (10.30am), including any particular local hazards or special instructions. Show the flags that you will use and your intentions for starting and finishing. A 5-4-1 go start with the P flag, is our normal starting procedure. Please remind all sailors that sailing is a self-policing sport and if they break a rule or touch a mark, they are expected to take a penalty on the water in accordance with the sporting code of conduct which they agreed to follow when they signed in at registration. Please introduce your club rep and any DYS committee members present. Please highlight any first aiders on site and the location of first aid kits.

Class Flag. Our class flag is D Delta or the Derbyshire Flag.

45m – 1h. As this is a handicap series, the leaders should complete at least 45 minutes to keep the handicaps accurate, but the last boats should not be on the water more than 1 hour. Keep the course short (especially if the wind might drop), set plenty of laps and shorten the race according to the time. A suggested plan would be to finish on the lead boat at about 45 minutes and then finish all other boats as they cross the line after the leader, regardless of how many laps they have done. Ideally all boats are then finished within the hour. If there are boats on the course that will not finish within the hour, they could be finished after an hour using the Whiskey flag. If times have been recorded every lap, then these boats can use their last recorded time and laps completed to calculate a result. Please be

aware that the lead sailors in the slower classes (e.g. Toppers) are still competing (and often beating) the faster boats (e.g. ILCAs) even though they appear a long way back on the water. If they are finished early with fewer laps, it does not give a fair handicap. Please always shorten courses and finish races on the lead boat and not on individual fleets further back, as this effects the results. All boats are competing in the same race and are not scored by fleets. Ideally boats within a fleet should do the same number of laps if they are closely grouped together.

Lead Boat. If possible, please provide a lead boat for the first lap, to orientate sailors with your water and marks.

Coaching. RIBS are allowed to provide coaching and help to the back of the fleet, so that novices can keep up with the fleet or can be helped out of difficulty. This is part of our learning experience. Boats should not however, be coached to pass another boat and strict rules should be applied to the leaders.

Results. Please use the DYS Sailwave file to process the results. This will be available via one of our DYS representatives. Although we have sub fleets of Juniors, Intermediates and Seniors, the results are only scored as one fleet. The positions for the Juniors, Intermediates and Seniors are then taken from the overall results. The results are not re-scored as fleets. The Sailwave results are treated as final. Anomalies will not be addressed (which is why correct finishing of the races is important)

Rules. Please bear in mind the experience of the sailors. For the top sailors, it is important to them that all sailing/racing rules and penalties are applied correctly and fairly. For those just taking part and gaining experience, then quiet words of advice are appropriate and appreciated. Please remind all sailors that sailing is a self-policing sport and if they break a rule or touch a mark, they are expected to take a penalty on the water in accordance with the sporting code of conduct which they agreed to follow when they signed in at registration.

Protests. All disputes should be managed using the DYS Hearing Dispute Process, which uses a form of Arbitration meeting and the Post-Race Penalty system (30%). DYS Arbitration request forms and Arbitration report forms are available at registration along with the process document. The sailors cannot go straight to a formal RYA Protest hearing. Our process ensures that advice can be given in a non-confrontational manner, to provide a learning opportunity. All Arbitration Meetings and Hearings should be held in private, away from other sailors and parents. Parents of the sailors are not to be present, but an independent adult observer must be present instead. In exceptional circumstances, if the Arbitration Meeting is unsure, then the Arbitrator can ask for it to go to an RYA Protest hearing.

Thank you for giving your time to help the young sailors of DYS. If you have any further questions or queries, please contact your DYS club representative.

Have Fun

Friendly Competition

Learning Experiences