



International Optimist Class Association (UK)



2026 Major Event Sailing Instructions

[NP] denotes a rule that shall not be grounds for protests by a boat. This changes RRS 60.1.

[SP] denotes a rule for which a standard penalty may be applied by the Race Committee without a hearing, or a discretionary penalty applied by the Protest Committee at a hearing.

1 RULES

- 1.1 Racing will be governed by the rules as defined in the Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS).
- 1.2 These Major Event Sailing Instructions (MESI) represent standard sailing instructions for the Major events run by IOCA UK. They apply to all fleets: Main, Racing Regatta and Coached Regatta. A set of Supplementary Sailing Instructions (SSI) will be published for each specific event.
- 1.3 MESI 7 and MESI 18 do not apply to the Regatta Fleet.

2 CHANGES TO SAILING INSTRUCTIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

- 2.1 Any change to these MESI or SSI will be posted on the official notice board not less than 30 minutes before Flag D is displayed, except that any change to the schedule of races will be posted by 19:00 on the day before it will take effect.
- 2.2 [DP] From the first warning signal until the end of the last race of the day, except in an emergency, a boat shall not make voice or data transmissions and shall not receive voice or data communication that is not available to all boats.

3 CODE OF CONDUCT

- 3.1 [DP] Competitors and support persons shall comply with reasonable requests from race officials.

4 SIGNALS MADE ASHORE

- 4.1 Signals made ashore will be displayed as specified in the SSI.
- 4.2 When Flag AP displayed ashore without a numeral pennant it means "Racing is postponed indefinitely. Flag D will be displayed to commence launching shortly after AP is removed." This changes Race Signal AP.
- 4.3 When flag T is displayed ashore with one sound signal, competitors shall tally out as per MESI 16, but not launch until flag D is displayed.
- 4.4 [NP] [DP] Boats shall only launch when Flag D (Delta) is displayed ashore, either on its own or with their class flag.

Flag Delta



4.5 The warning signal will be at the later of the scheduled time or 30 minutes after flag D is displayed.

5 SCHEDULE OF RACES

5.1 The schedule of races will be set out in the NoR and SSI.

5.2 To alert boats that a race or sequence of races will begin soon, the orange flag will be displayed with one long sound signal at least five minutes before a warning signal is made.

5.3 An additional race may be run at the discretion of the Race Committee on a given day. To indicate this intention the finish boat will display an orange flag at the end of the last scheduled race of the day.

6 FLEETS AND FLAGS

6.1 MESI 6 only applies if it is stated in the SSI.



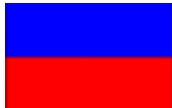
6.2 Unless stated otherwise in the SSI, the Race Committee will allocate each boat in the main fleet to a colour group (yellow, blue, red or white) as posted on the ONB. The allocation of competitors into colour groups will be based on the latest IOCA ranking and thereafter in sail number order for any sailors without a ranking.

6.3 When the fleet is split into flights there will be two starts in each race. Each start will be for two colour groups, as shown in Attachment A to these instructions.

6.4 The allocation of the groups will not be grounds for redress. This changes RRS 61.4(b).

6.5 [DP] Each boat shall display the coloured group identification ribbon provided at the peak of her sail.

6.6 [SP] It is each sailor's responsibility to ensure that they sail in the correct group. The penalty for sailing a race in the incorrect group shall be 5 points added to the boat's finishing position in that race.

Fleet	Flag
Main Fleet	Flag Oscar 
Racing Regatta Fleet	Flag Romeo 
Coached Regatta Fleet	Flag Echo 
Also, when racing in groups/flights	
Yellow	Yellow Flag
Blue	Blue Flag
Red	Red Flag
White	White Flag

7 THE COURSE

- 7.1 The course configuration to be sailed will be stated in the SSI and may be selected from those shown in Attachment B of these MESI.
- 7.2 A gate mark may be replaced by a single mark to be left to port.

8 MARKS

- 8.1 Marks will be described in the SSI.
- 8.2 Any replacement marks, as described in MESI 10.1 will be the same as the original marks unless stated otherwise in the SSI.
- 8.3 Holding area marks will be narrow yellow cylinders.

9 THE START

- 9.1 Races will be started in accordance with RRS 26, except that the warning signal for each succeeding start will be at least 5 minutes after the starting signal of the preceding class. This changes RRS 26.
- 9.2 The starting line will be between a staff displaying an orange flag on the committee vessel and the Pin mark (or a staff displaying an orange flag on the Pin vessel, if used).
- 9.3 A boat starting later than 4 minutes after its starting signal shall be scored Did Not Start (DNS) without a hearing. This changes RRS A5.1.
- 9.4 [NP] [DP] Holding area marks may be laid, in which case the holding area is downwind of those marks. When the orange flag is displayed, boats which are not competing in the next start shall remain in the holding area.

10 CHANGE OF THE NEXT LEG OF THE COURSE

- 10.1 To change the next leg of the course, the Race Committee will move the original mark or the finishing line, or lay a replacement mark in a new position and remove the original mark as soon as practical.
- 10.2 Minor course changes may be made without being signalled. This changes RRS 33.

11 THE FINISH

- 11.1 The finishing line will be between a staff displaying a blue flag on the finishing vessel and the Pin mark (or a staff displaying a blue flag on the Pin Vessel, if used).
- 11.2 [NP][DP] After finishing and clearing the finishing line, boats shall avoid the course area including the finishing area and all boats not yet finished.
- 11.3 The Race Committee may give a finishing place to any boat as follows:
 - 11.3.1 [NP][DP] When a race committee vessel (which may be in motion) displays flag W with two sounds, boats that have not yet finished may be given a finishing place. A boat so notified is no longer required to sail the course, shall stop racing and shall return to the starting area, or return ashore if there is no more racing.
 - 11.3.2 The finishing place given shall match the boat's race position in the race at that time.
 - 11.3.3 The decision by the race committee to use this procedure, or not to use it, shall not be grounds for requesting redress. This changes RRS 61.4(b).

12 PENALTY SYSTEM

- 12.1 RRS Appendix T (Arbitration) applies.
- 12.2 [SP] The penalty for breaches of Class Rules shall be the Graded Penalty System detailed in Attachment C and will be applied by the Technical Committee/Event Chief Measurer.
- 12.3 [DP] The penalty for breaking RRS 41 Outside Help shall be at the discretion of the Protest Committee.
 - 12.3.1 RRS 41 is changed by the addition of "Clarification of Outside Help: A boat that is alongside or communicating with a support vessel is receiving outside help".
 - 12.3.2 At the discretion of the Race Committee the Racing Regatta Fleet may be provided with outside help while racing. This will usually take the form of a designated coach providing verbal advice to those sailors nearer the back of the fleet. This changes RRS 41.

Racing Regatta Fleet ONLY

- 12.4 A boat may take a 20% Scoring Penalty, calculated as in RRS 44.3(c), as a Post-Race Penalty under T1(a). The rest of Appendix T does not apply.

13 TIME LIMIT AND TARGET TIMES

- 13.1 The time limit is 60 minutes.
- 13.2 Boats failing to finish within 20 minutes after the first boat sails the course and finishes shall be scored Did Not Finish without a hearing, except when MESI 11.3.1 applies. This changes RRS 35, A5.1.
- 13.3 [NP] The target time for each race is 40 minutes for Main Fleet and 20 minutes for Racing Regatta Fleet. Failure to meet the target time will not be grounds for redress. This changes RRS 61.4(b).

14 PROTESTS AND ARBITRATION

- 14.1 When a boat's protest will concern an incident in the racing area that she was involved in or saw, in addition to all other requirements, the boat shall inform the Race Committee of the boat/s being protested at the finishing line immediately after finishing, or as soon as practicable after retiring. For the purposes of this rule, Race Committee includes the Measurers when they are located near the finish. The Protest Committee may waive this requirement if it decides that it was impractical for a boat to comply with this rule.
- 14.2 Protests and requests for redress or reopening shall be written on forms available at the race office and shall be delivered there within the appropriate time limit.
- 14.3 The protest time limit will be 30 minutes after the last boat of a fleet comes ashore, unless the Protest Committee posts a different time. The protest time limit will be posted on the ONB. The SSI may specify the use of an online form in which case this must be submitted within the protest time limit, but email attachments received after the time limit will not invalidate the protest.
- 14.4 Notices of protests by the Race Committee, Technical Committee or Protest Committee will be posted to inform boats under RRS 60.2(a)(2) within the protest time as in MESI 14.3.
- 14.5 Times and places of arbitration meetings and protest hearings will be posted within thirty minutes of the end of the protest time limit.
- 14.6 When the Protest Committee decides that an infringement, other than an infringement of a rule of RRS Part 2, has had no significant effect on the outcome of the race, it may impose a penalty of one or more points or make such other arrangements as it thinks fair. This may be to impose no penalty.

Hearing Process for Racing Regatta Fleet ONLY

- 14.7 The protest committee for a protest hearing shall be a single judge, and the penalty for a breach of a rule of Part 2 or rule 31 shall be a 20% Scoring Penalty unless rule 44.1(b) applies.
- 14.8 Parties may not call witnesses, but the judge may call a boat who saw the incident as a witness. This changes rule 63.4(b).
- 14.9 One parent or other adult per boat may attend the hearing as an observer.

15 SAFETY

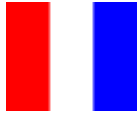
- 15.1 [NP] [DP] On any day that racing is scheduled boats shall not go afloat without the permission of the Race Committee.
- 15.2 RRS 40 (Personal Flotation Devices) applies at all times when afloat.
- 15.3 [SP] When the Race Committee (including Beach Master and Class Measurer) considers that a boat, its equipment or crew's clothing are not adequate for the existing or anticipated conditions, or that a boat or crew is in difficulty, it may instruct the boat and crew not to launch, or to retire or to sail ashore or to accept outside help. The boat and crew shall comply with such instructions without delay. The penalty for a breach of this rule shall be a major class rule penalty (Attachment C.4).
- 15.4 Additional safety information may be listed in the SSI.

16 [NP] [SP] TALLIES

- 16.1 MESI 16 only applies if it is stated in the SSI.
- 16.2 A tally board will be situated at the place specified in the SSI.

- 16.3 After flag T is displayed ashore and before going afloat each competitor intending to race shall personally take the appropriately coloured tally band bearing their tally number from the tally board and place it securely and visibly on their wrist, leg or arm.
- 16.4 Immediately after coming ashore, each competitor shall remove their tally band from their person and place it back on the tally board.
- 16.5 The penalty for infringing MESI 16 shall be 5 points added to the boat's series score. The Protest Committee may change this penalty at its discretion.

Flag Tango



17 [NP] [DP] REPLACEMENT OF EQUIPMENT

- 17.1 Damaged or lost equipment (spars, sail, foils etc) shall only be substituted if authorised by the Technical or Race Committee. Boats shall make requests for substitution at the first reasonable opportunity.

18 [NP][DP] EQUIPMENT INSPECTION AND MEASUREMENT CHECKS

- 18.1 Each boat shall produce or verify the existence of a valid measurement book.
- 18.2 Boats may be inspected at any time.
- 18.3 Immediately after each race one or more boats may be required to proceed for an equipment check. Boats notified shall report immediately to a nearby measurement vessel displaying a yellow flag marked "Measurer" or "M". Measurement checks may be made using photography.
- 18.4 After finishing, boats shall not alter any settings on their boat until after they have cleared the measurement boat area.

19 OFFICIAL VESSELS

- 19.1 Vessels will be marked as follows:

Role	Status	Identification
Safety Control	Official	Orange Flag
Jury, Official, Measurer, Medic, Press	Official	Yellow Flag
Coach	Official	Yellow Flag (letter C)
Main Fleet Safety	Official	White Flag (numbered)
Racing Regatta Fleet Safety or Official Support Vessels when Attachment D is in force	Official	Blue Flag (numbered)
Mark Layer	Official	Red band on engine
Support Person vessels	Non-Official	Green flag (numbered)

- 19.2 [DP]All vessels listed in MESI 19.1 shall be registered with the Organising Authority. Registration shall include a list of the boats which any Support Persons on board will be supporting.
- 19.3 [DP]Support persons aboard unregistered vessels shall not be in the racing area (see MESI 19.7) nor have any communication with competitors from the time the D flag is raised for the first race until the finish of the last race of the day.

- 19.4 All vessels listed in MESI 19.1 are under the control of the Race Committee which includes the Safety Officer.
- 19.5 [DP] Unless carrying out official duties as directed by the Race Committee, a support vessel shall not be in the racing area from the display of the warning signal until all boats in that race (or races if there are groups) have finished or the Race Committee signals a postponement or abandonment.
- 19.6 For official vessels displaying their identification described in MESI 19.1, the racing area is defined as 100m from anywhere that a boat may reasonably sail when racing.
- 19.7 For all other vessels, including those described as non-official vessels in MESI 19.1, this distance is increased to 250m. If holding marks are laid, non-official vessels shall not be on the course side of these marks.
- 19.8 The penalty for failing to comply with MESI 19.7 will be determined by the Protest Committee and may include penalising of boats associated with the Support Persons who break this rule. Note that this also applies for official vessels which do not adhere to the Race Committee's positioning instructions. This changes RRS 62.4.

20 [DP] TOWING

- 20.1 Boats shall not be towed. Boats breaking this rule shall be disqualified without a hearing from the race completed nearest in time to the infringement.
The only exceptions to this are:
- 20.1.1 If a boat has retired from a race and is being escorted by a support vessel either ashore or to the nearest mothership.
- 20.1.2 If the Race Committee or Event Safety Officer informs all support vessels that towing is permitted.

21 RUBBISH DISPOSAL

- 21.1 Rubbish may be placed aboard support or race committee vessels.

22 BERTHING [NP][DP]

- 22.1 Support person vessels shall be kept in their assigned places.

23 RISK STATEMENT

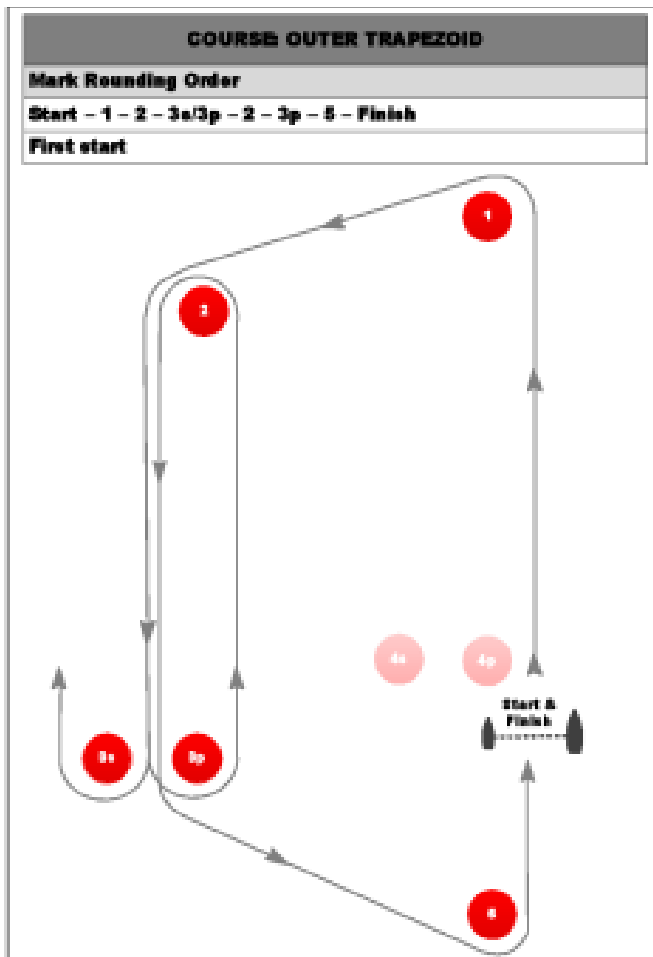
- 23.1 RRS 3 of the Racing Rules of Sailing states: "The responsibility for a boat's decision to participate in a race or to continue racing is hers alone".
- 23.2 Sailing is by its nature an unpredictable sport and therefore involves an element of risk. By taking part in the event, each competitor agrees and acknowledges that:
- 23.2.1 They are aware of the inherent element of risk involved in the sport and accept responsibility for the exposure of themselves, their crew and their boat to such inherent risk whilst taking part in the event;
- 23.2.2 They are responsible for the safety of themselves, their crew, their boat and their other property whether afloat or ashore;
- 23.2.3 They accept responsibility for any injury, damage or loss to the extent caused by their own actions or omissions;
- 23.2.4 Their boat is in good order, equipped to sail in the event and they are fit to participate;
- 23.2.5 The provision of a race management team, patrol vessels, umpires and other officials and volunteers by the organiser does not relieve them of their own responsibilities;
- 23.2.6 The provision of patrol vessel cover is limited to such assistance, particularly in extreme weather conditions, as can be practically provided in the circumstances;
- 23.2.7 It is their responsibility to familiarise themselves with any risks specific to this venue or this event drawn to their attention in any rules and information produced for the venue or event and to attend any competitors briefing held at the venue.

Attachment A: Schedule of Group Starts

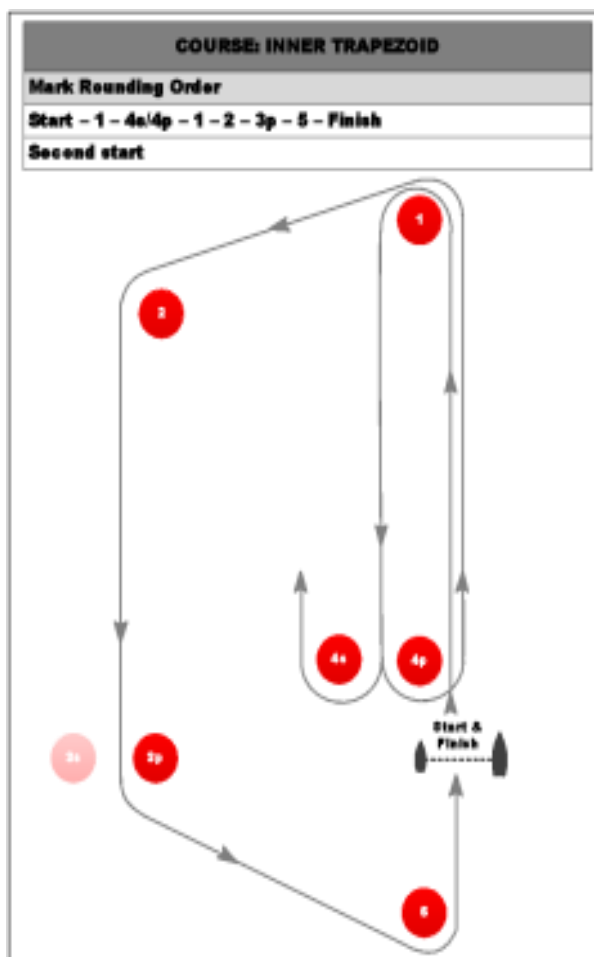
Race	First Start Groups		Second Start Groups	
1 & 7	Yellow	Blue	Red	White
2 & 8	Yellow	Red	Blue	White
3 & 9	Yellow	White	Blue	Red
4 & 10	Red	White	Yellow	Blue
5 & 11	Blue	White	Yellow	Red
6 & 12	Blue	Red	Yellow	White

Trapezoid Courses with Windward Finish

FIRST START



SECOND START



Attachment C: Graded Penalties

(CR refers to class rule)

C.1 Minor (Technical Penalties)

First offence warning, 2nd and subsequent offences 2 points

- a) Breaches of Safety Regulations if no danger was involved (MESI 14 and 15)

C.2 Minor class rule penalties

First offence warning, 2nd and subsequent offences 3 points

- a) Bailer not attached to hull (CR 4.3)
- b) Paddle not attached to hull (CR 4.3)
- c) Daggerboard not attached to hull (CR 3.3.4)
- d) Painter not attached to mast step or thwart (CR 4.3)
- e) Whistle not attached to personal flotation device (CR 4.2)
- f) Two sail ties 3mm or more loose (CR 6.6.3.4)
- g) Accidental loss of sail tie (CR 6.6.3.4)

C.3 Intermediate class rule penalties

First offence warning, 2nd and subsequent offences 5 points

- a) No bailer, paddle or painter in boat (CR 4.3)
- b) No whistle (CR 4.2)
- c) No lanyard, locking device or other arrangement to attach mast to hull (CR 3.5.2.11)
- d) Sail outside limits of bands (CR 3.5.2.7)
- e) Three or more ties 3mm or more loose (CR 6.6.3.4)
- f) Throat, tack or clew eyelet 3mm or more loose (CR 6.6.3.4)
- g) Buoyancy bags deflated, deteriorated or damaged (CR 3.2.7)

C.4 Major class rule penalties (as per RRS)

First offence penalty of a minimum of 10 points and up to DSQ subject to protest by the Technical Committee or Race Committee, 2nd and subsequent offences DSQ

- a) Use of uninspected equipment
- b) Use of unapproved fittings
- c) Breaches of Safety Regulations where danger may have been involved including MESI 14.3

Attachment D - Protocol for a zero-coaching event

D.1 This attachment only applies at events where it has been invoked by the NoR, SSI or an Official Notice.

Support Vessels

D.2 No support vessels shall be allowed, other than those authorised by or agreed with the race committee. Upon arrival, the person in charge of a support vessel shall report to the Race Office, and shall not launch the vessel before this requirement has been met.

D.3 All boats will be allocated an official support vessel for the event. These support vessels shall display a coloured identification flag matching the ribbon colour of their allocated boats.

D.4 These support vessels shall provide their allocated boats with the following support: rig alteration (for example alteration and replacement of sail ties, kicker, and sprit tensions); provision and storage of their boats' food and drink and spare equipment; and replacement of equipment – each official support vessel shall carry a limited supply of spares (tiller extension, sail ties, rope and sail-repair tape), and shall check with other support vessels if they no longer have the required spare.

D.5 For more extensive boat repairs, the official support vessel shall request additional support from the Race Committee.

D.6 When the orange flags are raised on the Committee Vessel, official support vessels shall immediately proceed to the waiting area (50m downwind of the start line, or as marked) and remain there until the orange flags are lowered.

D.7 Between races, official support vessels shall be positioned in the area where the Race Committee have directed boats to congregate. A diagram may be posted on the official notice board providing details.

D.8 In exceptional circumstances official support vessels may be called upon by the race committee to undertake other duties and may not be available to boats for use as support vessels.

Support Persons (as defined in RRS)

D.9 Except when performing their official roles onboard support vessels, or when requested by - or agreed with - the Race Committee, Support Persons shall not communicate with or otherwise help boats afloat, tow boats to or from race area, nor enter race area as described in MESI 19.6 and 19.7.

D.10 Support Persons aboard non-official vessels shall stay outside the area described in MESI 19.7 at all times.

D.11 A Support Person shall immediately comply with any request from a Race Committee or Jury member to move further from the course area.

[NP] [DP] Boats

D.12 Boats' allocated ribbon colours will be notified on the official notice board; ribbons will be available at registration.

D.13 Boats shall fly a ribbon of their allocated support vessel colour at the peak of their sails.

D.14 Boats shall not approach any vessel for support other than their allocated support vessel from Delta flag until they finish their last race for the day, or the Race Committee signals no more racing today, whichever is later.

Penalties & Other rules

D.15 Any additional requirements shall be posted on the official notice board.

D.16 The penalty for failing to comply with the requirements of this protocol shall be determined by the Protest Committee and may include penalising of boat(s) supported by an infringing Support Person. This changes RRS 62.4.

Attachment E - Messaging

In addition to the Official Notice Board, the Organising Authority may send messages to competitors and support persons via the Instant Messaging Application, WhatsApp.

Please download WhatsApp to your Smartphone and/or laptop prior to the event from the links

EVENT BROADCAST: Messages from the Organising Authority and Race Committee:

EVENT BROADCAST
WhatsApp group



EVENT QUERIES: Questions to the Organising Authority or Race Committee:

EVENT QUERIES
WhatsApp group



EVENT SAFETY FLEET: Messages from the Event Safety Officer, in relation to volunteers/coaches acting as a Safety Boat Driver or Crew.

EVENT SAFETY FLEET
WhatsApp group



The speed of answers may vary and may be sent via the Broadcast group. Please use this facility as sparingly as possible and certainly not for chat or it will lose its effectiveness.

