

Isle of Sheppey Island Race 2026 - Sailing Instructions

Last updated: 16 August 2026

1. Rules

1.1 The race will be governed by the 'rules' as defined in The Racing Rules of Sailing as modified by: the prescriptions of the RYA, the Notice of Race, the rules of each class concerned, and these Sailing Instructions (SI).

Competitors should note that IOSSC implements the RYA Racing Charter and that they will be required to undertake to sail in compliance with the Charter, which can be found at

<https://www.rya.org.uk/racing/rules/racing-charter>

1.2 Unless otherwise specifically mentioned by these instructions, all duties ascribed to the Race Committee shall be carried out by the OOD.

2. Registration

2.1 Competitors must enter online by completion of the official race entry forms published online, and payment of the relevant entry fee.

2.2 The OOD has the right to refuse or restrict entry without stating a reason.

2.3 All competitors must register with the OOD's representative in the clubhouse on the morning of the race before their start.

2.4 Following registration, competitors must collect their GPS tracker and their corresponding safety wristband. One wristband per competitor. Those competitors that have highlighted a medical requirement during the online entry may be issued a red wristband as well.

3. Notices to competitors

Notices to competitors will be posted on the official notice board located adjacent to the registration area in the clubhouse.

4. Changes to the Sailing Instructions

Changes will be posted on the official notice board as above. Any change to the sailing instructions will be posted not less than 60 minutes before the start of any class that might be affected.

5. Signals made ashore

5.1 Signals made ashore will be displayed from the club flagstaff.

5.2 Flag L - a notice to competitors has been posted and will be deemed to have been notified to all.

5.3 Flag L first substitute - changes to the sailing instructions have been posted.

5.4 When flag AP is displayed ashore, '1 minute' is replaced with 'not less than 15 minutes' in the race signal AP.

6. Class flags

Numeral 1 Slow Fleet 1050 or higher

Numeral 2 Medium Fleet 1049 to 850

Numeral 3 Fast Fleet 849 or less

7. The course

7.1 The race will be sailed in a clockwise direction around the Isle of Sheppey, starting and finishing from IOS Sailing Club, Sheerness. Competitors are advised to acquaint themselves with the course, as there are several underwater obstructions, shoals and areas of foul ground.

7.2 The Kingsferry Bridge: competitors will be permitted to negotiate the bridge by wading, paddling, or sailing under any of the side spans. Competitors are advised to walk their craft in a capsized position underneath the mainland side of the bridge. No special arrangements will be made for multihulls. There may be marshals in the immediate vicinity of the bridge who can be called upon to give assistance. If there is a queue at the bridge, competitors should wait in turn. The marshals will endeavour to get your boat under the bridge as quickly as possible, please obey their directions, and those of the safety boats.

7.3 Sailing through the centre lifting section of the Kingsferry Bridge is **NOT** permitted, and may result in disqualification without hearing. However, in exceptional cases, special dispensation may be granted by the OOD in advance, permitting use of the centre span due to the nature and/or restrictions of the specific craft entered (ie. fixed keel). In such cases, the OOD will factor in a discretionary time penalty taking this into account.

8. The start

8.1 There will be three staggered starts as set out below.

The starting sequence for each group will be 5,4,1,0 (minutes)

Slow handicap fleet

PY 1050 or higher

09.55 Warning Signal Numeral 1,

09.56 4 minute preparatory signal Flag P,

09.59 1 minute signal , P removed

10.00 Start Numeral 1 removed

Medium PY1049 to 850 fleet

10.25 Warning Signal Numeral 2,

10.26 4 minute preparatory signal Flag P,

10.29 1 minute signal, P removed

10.30 Start Numeral 2 removed

Fast handicap fleet

PY850 or less

10.55 Warning Signal, Numeral 3

10.56 4 Minute Preparatory Signal, Flag P

10.59 1 Minute Signal, P removed

11.00 Start Numeral 3 removed

8.2 The start line is defined as the line between a mast bearing an orange flag on the committee boat and an inner distance marker, which will be an orange buoy. The starting area will be offshore, due north of IOSSC.

8.3 Boats whose warning signal has not been made shall avoid the starting area during the flag sequence for other starts.

9. The finish

9.1 The finish line will be the IOSSC line, formed by a line projected by a black and white vertical line painted on the clubhouse and a post on the foreshore, limited at the seaward end by an outer distance mark which will be a black and white painted post or an orange buoy (if laid due to tide levels).

9.2 Within 30 minutes of finishing competitors must return their GPS tracker and return their wristbands to the registration desk. A declaration sheet detailing finished or retired will also need to be completed.

10. Time limits

10.1 Any boat not finishing by 19.30 hours will be deemed to have retired and scored DNF.

10.2 Competitors not reaching the Kingsferry Bridge by 18.00 will not be allowed to continue, will be directed ashore and scored DNF.

10.3 Competitors reaching Queenborough after 19.00 will be escorted to shore on the Island side and will be scored DNF.

10.3 Any boat at the discretion of the Officer of the Day which has not passed Shellness within 2.5 hours of their start shall be ordered to return to the club the way they had come, (ie North of the Island) and will not be permitted to continue sailing around the South Shore of the island. Failure to comply with this order will result in disqualification without hearing.

11. Protests and requests for redress

11.1 Protest forms are available at the race office. Protests and requests for redress or reopening shall be delivered there within the appropriate time limit.

11.2 Protests must be submitted to the OOD within 30 minutes of the protester finishing the race.

11.3 Protests concerning breach of class rules (including measurement) shall be accompanied by a current issue of the rules.

11.4 Whenever possible the protest will be heard at the earliest opportunity, whether all boats have completed the course or not.

11.5 Notices will be posted no later than 30 minutes after the protest time limit to inform competitors of hearings in which they are parties or named as witnesses.

12. Handicapping

12.1 All boats will compete using the Portsmouth Yardstick Scheme as set out by the RYA. Declaration of the PY number of the boat will be done on the entry form. No changes of PY numbers will be accepted unless agreed with the organising authority at registration

12.2 Boats without a PY number assigned by the RYA (other than Sailboards), will have a provisional number agreed prior to the event.

13. Safety

13.1 ALL COMPETITORS NOT RETURNING AND/OR RETIRING MUST TELEPHONE THE CLUBHOUSE on (01795) 663052 before 20.30 hours and ask for the Safety Officer to ensure they can be logged at retired and safe, even if safety boats and RAYNET personnel (amateur radio) have been informed.

13.2 Vessels are to be navigated with care and caution. Competitors' attention is drawn to the Medway Ports Authority River Bylaws 1991 Clause 22 (1), reproduced below:

No person shall navigate a vessel without care and caution or at a speed or in a manner which, having regard to all the circumstances at the time, including weather conditions and the type, condition and use of other vessels under way, berthed or moored, or which might reasonably be expected to be under way, berthed or moored, endangers the safety of, or causes injury or damage to any person, any other vessel, buoy, moorings, banks of the Port or the Medway approach area or any other property.

13.3 Between Grovehurst and Garrison Point competitors may encounter large commercial vessel movements especially off Sheerness. Competitors must give these vessels a wide berth and not hinder their passage. Ship's Masters or Pilots will give a series of five or more short blasts on the ship's hooter to craft that they consider to be impeding their passage. A traffic warning light on the white tower at Garrison Point in the form of a high powered flashing light will signal a large vessel in the channel between the Medway Buoy and Garrison Point

13.4 Competitors are reminded that in a race of this nature it is unlikely that safety craft will be on hand at all times. They should be able to handle their craft in conditions of high winds and rough seas, and it is essential that every boats buoyancy arrangements are in thoroughly efficient order.

13.5 Safety boat coxswains are instructed that, if necessary, crews are to be picked up and boats left to be towed in later. The sailing instructions do not take away the sole responsibility for safety from any helmsman or crew. It is suggested that competitors carry an anchor.

13.6 If advised by a safety boat crew to abandon your boat, you must do so.

13.7 All competitors must wear a buoyancy aid at all times.

14. Safety wristband system

14.1 The tally wristband board will be located at the registration desk inside the clubhouse. At registration every boat will be assigned a unique tally number.

14.2 Wristbands will be colour coded and will detail your tally number.

14.3 Competitors must collect their wristbands prior to going afloat. The competitor is then deemed as racing.

14.4 Within 30 minutes of finishing competitors return their wristbands and GPS tracker to the registration desk and complete the declaration form.

14.5 All competitors not returning MUST contact the clubhouse and ask for the Safety Officer to ensure the declaration form can be updated and the persons onboard the board logged as safe. Wristbands and GPS tracker must be returned by 20.30 to the registration desk.

15. Sail numbers

15.1 Every boat shall carry a sail number and shall also carry class insignia as provided for by the relevant class association. Any boat finishing without a sail number will not be recorded or timed and will be deemed to have retired.

16. Disclaimer of liability

16.1 Competitors participate in this race entirely at their own risk. See RRS Rule 4, Decision to Race. The organizing authority will not accept any liability for material damage or personal injury or death sustained in conjunction with or prior to, during, or after the race.

16.2 IOSSC cannot be held responsible for recovering boats from any of the various landing points around the island.

17. Insurance

Competing boats must have valid third-party liability insurance (min. £3,000,000).

18. Misc.

18.1 GPS Tracking. All boats shall carry a GPS tracker provided by the Organising Authority whilst afloat. The GPS tracker must be returned within 30 minutes of a boat finishing the race.

18.2 Photography/Video Recordings. By entering the event, competitors agree that the Organising Authority and associated race partners including TracTrac have the right, in perpetuity, to use and show any photography, audio and video recordings, and other reproductions of them made at the venue, without compensation.