



Supplementary Sailing Instructions

Contingency Gate Start Instructions

1. Purpose

- 1.1. In the event that the Race Officer and Committee Vessel are not present to conduct a conventional start, each fleet shall conduct a separate **Gate Start** (sometimes referred to as a Pathfinder or Rabbit start) as described below.
 - 1.2. This process is experimental on the East Patch and while not ideal, it will enable evening racing to proceed.
 - 1.3. For this to work all boats need to carry as a minimum a handheld VHF
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2. What is a Gate (Pathfinder) Start?

A Gate Start uses a moving “Pathfinder” boat instead of a fixed start line. The pathfinder passes the fixed start mark creating a line between its stern and the fixed mark.

The pathfinder sails a steady course for a fixed time after which it can tack and the line closes.

Boats may start at any time while the gate is open. After the gate closes, no further boats may start. The pathfinder boat shall also act as the Race Coordinator for that race and choose the appropriate course.



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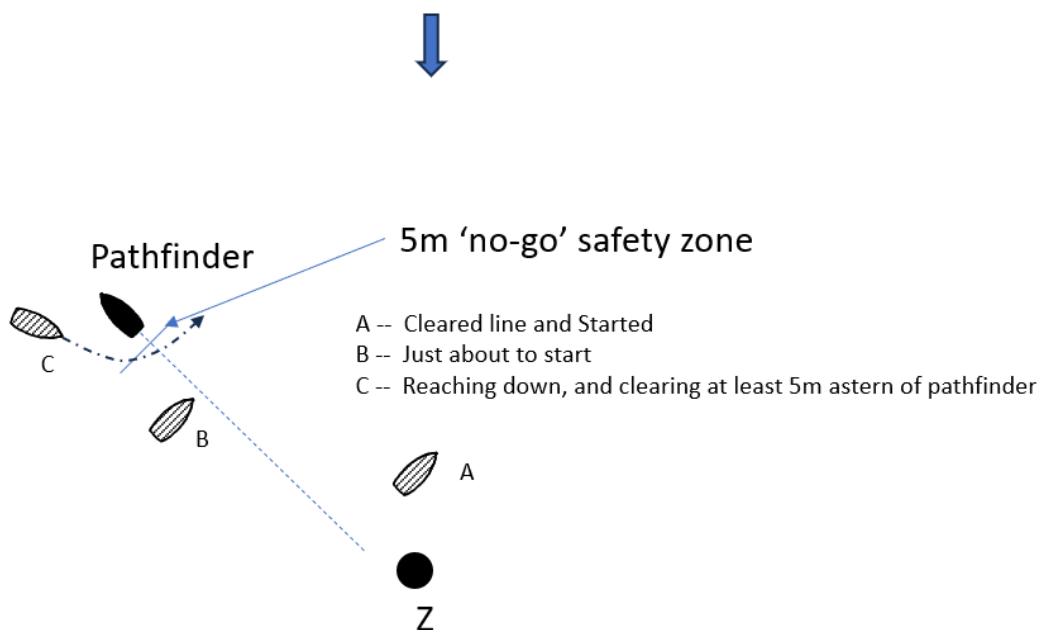
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3. Communication

- 3.1. All communication will be conducted on **VHF** therefore all boats shall carry, as a minimum, a handheld VHF radio and monitor Channel **M /37** before and during racing.
 - 3.2. However, in the event of implementing a pathfinder start, the Sonata Fleet shall switch to and communicate using **Channel M2** for the remaining duration of racing to avoid crosstalk and potential confusion between fleets.
 - 3.3. A volunteer **Race Coordinator** and **Pathfinder boat** *for each fleet* shall be agreed by VHF before the start sequence begins.
 - 3.4. Call signs are: **Handicap Fleet** (Which includes White Sails) and **Sonata Fleet**
 - 3.5. Failure to receive transmissions shall not be grounds for redress. *This changes RRS 62.1(a).*
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4. Pathfinder

- 4.1. It is acknowledged that acting as Pathfinder may confer a small tactical advantage due to clean air and freedom of manoeuvre at the start. This role is undertaken in the interests of enabling racing to proceed, and any advantage gained is accepted as part of the emergency self-managed starting procedure.



- 4.2. A Pathfinder for each fleet shall be appointed by agreement of the competitors via VHF prior to the Warning Signal.
- 4.3. The Pathfinders shall be clearly identified by announcement on VHF.
- 4.4. The Pathfinder may also be published on Facebook ⁽¹⁾ in advance of each race and shall be identified again on VHF prior to the warning signal.
- 4.5. There is a separate "Pathfinder Race Officer" guide that lists all the steps required.
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5. Course

- 5.1. The selected course for both fleets will be **Course Board “D”**, i.e. Windward / Leeward using the designated Windward mark each round, and Mark **Z** to be left to port as there will be no CV on station
 - 5.2. The selected course will be announced on VHF by the Pathfinder and shall be the course closest to the wind direction as defined on the course card column 2.
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6. Starting Signals

- 6.1. In the absence of a Race Officer, each fleet shall agree a Start Time by VHF
 - 6.2. The start time should, if possible, be as stated in the main Sailing Instructions.
 - 6.3. Standard timing shall apply:
 - Warning Signal: **10 minutes** before Start Time
 - Preparatory Signal: **5 minutes** before Start Time
 - The gate opens as soon as the pathfinder passes Mark ‘Z’ which will be as close to 5 minutes after the Preparatory signal as sailing allows.
 - 6.4. Timing announcements equivalent to Flag Warning & Preparatory signals will be made from the Pathfinder boat by VHF.
 - 6.5. There will be no signal Flags.
 - 6.6. If available on the Pathfinder boat, sound signals may also be made.
 - 6.7. Timing shall be by GPS / mobile phone clock and confirmed on VHF.
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7. Start Line & Gate Procedure

- 7.1. **Safety:** Until the gate closes, the Pathfinder shall be treated as both a **mark of the course** and an **obstruction**. Boats shall not impede the Pathfinder and shall allow room at least 5m for other boats to safely pass astern.
 - 7.2. At the Start Signal the Pathfinder shall begin sailing **on starboard tack** on a close-hauled course leaving **Mark Z to port**
 - 7.3. All boats shall keep at least 5m clear astern of the Pathfinder, crossing the imaginary line between the **stern of the Pathfinder** – to port - and **Mark Z** – to starboard.
 - 7.4. Mark **Z** serves as the fixed end of the start gate.
 - 7.5. From the Start Signal the Pathfinder becomes the moving (port) end of the starting gate.
 - 7.6. A boat starts when all of her hull crosses this gate line from the pre-start side of the course.
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8. Gate Closing

- 8.1. The gate shall remain open for **three minutes** from the Start Signal, during which the Pathfinder shall continue sailing to windward on starboard tack.
 - 8.2. After three minutes the gate is closed.
 - 8.3. If all boats in the fleet have started the gate is automatically closed, and the pathfinder is free to tack earlier than the three minutes
 - 8.4. This **may** or may not be announced on VHF channel M / 37A.
 - 8.5. Boats failing to start before the gate closes shall be scored **DNS**.
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9. Finish Line

- 9.1. Unless otherwise stated before the start, the Finish Line shall be between Mark Z (to be left to port) and a line at right angles to the direction from the previous mark and within a nominal 10 boat lengths of mark Z
 - 9.2. In the event that boats are extremely close their times will be deemed to be the same as determining the exact position of the line will not be possible.
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10. Pathfinder Rights

- 10.1. For safety and fairness:
 - 10.1.1. Boats **MUST** stay clear of the Pathfinder until the gate is closed.
The Pathfinder shall be treated as both a **mark of the course** and an **obstruction** until the gate closes.
 - 10.1.2. No yacht shall pass to windward of the pathfinder on the same tack within the first three minutes of the start.
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11. General Recall / Abandonment

- 11.1. If the start is or becomes unsafe or unfair (e.g., Pathfinder obstructed, major confusion, collision risk), a general recall shall be declared by VHF.
 - 11.2. A new start procedure will then be agreed and announced.
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12. Protests

- 12.1. Normal protest rules apply.
 - 12.2. Protests shall be notified verbally via VHF as soon as possible to the race coordinator,
 - 12.3. This shall be followed up in writing in accordance with the main Sailing Instructions.
 - 12.4. Competitors are reminded of the spirit of **RRS 2 (Fair Sailing)**.
 - 12.5. If there is a conflict between these and the main sailing instructions, these instructions shall prevail.
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13. Time Recording

- 13.1. All boats – both one design and handicap - shall:
 - 13.1.1. Record her own finish time (GPS / mobile phone, HH:MM:SS preferred).
 - 13.1.2. Record the sail numbers of boats immediately ahead and astern, if visible.
 - 13.1.3. Failure to record sail numbers will not automatically invalidate a finish but may be used to resolve disputes.
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14. Declaration of Finish & Results

- 14.1. As soon as practical after racing, each boat shall declare their finish time by WhatsApp to Robin Young – 07 596 608 035 including:-
 - Boat name / sail number
 - Finish time
 - Boats finishing ahead / astern (if visible)



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- 14.2. Failure to declare a finish time may result in DNS/RET at the discretion of the Organising Authority
 - 14.3. Results will be compiled from declared times. Discrepancies will be resolved collectively where possible; otherwise, normal protest procedures apply.
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15. Time Limit

- 15.1. The time limit is as stated in the main Sailing Instructions.
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16. Shortened Course

- 16.1. If shortening the course becomes necessary, the fleet may agree by VHF to designate the next rounding mark as the finish.
 - 16.2. Agreement and decision on this must be clearly stated and acknowledged on VHF channel M / 37A. by the Pathfinder/coordinator
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17. Sportsmanship

- 17.1. Given the self-managed nature of this emergency start and finish procedure, competitors are reminded of **good seamanship, mutual respect**, and the principles of **RRS 2 Fair Sailing**.
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Notes:

1. Facebook: For those who may not have a Facebook account, the Eastpatch Facebook page is also available on the Home page of the Eastpatch.org.uk website.
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