



Eagle Creek RC Handbook

A guide to help ECSC Race Committee Volunteers

The contents of this document are not rules as defined in the RRS

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1. Introduction

Thank you for volunteering to work as Race Committee. It is a duty that we must all perform to have a vibrant race program. If you are unfamiliar with Race Committee duties, this Handbook will tell you what to do and when to do it. Please read it before you leave the dock so that you can quickly refer to the appropriate sections when necessary.

This Handbook is organized by actions that occur together before, during and after the race. By organizing the Handbook in the order of when you need the information, we hope to minimize confusion on the water.

1.1. RC Duties and Responsibilities

The prime goal of the race committee is to offer fair competition to all who are racing. This includes:

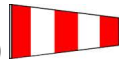
- Setting a fair course,
- Running a good start and
- Recording finishes.

However, if you have been racing for any amount of time, you know that the wind and weather conspire against the RC.

Keep in mind that ***out on the water, the RC is in charge***. You may get some “helpful advice” from the racers from time to time. You may heed that advice or ignore it. It is your decision. Use your best judgement. If you are new to RC and the advice seems reasonable, or if two or more racers are giving the same advice, it’s a pretty good bet that they are right.

1.2. If you Mess up

Relax. It’s not the end of the world. We all mess up from time to time. There are several ways to recover from an error. Just refer to Section 5.4 for tips and suggestions.

Note that if you mess up during the start, you can always raise the AP flag (postpone)  with two sounds, and start over. Don’t be afraid to use the AP flag. It is your best friend. You can raise the AP flag at any time in the starting sequence to stop the starting countdown. Once you get yourself re-organized, lower the flag with one sound and start over (See Section 5.4).

Good Luck and thanks for volunteering.

ECSC Race Director

2. Before you leave the dock

Before you leave the dock, you should decide which RC boats you are going to use. As a rule of thumb the following boats are used at ECSC

2.1. RC Boats and Primary Usage

Main RC Boat

- Typically used as the starboard end of the starting line.

Backup RC Boat

- Used when the RC plans to use separate starting and finishing lines.
- Used as a mark set boat – typically at the windward mark.
- Used as a second safety boat with large fleets.

RIB

- Used as a mark set boat for the start line pin and leeward mark/gate.
- Used to monitor the pin-end of the start line.
- Primary safety boat

2.2. At the Dock

Gear UP!

Make sure you have the gear you need to run a good and safe race. Use the checklists on page 5 to make sure you have the proper gear on the boats.

RC Boat Prep

- Unplug the battery charger and set battery switch to “ALL”.
- Fill tank with gas. Lower and start the motor and allow it to warm up. MAKE SURE THE ENGINE IS “PEEING”. If not, stop the motor and ask for assistance.
- Go through the **RC Gear Checklist** – make sure you can locate all equipment.
- Remove the canvas and plastic covers from the automatic race timer and turn it on. Put the covers in a safe place.
- Make sure the clock on the committee boat closely matches the time on a cell phone.
- Perform a radio check with the stationary radio and the handheld radio. Use channel 68 or 69.
- Uncover the signal flags and make sure you have the flags you need. You should have the following flags set up on the mast (from port to starboard)
 - X-Flag – individual recall
 - 1st Repeater – General Recall
 - AP – Postpone
 - RC Flag
 - L-Flag – Come within hail
 - P-Flag – Preparatory flag
 - Class Flag

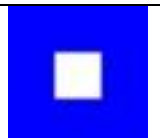
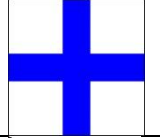
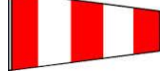
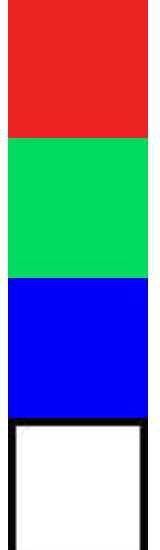
RIB Boat Prep

- Lower the RIB and tie off at the RC dock.
- Fill tank with gas. Lower and start the motor and allow it to warm up. MAKE SURE THE ENGINE IS "PEEING". If not, stop the motor and ask for assistance.
- Go through RIB Gear Checklist.
- Perform a radio check with the main RC boat on the designated channel(s).

Backup RC Boat Prep

- Fill tank with gas. Lower and start the motor and allow it to warm up. MAKE SURE THE ENGINE IS "PEEING". If not, stop the motor and ask for assistance.
- Go through Backup RC Gear Checklist.
- Perform a radio check with the main RC boat on the designated channel(s).
- Uncover the signal flags and make sure you have the flags you need. You should have the following flags set up (from port to starboard)
 - X-Flag – individual recall
 - 1st Repeater – General Recall
 - AP – Postpone
 - RC Flag
 - L-Flag – Come within hail
 - P-Flag – Preparatory flag
 - Class Flag

2.3. Starting Flags

Flag Name	Shape	Comment / How used
RC Flag		Flies at highest point of the RC mast. Signifies that the RC boat is on station
L-Flag (Lima flag)		Signals to racers that the RC is ready to check in boats, or that boats should come by for instructions from the RC. One sound when raised.
P-Flag (Papa flag)		Preparatory flag. Raised at preparatory signal with one sound, lowered at 1 minute before the start with one long sound
X-Flag (X-Ray flag)		Individual recall. Used to signal that one or more boats are over the line early. Raised with one sound. No sound when lowered.
1 st Repeater		General Recall. Used to signal that all boats are to return for another start. Raised with 2 sounds. Lowered with one sound.
Answering Pennant (AP Flag)		Used before the start to signal that the current start is being halted and the race will be restarted. Raised with 2 sounds. Lowered with one sound.
Class Flags		For most races, you will run only the four fleets. Note that in addition to the individual flags, we also have the following combination flags: • Red/Green • Blue/White • Green/Blue/White • Red/Green/Blue/White Use these combined flags to combine the various fleets into fewer starts. In a regatta, you may have fleet-specific flags.

2.4. RC Boat Gear Checklist

Main RC Boat Gear Checklist	RIB – Safety Boat	Backup RC Boat
☐ Handheld Radio ☐ Life vests - one for each person on board (in center storage) ☐ Throw ring (mounted to side of boat) ☐ Race starting timer ☐ Air horns and canisters ☐ Course placards ☐ Orange flags on poles (2) ☐ Race signal flags – clear plastic bins ○ Class flags ○ Starting flags ○ Other flags ☐ Extra fuel ☐ Chairs ☐ Race clock/Timer ☐ Racing score sheet ☐ Pens/pencils ☐ Two Orange Buoys with anchor and anchor lines ☐ One White Buoy with anchor and anchor line ☐ Food for Race Committee members if out over lunch ☐ Water or soda	☐ Handheld Radio ☐ Life vests (one for each person on board) ☐ Throw cushion ☐ Air horn and canisters ☐ Race signal flags ○ “C” flag  ○ “S” flag  ○ “M” flag  ☐ Extra fuel ☐ Racing score sheets ☐ Pens/pencils ☐ Yellow Buoys with anchor (if leeward gate is used) ☐ Orange Buoy with anchor (if no leeward gate) ☐ White Buoy with anchor ☐ Food & Water	☐ Handheld Radio ☐ Life vests (one for each person on board) ☐ Throw ring ☐ Race starting timer ☐ Air horn and canisters ☐ Course placards ☐ Orange flag on pole ☐ Race signal flags ○ Class flags ○ Starting flags ○ Other flags ☐ Extra fuel ☐ Chairs ☐ Race clock/timer ☐ Racing score sheet ☐ Pens/pencils ☐ Orange Buoy with anchor ☐ Food & water

2.5. Assigning positions

Make sure you assign the following positions before you leave the dock so that you know who is doing what on the water.

Position	Responsibility
Principal Race Officer	In charge of the race. Makes major race management decisions. Usually doubles as the Line Sighter.
Line Sighter	Sights the starting line to identify boats on the course side of the line and tracks boats returning to start. Sights the finish line to determine the order and moment of finish.
Signaler	Signals information the competitors via visual signals (flags). At ECSC, is also responsible for setting and operating the Auto Race Timer. Note: The Signaler usually doubles as the sounder.
Sounder	In charge of sounds made in conjunction with signals. Note that the automatic timer makes all proper sounds during the starting sequence.
Timer	Call the time sequence aloud so the start and finish can be properly run. Note: The Auto Race Timer serves this function at the start. In larger regattas, it is nice to have someone calling out the time.
Recorder	Identifies and records all boats starting and finishing. Records OCS boats and OCS boats that have "cleared".
Pin Sighter	Same a Line Sighter, but is stationed at the Pin-end of the starting line.
Safety Boat	Drives the safety boat.
Mark setter	Rides on Safety Boat. Positions, sets and relocates marks of the course.

3-person RC crew

It normally takes at least 3 people on the RC boat to run a smooth race. With three people, assignments are as follows:

Position	Roles
1	PRO, Line Sighter
2	Signaler, Sounder, Timer
3	Recorder

4-person RC Crew

A four-person crew allows things to work more smoothly on the RC boat. With four people, assignments are as follows:

Position	Roles
1	PRO, Line Sighter
2	Signaler, Sounder
3	Timer
4	Recorder

3. Leaving the Dock

Once you have checked your gear and reviewed the checklists, it's time to leave the dock. Raise the RC Flag and cast off the dock lines.

When you leave the dock, ***be aware of the rocks next to the shore.*** If there is no boat in the slip directly behind you, simply back into the opposite slip and then head out.

If the water is down and there is a boat in the slip behind you, you may have to back out into the lake to avoid hitting the rocks near the shore.



As you leave the dock, sound one long horn on the Main RC boat. This signals to the racers that the RC Boat is heading out to set the course.



On the way out to the lake, be sure that everyone knows their duty assignments.

4. Out on the water Before the Start

4.1. Take Wind Readings

Once you get out on the water, motor out to the middle of the lake (near the “X” mark) and take an initial wind direction reading. Use this initial reading to determine the course you are going to set up. You will want to sit there for 10-15 minutes to determine wind shifts/oscillations. Use the wind indicator and compass at the bow of the RC boat to determine the wind direction and write your reading on the back of the Score Sheet. Take a wind speed reading and record that on the Score Sheet too. Looking at your wind observations, you should get an idea of the prevailing wind direction. Select a mark from that direction as the windward mark and build your course around that mark. But first, a few words about the course cards.

4.2. Course Cards:

We use colored wooden placards to signify marks, fleets, number of starts and laps. The cards correspond to the permanent lake marks (1-6, X & Y) and temporary marks (T, T1, T2, T3). A green card indicates that the designated mark is to be left to the Starboard of the racing boat. A red card indicates that the designated mark is to be left to the Port of the racing boat.



Marks (Starboard Rounding)



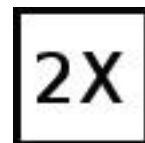
Marks (Port Rounding)



Gate mark



Number of Starts



Number of Laps

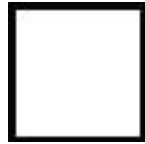
(All fleets start together)

ECSC PHRF Fleets



Red Fleet

154-186



White Fleet

187-231



Blue Fleet

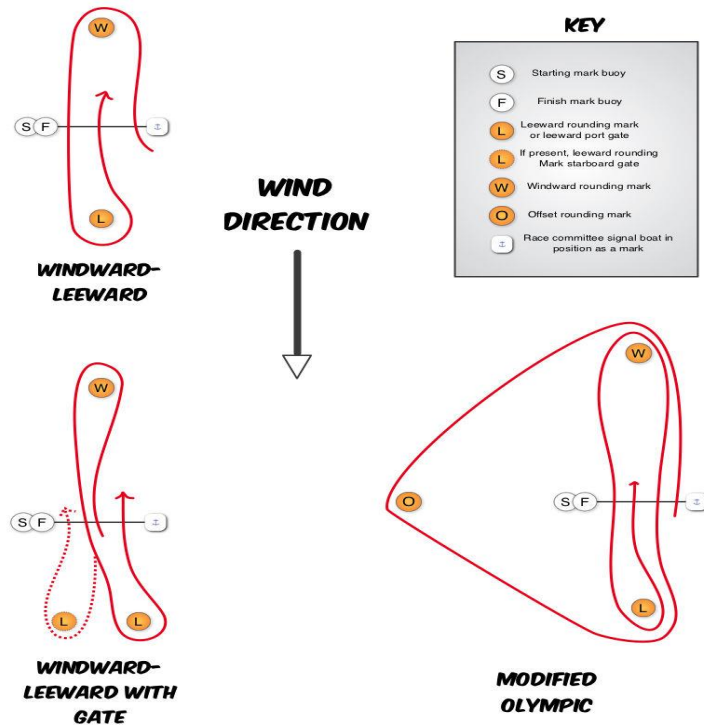
232-264



Green Fleets

4.3. Setting the course:

The Race Committee may set up any course they choose using permanent marks, temporary marks or any combination. Three of the most common courses are shown to the right. Point to Point courses where you list each mark individually are also acceptable.



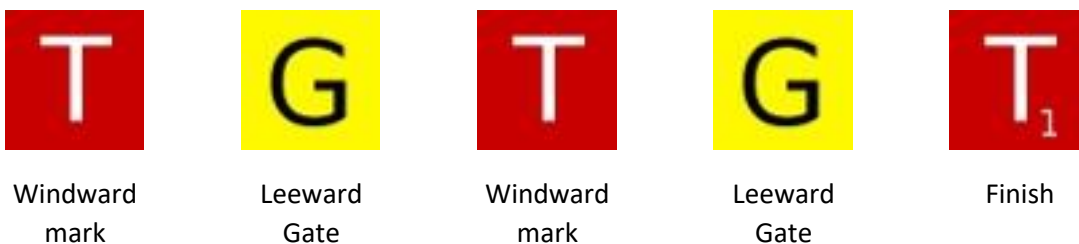
When setting up a course using temporary marks, the T#’s are listed by order of rounding. For example, a simple windward-leeward two lap race with port rounding’s would have the course cards set as follows:



Alternatively, the course cards for the same course could also be set this way:



The same course with gates instead of a single leeward mark would be set like this:



A Windward-Leeward course using permanent marks along with temporary marks and starboard rounding's may look like this:



4.4. What Course(s) Do I Set?

In general, the Red and Green fleets prefer windward/Leeward courses and the Blue/White fleets prefer Triangle courses. It usually works best to give the Blue/White fleet a course that is $\frac{3}{4}$ as long as the Red/Green fleets. This way, all boats finish around the same time. One easy way to do this is to set up a temporary mark in line with a permanent mark and simply use the farthest mark as the windward mark for the Red/Green fleets and the closest mark as the windward mark for the White/Blue fleets.

You can start the fleets together or separately depending on the number of boats. If there are a lot of boats, it is best to start the Red/Green fleet together – with the longer course, and the Blue/White fleet together – with the shorter course.

4.5. Indicating the course on the Coarse Board

Once you have decided the course(s), you need to communicate the course(s) to the racers. We use the placards for this. On the Starboard side of the boat you will see two rows of slots. This allows you to set up two different courses and two or more starts. Here's how to signal the course.

- The slot furthest aft signifies the number of starts (1, 2, 3)
- The next slot signifies the fleet(s) that must use that course
- The next slots describe the course by mark number and rounding (see 4.1)
- Repeat the process on the bottom if more than one course is set up.

For example, if we set up a start line between mark 5 and mark 3 and wanted to run two courses – a windward/leeward and a triangle, we could use mark 3 as the Red/Green windward mark and a temporary mark between the start and 3 as the shorter windward mark for the Blue/White fleet. In this case, the board might look like this (See 20 for mark locations):



It would signal the following to the racers:

- We will run two starts.
- The first start will be the Red/Green fleet. They will sail the course: 3-5-T₁, with T₁ as the start/finish line.
- The second start will be the Blue/White fleet. They will sail the course T-2-5-T₁ with T₁ as the start/finish line.

As described above, we designate the temporary marks in the order of rounding. So, in this case, T is the windward mark for the Blue/white fleet, and T₁ in the finish pin. When you use Temporary marks, expect the racers to ask you to point them out to you. You can either point to the mark and call out the marks: "T is there, T₁ is there." Or you can describe their location: "T is the B/W windward mark towards 3, T₁ is the start/finish pin."

You could also start all fleets at the same time, but with two courses. In the above example, simply replace the "2 Starts" card with "1 Start". This tells the racers there are two courses, but everyone starts together.

Take the PVC pole with the orange flag and place it in the holder on the outside of the port bow to identify the starboard end of the start line.



4.6. Set the Pin-end of the Start Line

While you are prepping the RC boat and course board, the Safety boat should be setting temporary marks as needed. Once all temporary marks are set, the Safety boat sets the pin end of the line. This is usually a white ball. The line should be perpendicular to the prevailing wind to give a square line. Take the hand bearing compass and sight 90 degrees from the wind direction. When the Safety boat is in position, signal the boat to drop the pin. A good rule of thumb is to set the line equal to the sum of the boat lengths of the largest fleet. If the wind shifts and you need to adjust the line, you can take in or let out the anchor line to square the RC boat with the pin.

Note: After the prep flag goes up at 4 minutes to start, you may no longer move either the RC boat or the starting pin. Your only option at that point is to raise the AP flag (with two sounds) to stop the starting sequence, reset the line and then restart (See Section 5.4)

4.7. Check in Boats

Once the course is set up and displayed, it's time to register the boats. Take out the clipboard and a fresh score sheet. Record the date of the race, the PRO and Safety people and their boat numbers. See Section 10 for a sample sheet.



Raise the "L" flag **with one sound**.  This signifies to all boats to come within hail and check in.

The boats will sail by the stern of the RC boat and hail their sail numbers. Put a check mark next to the boats on the score sheet as they check in. This is when a number of racers will ask questions about the course. See Section 10 for a sample sheet.

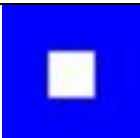
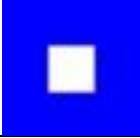
Now you are ready to start the race.

5. The Start

Set the race timer to “P1”. This is the normal ECSC Start. Check with all positions to make sure they are ready check with the Safety boat as well. If everyone is on station and ready, tell the Signaler to lower the “L” flag and attach the Class Flag for the first start. Once the flag is ready, tell the Signaler to start the timer. You will hear 5 short sounds and the timer will start at 6 minutes. During this time, check to make sure everyone is ready and focused on the start.

5.1. Start Sequence

As the timer gets closer to 5 minutes, you will hear some short “beeps” to alert you that you need to take action. Here is what you do.

When	What	Signal
5 minutes to start	Warning signal	 RAISE Class Flag with one sound (automatic from timer)
4 minutes to start	Preparatory signal	 RAISE “P” flag with one sound (automatic from timer)
1 minutes to start	Preparatory signal	 LOWER “P” flag with one sound (automatic from timer)
0 minutes to start	Class Flag	LOWER Class Flag with one sound (automatic from timer)

At the start, be sure to have someone sighting the line using the orange flag on the committee boat and the COURSE SIDE of the white starting mark as a reference. Record the exact time HH:MM:SS for each fleet’s start on the score sheet. See Section 10 for a sample sheet.

5.2. What if Someone is Over Early?

If some of the boats are over the starting line early and the person sighting the start can tell who they are, **raise the ‘X’ flag and sound 1 horn immediately**. This is called an **INDIVIDUAL RECALL**. Call out the sail numbers to the recorder to make sure they are written down. You may attempt to notify the racer(s) over early by hailing their sail numbers, but it is not required. Once all early boats have restarted, lower the flag.



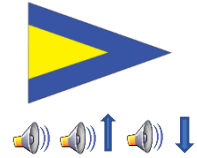
Note: all of the boat, equipment and crew must be below the line to start properly. Keep the X-flag up until all early boats have returned and properly started.

If after 4 minutes, some of the early boats still have not returned to, mark those boats as OCS on the score sheet and lower the X flag.

In summary: the X flag is displayed until the earliest of the following: a) all boats over the line early have returned correctly, or b) 4 minutes have elapsed since the start.

5.3. What if a Lot of Boats are Over Early

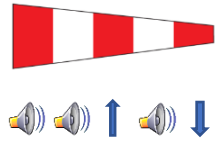
If there are so many boats over early that you cannot identify them all, raise the “First Substitute” flag with 2 horn sounds. This is called a **GENERAL RECALL** and recalls all boats to start again.



When ready for a new start, make 1 sound  while lowering the flag. Wait 1 minute and restart the sequence.

5.4. What if I Mess up or am not ready at the published start time?

The AP (postponement) flag is the PRO’s best friend. Use the AP flag anytime you:



- a) Make a mistake in the start sequence and want a “do over”.
- b) Are not going to start a race at the published time.
- c) Notice a huge wind shift that skews the starting line.

Here are some common examples of when to use the AP flag

- a) You forget to watch the timer and the Preparatory signal sound is made at 4 minutes, but you forgot to raise the “P” flag or you raised it a several seconds late.
- b) You set up the start line and a massive wind shift makes the line heavily biased to the right or left and you want to square the line again.
- c) You are supposed to start the race at 6:50, but there are still boats coming out of the harbor.
- d) You are supposed to start the race, but you don’t have the course set up yet, or you are waiting for wind.

When raising this flag sound 2 horns. 

Once you are ready, lower the flag along with one sound,  wait 1 minute, and proceed with the start sequence.

6. Mid Race

Ok. You had a good start. The boats are off. Everyone started properly or came back and restarted. Now what?

Now you have to pay attention to the wind. If the wind is dying (as it usually does on Wednesday night), you might have to shorten course. If the wind shifts, you might have to change a mark.

6.1. How to Shorten Course

The wind is dying. It is obvious that the race cannot be finished within the time limit. This is where you need to think about shortening the course.

NOTE: You can only shorten the course at a ROUNDING MARK. If you have set up a windward/leeward course with a mid-course start/finish line, you can only shorten the course to finish at the windward or leeward mark. You cannot set up a 2-lap race and shorten the course by having the boats finish at the start/finish line after one lap. That would require a change of course (See Sections 6.2 and 6.3).

Here's how to shorten the course.

1. Go to a rounding mark
2. Set up a finish line between your boat and the rounding mark.
3. Raise the "S" flag.
4. As boats near the mark, make two sounds to call attention.
5. Record boats as they finish. Boats must finish between the Mark and the "S" flag.
6. If you are using a gate instead of a single leeward mark, then the gate becomes the finish line.



6.2. What if the wind changes a lot

You can change the course and send boats to a moved or different mark. There are two situations.

1. A previous mark has been moved
2. You want to use a new mark

Here's how to change the course

Action	Signal/Notes	
Send the Safety boat to the mark that starts the leg that contains the new mark and set up just before the mark.	You must be in position with the proper signals before the first boat reaches the mark.	
Raise the "C" flag		
Display a shape that tells the direction of the moved mark from the original mark.	 Mark has been moved to starboard	 Mark has been moved to port
Display a shape that tells whether the new leg has been shortened or lengthened.	 To decrease the length of the leg	 To increase the length of the leg
As each boat nears the mark, make repeated sounds		

Wait a minute! Can't I use the Change of Course to finish at the start/finish after one lap instead of two?

Yes you can. You would have to send the Safety boat to the Leeward mark and set up with a "C" flag and the "- " shape. This tells the racers that the next mark is in the same direction, but has been shortened. It would also be a good idea to hold up the mark card.

6.3. The Wind is Dying: What do I do?

Let's say you set up a windward/leeward course using Mark 5 as the windward mark, Mark 1 as the leeward mark and a start/finish line in between. You set the course for 2 laps with a finish at Mark X, but now the wind is dying. You have several options based on where the boats are and where you want to finish.

Scenario	What to do	How to do it
Boats have not reached windward mark. You decide to finish at the leeward mark.	Shorten Course (This is easiest)	Set up a finish line at Mark 1. Raise "S" flag. Sound two horns as boats approach.   
Boats have passed the windward mark. You want to finish at the leeward mark.	Shorten Course (This is easiest)	Set up a finish line at Mark 1. Raise "S" flag. Sound two horns as boats approach.   
Boats have passed the windward mark and you want to finish at the start/finish line after one lap.	Change of Course (This is harder – Shorten Course is preferable)	Send the Safety boat to the Mark 1. Raise the "C" Flag. Display the "X" placard and the "- " placard to signal a shortened leg and a new mark.    Make repeated sounds as boats approach.     Now, you still have to shorten the course. So, the RC boat must fly the "S" flag and make two sounds as boats approach.   

7. The Big Finish

The boats have sailed the course and are heading to the finish. You need to get ready to record the finishes.

Position	Responsibility
Line Sighter	Call boats over as they finish. This is usually done by calling out sail numbers as boats finish.
Signaller	Calls out the time as the Line Sighter calls out the sail numbers. It is traditional for the first finishing boat of a fleet to get a "courtesy sound" as she finishes. Note: this is optional and certainly not required if you are short handed.
Recorder	Records the finish times for each boat on the scratch sheet.

As each boat crosses the finish line, the Line Sigher will call out sail numbers. The Timer calls out the time, and the recorder records the finish time on the score sheet. See Section 10 for a sample completed score sheet.

7.1. What if we run out of time?

ECSC has a time limit for races to finish. The time limit is specified in the Sailing Instructions. Here are some common situations related to time limit.

Scenario	Action		
None of the boats reach the windward mark by the time limit, or none of the boats finish within the time limit.	Abandon the race and return to start area. Raise "N" flag with 3 sounds.  	Abandon the race – no more races today. Raise "N" over "A" with 3 sounds.   	Abandon the race – further instructions ashore. Raise "N" over "H" with 3 sounds.   
At least one boat has finished within the time limit, but others will not finish within the time limit.	Score all boats that did not finish within the time limit as TLE (Time Limit Expired)		

7.2. No More Races Today

If there are no more races to be sailed that day. Fly "A" flag with no sounds as boats are finishing.

8. After the Race

After all boats have finished, remove and stow the orange line flag. Gather up all of the temporary marks and head back to the dock. After you have docked the RC boat, make one long sound to signal that the time limit for protests has begun.

8.1. Pack it UP!

RC Boat Prep

- Turn off the motor and raise the motor out of the water.
- Set the battery switch to "OFF" and plug in the battery charger.
- Cover up the flags. Return other flags to the proper plastic bin.
- Cover the automatic race timer with the plastic and canvas covers.
- Stow the clock and any course placards you used.
- Gather up all of your trash and throw away.
- Take the scratch sheet and portable radios and keys to the RC Shed. Place the radios in chargers. Pin the scratch sheet to the bulletin board. Put the boat key on the key peg.

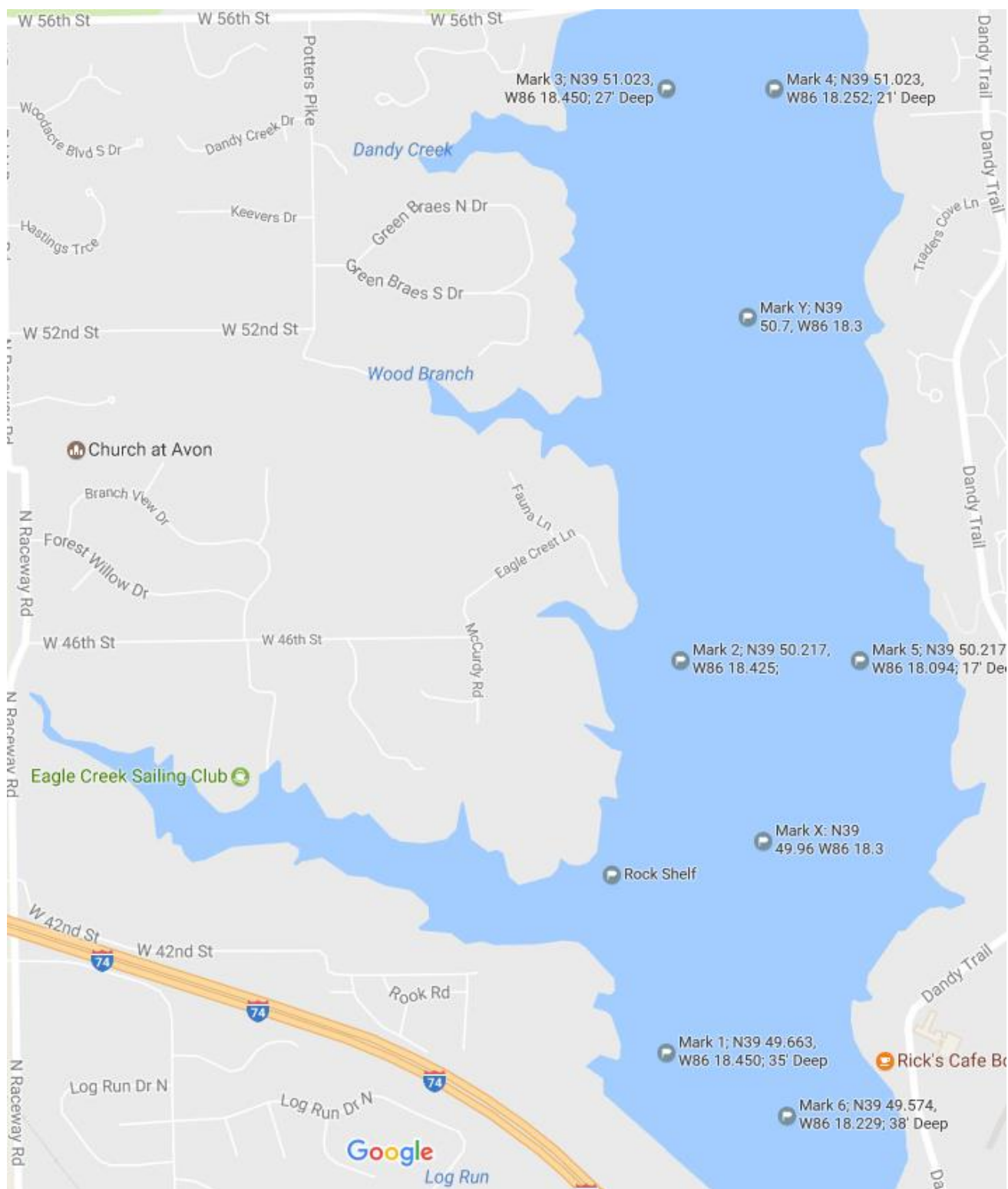
RIB Boat Prep

- Turn off and raise the motor out of the water.
- Gather up your trash and throw away.
- Return the RIB to the covered boat lift and lift the boat out of the water.
- Return all flags, the portable radio and the boat key to the RC shed. Put the radio in the charger, put the flags in the bin. Put the boat key on the key peg.

Backup RC Boat Prep

- Turn off the motor and raise it out of the water.
- Cover the signal flags.
- Cover the race timer. Stow the clock if you used one.
- Return the radio and keys to the Race shed. Put the radio in the charger. Put the key on the key peg.

9. Permanent Marks



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