



MERSEA WEEK 2026

Sailing Instructions

(Smacks, Cruisers & Keelboats)

Sunday 9th to Friday 14th August 2026

The races are organised jointly by West Mersea Yacht Club (WMYC) and Dabchicks Sailing Club (DSC) known as the Joint Organising Authority.

The notation '[NP]' in a rule of the sailing instructions (SIs) means that a boat may not protest another boat for breaking that rule. This changes RRS 60.1(a).

1. RULES

- 1.1 The event is governed by the rules as defined in the Racing Rules of Sailing and the 2026 IRC Rules Parts A, B and C if racing in the IRC Class.
- 1.2 RRS Appendix T, Arbitration, will apply.
- 1.3 Where there is a conflict between the Notice of Race and the Sailing Instructions, the Sailing Instructions shall prevail. (This changes RRS 63.7).

2. CHANGES TO SAILING INSTRUCTIONS

- 2.1 Any change to the sailing instructions will be posted before 19:00 on the day before it will take effect.

3. COMMUNICATIONS WITH COMPETITORS

- 3.1 Notices to competitors will be posted on the Official Notice Board which is online at [ONB](#) and will also be displayed on a board in the Race Office.
- 3.2 The Race Office is located in the Long Room at West Mersea Yacht Club.
- 3.3 The Committee Boat for the Smack, Cruiser and Keelboat events is a classic yacht "Windrunner" and will have the call sign "Molliette" on VHF Channel 77.
- 3.4 On the water the Race Committee intends to monitor and communicate with competitors on VHF Channel 77. Competitors are strongly advised to monitor VHF Channel 77, particularly after they leave their mooring each day, before and during the start of each race and after finishing.
- 3.5 [DP] While racing from the first warning signal until the end of the last race of the day, except in an emergency, a boat shall not make or receive voice or data transmissions that are not available to all boats.
- 3.6 There is a WhatsApp group which will be used to broadcast general information concerning the week.

4. CODE OF CONDUCT

- 4.1 Competitors and support persons shall comply with any reasonable request from an event official. Failure to comply may be misconduct. Reasonable actions by event officials to implement protocols or legislation, even if they later prove to be unnecessary, are not improper actions or omissions. [DP]
- 4.2 Competitors and support persons shall place advertising provided by the Organising Authority with care, seamanship, in accordance with any instructions for its use and without interfering with its functionality.

5. SIGNALS MADE ASHORE

- 5.1 Signals made ashore will be visibly displayed at the front of the WMYC.
- 5.2 When board 'AP' is displayed ashore, '1 minute' is replaced with 'not less than 45 minutes'. This changes Race signal AP.
- 5.3 Flag D is not relevant to the Smacks, Cruiser and Keelboat Classes.

6. SCHEDULE OF RACES

6.1 Registration (*Not Open 12/08/26*)

Date	Open	Closed	Location
08/08/26	17:30	19:00	WMYC Long Room
09/08/26 – 14/08/26	08:30	15:00	WMYC Long Room

6.2 The scheduled time of the **START SIGNAL** for the first race each day is:-

Event No	Class	Start Time	Warning Signal
1	Smacks B	11:10	Class Flag B
2	Smacks A	11:20	Class Flag C
3	YTC Cruisers A	11:30	Class Flag D
4	YTC Folkboat	11:40	Class Flag E
5	YTC White Sail	11:50	Class Flag F
6	YTC Cruisers B	12:00	Class Flag G
7	YTC Classic Yachts & Gaffers	12:10	Class Flag H
8	Sonata One Design	12:20	Class Flag J
-	IRC Class will not be running this year	-	-

6.3 A warning signal will be made 5 minutes before the start signal for each class.

6.4 To alert boats that a race or sequence of races will begin soon, the Committee Boat will display an orange starting line flag with one sound signal at least five minutes before the first warning signal is made.

6.5 On the last scheduled day of racing, no warning signal will be made after 15:00.

7. RACING AREAS

7.1 The racing area will be the Blackwater Estuary.

8. THE START

8.1 LOW WATER Competitors are reminded to check the low water times each day to ensure that they can arrive at the start line in reasonable time for their start.

8.2 REGISTER PARTICIPATION – On arrival at the racing start area, vessels shall register their participation by passing close to the Committee Boat on the non-start line side and make themselves known to the Race Committee and receive an acknowledgement before starting.

8.3 Races will be started by using RRS 26 with each class warning signal made five minutes before the class starting signal.

8.4 Boats whose warning signal has not been made shall keep clear of the start line during the start sequence of the previous fleets. [DP]

9. START LINE

9.1 The starting line will be one of the West Mersea Yacht Clubs starting lines - defined as a line between the Main Mast of the Committee Boat flying an orange flag, moored to the Committee Boat mooring buoy (approximately 200m to the southwest of the Nass Beacon) and the course side of the Starting Outer Limit Mark displayed on a board on the Committee Boat.

9.2 Board displays 'S' then Outer Limit Mark 'S' will be used as the starting mark- (yellow buoy with a Black flag - OLMS) moored approximately 150 metres to the south of the Committee Boat.

9.3 Board displays 'E' then Outer Limit Mark 'E' will be used as the starting mark - (yellow buoy with a Red flag - OLME) moored approximately 150 metres south east of the Committee Boat.

9.4 Board displays 'W' then Outer Limit Mark 'W' will be used as the starting mark (yellow buoy with a Green flag - OLMW) moored approximately 150 metres south west of the Committee Boat.

9.5 Which start line to be used shall be decided by the Race Officer and displayed on the Committee Boat board, this information may also be transmitted on VHF channel 77 using the call sign 'Molliette', a minimum of 15 minutes before the start of the first event and may be repeated before each event start.

10. **INNER LIMIT MARK**

- 10.1 No Inner Limit Mark will be laid, however a Guard Buoy may be deployed to protect the Committee Boat, if deployed it is a Starting Limit Mark and must be left on the same side as the Committee Boat.

11. **OBSTRUCTIONS [DP]**

- 11.1 Boats shall keep more than 100 metres away from vessels over 100 metres in length, vessels at anchor or vessels displaying Flag A (indicating divers in the water). These areas are obstructions as defined in the Rules.
- 11.2 There is an **EXCLUSION ZONE** at approximately 51° 45.00N 000° 56.00E. The zone is clearly delineated by yellow marker buoys. No competitor may enter this zone at any time; any competitor identified in breach of this instruction will be disqualified without a hearing.

12. **STARTING RACES**

12.1 **RECALLS**

- 12.1.1 **Individual** - In the event of an individual recall Code Flag 'X' will be displayed, and one sound signal made in accordance with RRS 29.1. The Race Committee may, using the specified VHF radio channel, give the sail numbers or names of yachts affected. They may also give the information that those yachts have returned correctly. This does not change the responsibility of each yacht to start correctly and failure to broadcast the information will not be grounds for redress (RRS 62 is amended thereby). Failure to return and start correctly will result in being scored OCS.
- 12.1.2 **General** - In the event of a general recall two sound signals will be made and 'First Substitute' flag will be displayed in accordance with RRS 29.2. The warning signal for a new start for the recalled class shall be made one minute after the 'First Substitute' is removed (accompanied by one sound signal) and the start for any subsequent classes shall follow the new start.

12.2 **COURSES**

- 12.2.1 The course to be sailed will be identified by a Number displayed on a board hung as near as possible from the south side of the Committee Boat. The number refers to the Mersea Week courses printed on the 2026 Mersea Week Course Card available from the Official Notice Board on Mersea Week website [Course Cards](#) and in the competitors pack.
- 12.2.2 The course will be displayed as soon as possible for the class concerned, but in any case, the number displayed at the preparatory signal is the course for that class. RRS 27.1 is amended thereby. The number of the course may also be broadcast on VHF 77. Details of the race marks used for the courses are given in paragraph 29 below.
- 12.3 **CHANGE OF COURSE**
- 12.3.1 RRS 33 is changed. Should an official Boat, which may be a rib, positioned at a turning mark, display code Flag C and make continuous sound signals, then the course has been changed as follows: -
- 12.3.2 Round the mark at which a Committee Boat displaying code Flag C is positioned as required by the course being sailed, then: -
- 12.3.3 If the original finishing direction was westerly; leave MG Buoy to port, then proceed to the finish line and finish in a westerly direction; or;
- 12.3.4 If the original finishing direction was easterly; leave No.14 Buoy to starboard, then proceed to the finish line and finish in an easterly direction.

13. **THE FINISH**

- 13.1 The finish line is between the main mast of the Committee Boat displaying a Blue Flag, moored to the Committee Boat mooring buoy, (approximately 200m to the south west of the Nass Beacon) and the Southern Outer Limit Mark (OLMS). The OLMS is a Yellow Buoy with a Black Flag, moored approximately 150 metres to the south of the Committee Boat.

14. **PENALTY SYSTEM**

RRS Appendix T will apply as modified below:-

- 14.1 A boat may accept a Post Race scoring penalty of 30% only up to the end of the Protest Time limit by completing a penalty acceptance form available in the Race Office. This changes RRS App T.1 (a & b).
- 14.2 A boat accepting a Post Race Penalty after an arbitration hearing shall be penalised 40%. This changes RRS App T.1 (b).

15. TIME LIMITS

15.1 The time limits are as follows:-

Event	Time Limit for First boat to finish	Time limit for the rest of Fleet to finish after the First boat has finished	Applies to
Multi Race day	2 hours	60 mins 45 mins	Smack Class when SI 16 applies All other Classes when SI 16 applies
Single Race day	4 hours	120 mins 90 mins	Smack Class only All other Classes

15.2 Any boat failing to finish within these time limits or by 16:30 each day, whichever is earlier, will be scored TLE (Time Limit Exceeded). This changes rules 35, A5 and A10.

15.3 Failure to meet the Time Limit will not be grounds for redress. This changes RRS 62.1(a).

16. POSTPONED RACES DAY

16.1 If it is necessary, due to a postponed race day, to provide two races on the same day for all classes, the first race will be the advertised race for that day and may be shortened at any race mark in the given course. The Committee Boat at the shortened finish may not be the Committee Boat that started the race. It will make regular sound signals and display Code flag S and the relevant class flags for the class(es) being finished at that mark.

16.2 Once the first race has been finished competitors should return to the normal start area ready to start the second race. The second race of the day will replace a previously postponed race and will start using the same class order as soon as possible after the first race has finished.

17. HEARING REQUESTS

17.1 In addition to RRS 61.1(a) (hail protest) a boat intending to protest should notify the Committee Boat immediately upon finishing the race or retiring and await acknowledgement.

17.2 Protests/Redress shall be lodged online via the online Jury system located at Protests and requests for redress or reopening shall be delivered there within the appropriate time limit using the Online Form available [Protests Form](#).

17.3 The Protest Time limit for each class is 90 minutes after the last boat of each class has finished the last race of the day or after flag AP over A is displayed ashore.

17.4 A Hearing/Arbitration Schedule will be posted on the [ONB](#) as soon as possible after a protest has been lodged, but not later than 30 minutes after the end of Protest Time to inform competitors of hearings in which they are parties or named as witnesses. Hearings will be heard in the order specified on the Hearing Schedule. Parties and witnesses are required to be available at the time stated on the Hearing Schedule. It is the responsibility of each party to ensure their witnesses are available.

17.5 Notices of protests by the Race Committee or Protest Committee will be posted to inform boats under RRS 61.1(b) hearings.

17.6 On the last scheduled day of racing, a request for redress based on a Protest Committee decision shall be delivered no later than 20 minutes after the decision was posted. This changes RRS 62.2.

18. SCORING

18.1 As per NOR 13.

19. SAFETY REGULATION [NP]

19.1 A boat that retires from a race shall notify the Committee Boat as soon as possible.

19.2 Before starting and after finishing, boats in the Smack, Cruiser & Keelboat classes should keep clear of boats that may still be racing including those in the Dinghy and MFOB fleets.

20. EQUIPMENT AND MEASUREMENT CHECKS

20.1 A boat or equipment may be inspected at any time for compliance with the Class Rules and Sailing Instructions. On the water or ashore, a boat can be instructed by an equipment inspector to proceed immediately to a designated area for inspection. A boat shall comply with any reasonable request made by an Equipment Inspector. [DP].

TRASH DISPOSAL

20.2 Trash must be taken ashore and disposed of in appropriate rubbish bins.

21. BERTHING [DP]

21.1 Boats shall be kept on their assigned moorings.

22. HAUL OUT RESTRICTIONS

22.1 N/A

23. DIVING EQUIPMENT AND PLASTIC POOLS

23.1 N/A

24. PRIZES

24.1 Daily prizes will be awarded .

24.2 Overall prizes will be presented after the event.

24.3 Where separate prizes are presented for Smack Fast and Slow classes, White Sail classes or any other class that in the opinion of the Mersea Week Committee should be given separate prizes, the winners of each group will be calculated by reference to the overall results of each class.

25. RISK STATEMENT AND DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY

25.1 See NOR 17.

26. INSURANCE

26.1 See NOR 18.

27. MARKS

27.1 The racing marks are yellow can shaped buoys that may additionally have a black flag. They are identified by their sponsor's name and or their number. The course may also use navigation buoys as Marks of the Course.

RACE MARKS 2026

WMYC Mark No	Mark Name	Sponsor	Flag Colour	Approx. position
1	DAVONPORT KITCHEN & HOME	Richard Davonport	Black Flag	51-45.81N 00-56.22E
2	WINTER & CO MARINE	Paul Winter	Black Flag	51-45.21N 00-56.63E
3	ENOVERT COMMUNITY TRUST	Dabchicks Sailing Club	Black Flag	51-45.09N 00-52.86E
5	TROLLOPE LTD	Jack Trollope	Black Flag	51-44.91N 00-53.90E
6	FIDUCIA WEALTH	Fiducia Wealth Management	Black Flag	51-45.73N 00-58.97E
10	COLNE YACHT CLUB	Colne Yacht Club	Black Flag	51-44.82N 00-59.41E
12	RODNEY HILL	Jill Hill	Black Flag	51-44.46N 00-52.98E
14	COMPASS RIGGING	Compass Rigging	Black Flag	51-45.45N 00-53.91E
17	MILLERMOTORGROUP.COM	Miller Motor Group Ltd	Black Flag	51-45.21N 00-55.11E
18	WALDEGRAVES	Waldegraves Holiday Park	Black Flag	51-45.60N 00-57.60E
MG	JOHN MUNNS YACHT SURVEYOR	John Munns	Black Flag	51-45.60N 00-55.47E
OLM (S)	DABCHICKS SAILING CLUB	Dabchicks Sailing Club	Black Flag	51-45.60N 00-54.56E
OLM (E)	BLOKE	Friends – In Memory Adam Crisp	Red Flag	51-45.70N 00-54.76E
OLM (W)	STREETS	Streets Chartered Accountants	Green Flag	51-45.65N 00-54.38E
COMMITTEE BOAT MOORING	MERSEA ISLAND ROWING CLUB	Mersea Island Rowing Club	No Flag	51-45.77N 00-54.66E

END OF SAILING INSTRUCTIONS



Keelboats / Cruisers &
Smacks Broadcast

