**56th Southend Barge Match  
Saturday 8th June 2024  
  
Guidance To Officers Of The Day (OOD) On Safety Matters For Barge Races 2024**

lntroduction

This document follows on from the Risk Assessment for the Southend Barge Match. This guidance is produced to specifically assist the Officer of The Day on particular aspects of the Control Measures listed in the Risk Assessment. It includes actions that maybe carried out or delegated to other individuals involved with the match organization.

Note that the general principle that barge owners or skippers remain at all times responsible for the decision to race and for the care and safety of their barge is never overridden by any action of the race committee. The main role of the Officer of the Day so far as safety is concerned is to try to provide information to assist the skippers in their duty of care, and to try to ensure safe racing conditions. Therefore the Officer of the Day must use their judgement if, for safety reasons, it appears prudent to cancel a race or to abandon a race already started, regardless of the wishes of any of the competitors. The Officer of the Day may also disqualify a barge from racing if it appears that the skipper is ignoring safety rules or where there are concerns for the safety of the barge and crew.

All skippers should have knowledge of the PLA Byelaws governing the conduct of craft on the river, the ColRegs, and the relevant Racing Rules of Sailing in force at the time, and at all times behave in a seamanlike manner most especially where other craft not racing may be affected.

Before the briefing

1. Check the weather forecast for the expected duration of the race. If winds over 25 knots are forecast is for any part of the race, then you need to seriously consider cancelling. Also look at the wind direction and the tidal flows, for instance strong wind against tide creates increased severity, conversely a short fetch if the wind is across the river can reduce likelihood of waves. Where the forecast is expected to be strong at the start and diminish during the race, then you can judge the conditions as you see them at the briefing. If the forecast is for wind to increase during the race, then you have to rely on the forecast. Your judgement needs to be based on all the boats who have entered. ln addition check the visibility, fog or very poor visibility is an overriding reason to cancel or abandon a race. Likewise if it appears that the race may end up over-running the time limit, then shortening the course will become necessary.

2. If the course is likely to take barges into the main shipping channels, contact VTS to check for any unusual ship movements which may affect the race, it may be necessary to postpone the start if necessary by a short time, or alter the course. Check the state of the tides for the race area. Keep this in mind when setting the course, avoid creating a risk of a mark of the race being in too shallow water or in a confined area when the current will be strong thus creating a risk of collision.

Check that all entrants have submitted and signed entry forms including insurance declarations. Ensure that you have a contact ashore for all boats to be contacted in the event of an emergency or accident.

Hold briefing, if possible, but since this often becomes impracticable due to tide and weather conditions, or participants arriving on the day of the race,   
Alternatively, a Briefing document may be prepared, and this will be supplied to barges as necessary. If it is not possible to hold a briefing due to tide and weather conditions, or late arrival of participation barges, this document will ensure they are all made aware of the necessary information prior to the race. If a briefing can be held, details from this document can be presented.

Participants will also receive copies of the Match Risk Assessment, Local Rules, Barge Racing Rules, Briefing Document and Major Incident Plan.  
  
Note: The OOD will be able to work with, and delegate to match chairman and/or TBYC officials, any such matters he should deem fit.  
  
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