



2024 OPEN OCEAN REGATTA

COMPETITOR INSTRUCTIONS

EVENT DATE: SUNDAY APRIL 21, 2024

Updated Document, Date: April 20, 2024

The Open Water Rowing Center welcomes all competitors to the waters of San Francisco Bay for the 2024 Open Ocean Regatta.

SAFETY & ELIGIBILITY

There are dangers present when rowing and paddling on Richardson Bay and San Francisco Bay, including, but not limited to: very cold water, strong currents of moving water, strong winds, rough water created where different currents come together and mix, rough water created by wind blowing across the water for long distances, and vessel traffic.

To participate in the regatta, all individual competitors must sign the regatta waiver.

It is each competitor's decision whether or not to race.

By participating in the Open Ocean Regatta, all competitors agree to adhere to the following safety rules.

SKILLS

- Competitors must be able to swim, be comfortable swimming in cold water, and be able to swim for prolonged periods of time.
- Competitors will compete with equipment that they are familiar with.
- Competitors must have the skills and experience necessary to compete on their registered course and handle all conditions that may be encountered on that course.

EQUIPMENT

- Competitors will use equipment that is well-maintained and has no known issues that could prevent the safe completion of the course in which they've entered.
- Every shell, boat, outrigger canoe, surfski, kayak or paddleboard must have **one Personal Flotation Device ("PFD") per person**, including coxswains. The PFD must be a USCG-approved Type I, II or III, or Type V that meets the requirements of ("performs like") Type I, II or III.

- **OWRC strongly encourages competitors to wear their PFDs at all times**, especially on the Endurance, Pt. Diablo and Paddlesport Long courses.
- **OWRC strongly encourages competitors to wear high-visibility colors**. It enables our safety boat crews to quickly spot competitors from farther away to track their progress. It also helps vessels that are not part of the regatta to see you and avoid you.
- All SUP competitors will use and wear a board leash.
- All competitors must have at least one approved communications device on their person or in their boat (minimum: one device per boat; recommended: one device per person).
 - Acceptable communications devices include:
 - A mobile phone.
 - A cellular-capable smartwatch that is able to make phone calls.
 - A handheld marine VHF radio, ideally with DSC and FCC-registered.
 - A 406 MHz Personal Locator Beacon registered with NOAA..
 - A SPOT satellite tracker or messenger with an active subscription.
 - A Garmin InReach with an active subscription.
 - All batteries should be new or, if rechargeable, be as fully charged as-is practical.
 - Ask the race committee if you have a device that you believe will suffice but is not listed.

HELPING OTHER COMPETITORS

If you come upon or see another competitor that is in distress or needs assistance, it is your responsibility to stop racing to help them however you **safely** can. Be sure that in the process of helping another, you don't become another person in distress. If it is possible to call for help by phone or VHF radio, that might be the most effective way to help. Physically helping them might be the best course of action in some situations, if it is safe to do so. Use your best judgment to determine how best to help them within the safe limits of your skill and ability, and within the context of the current conditions.

DIRECTIONS ISSUED ON THE WATER

The regatta safety boats are instructed to help keep competitors clear of shipping and other vessel traffic. The regatta is permitted by the USCG and the race committee and safety boats will be in contact with the USCG and Vessel Traffic Services as needed.

All regatta competitors must comply with directions issued by safety boats. For example, if a safety boat issues a direction to change course, it is required that the competitor promptly do as instructed.

EVENT DAY CONDITIONS, CHANGES AND POSTPONEMENT

The size and direction of the ocean swell outside the Golden Gate is a variable we must contend with. Conditions will be assessed the morning of the race to determine if it is safe

to send competitors beyond the Golden Gate Bridge. If it is not safe, we will change to the alternate courses defined in the appendices to this document. Any course changes will be announced at the safety briefing in the morning.

If the conditions overall are not deemed safe for any of the events to take place, we will postpone the regatta. We will first do all that we can to safely avoid a postponement. If a postponement is necessary, we will do our best to make the decision before the event, but the regatta can be postponed the day of the event for safety.

BEFORE LEAVING THE DOCK OR THE BEACH

REGISTRATION CHECK-IN

On the afternoon of the day prior (Saturday, April 20), or on the morning of the regatta, we ask that each competitor (not just one person per boat) check-in at the registration table at OWRC. Rowers, surfski, kayak and outrigger canoe paddlers will receive their boat numbers. SUP competitors will receive their bibs. The registration table will be open 1:00 - 5:00 PM on Saturday, and will open on Sunday morning at 6:45 AM.

BOAT NUMBERS AND BIBS

All competitors are required to display their assigned entry number on their person or their boat. Specifically:

- Rowing shells, surfskis, kayaks and outrigger canoes are required to display the assigned number on the boat, on both sides of the bow. OWRC will provide enough number stickers for both sides of the bow. The numbers should be as far toward on the bow (in the forward $\frac{1}{3}$ of the bow section) and as far above the waterline as is reasonable to make the numbers easy to read by the race committee.

Note: Putting the stickers on the boat properly can take 10-15 minutes. Please consider coming to the pre-registration at OWRC on Saturday from 1:00 - 5:00 PM to do this the day before. If you cannot make it on Saturday, please add another 15-minutes to your Sunday morning routine to make sure you have enough time for this.

- SUP paddlers are required to wear their entry number as a bib on their chest. Safety pins will be provided.

COMPETITORS BRIEFING

All competitors must attend the safety briefing outside the OWRC boathouse at 7:15 AM where the day's conditions will be discussed, course guidance will be provided, and any late changes will be announced. There may be separate safety briefings for the different sports and/or courses, so keep an eye out for more details as we get closer to the regatta.

THE START

THE STARTING AREA - SEE APPENDIX A

The starting area will be just offshore of downtown Sausalito in the vicinity of, but beyond the Trident restaurant, near where the sea lion sculpture used to be.

As you head away from the OWRC, the starting area is beyond the ferry terminal. Please be careful making your way past the ferry terminal, being mindful of arriving or departing ferry traffic.

It takes 15 to 30 minutes to row to the starting area from OWRC, so leave the dock with enough time to comfortably make your start.

The center of the Starting Area is the Race Committee Boat. There is only one race committee boat signaling the starts and communicating with competitors.

THE STARTING LINES - SEE APPENDIX B

There will be **two starting lines**, LINE A and LINE B - see diagram in Appendix B. Each course is assigned a specific starting line. There is a chart below that pairs the courses to the lines.

- **LINE A** will be between the staff flying an orange flag on the race committee boat, and a large RED conical buoy set in the water towards the downtown Sausalito shore. This starting line will be used for race courses that start in the direction of the Golden Gate Bridge.
- **LINE B** will be between the staff flying an orange flag on the R/C boat and a large YELLOW conical buoy set in the water back towards the Trident Restaurant. This starting line will be used for the Strawberry Course so competitors can start in the direction of Cone Rock.

All competitors must stay clear of the starting line area when they are not inside of their 5-minute starting time window. Only boats and boards that are about to start should be near their starting line.

It is required that you and your boat be entirely on the pre-start side of the starting line at the moment the starting signal is sounded for your start.

If any part of your boat is on the race course side of the starting line when the start is signaled for your start, you will be assigned a one-minute time penalty, which will be added to your raw course time.

Please be prepared for an expected ebb current (towards the Golden Gate Bridge) which may push you over the line early, especially on Line A. If this is the case, you should be actively working to stay on the pre-start side of the starting line.

THE STARTING SEQUENCE AND SIGNALS

There is a structured starting sequence. We will provide a detailed timeline of signals, but generally, it goes like this:

- **UPDATED:** The sequence begins with a **warning** at 8:40 AM to let everyone know the clock is running.
- **UPDATED:** The first start will be at **8:45 AM**.
- **UPDATED:** The second start will be **8:50 AM**.
- **UPDATED:** The third start will be at **8:55 AM**.
- **UPDATED:** The fourth and final start will be at **9:00 AM**.

The starting sequence is based on **five-minute intervals**. All of the following details about our starting sequence exist to **help competitors build situational awareness on the water**. We intend for our redundant signals to be clear so you will know exactly when you are starting. It is very difficult to hear amplified speech across the water, so we will not be using verbal commands.

Visual Signals: Course Numbers and Colors

To clearly indicate which start is next, we will post two visual indicators: **a colored flag, and a number on a board**. When a number and color are indicated, that means the five-minute clock is running on that start. The colored flag will be lowered at the start. The color for the next start will be raised one-minute later; four-minutes before the next start. The number on the board will be replaced during that minute.

UPDATED START TIMES

COURSE	STARTING LINE	START NUMBER	FLAG COLOR	START TIME
ENDURANCE COURSE	A	1	BLUE	8:45 AM
PT. DIABLO COURSE				
PADDLESPORT LONG COURSE	A	2	YELLOW	8:50 AM
SPRINT COURSE				
STRAWBERRY* 'fours and doubles'	B	3	RED	8:55 AM
STRAWBERRY** 'singles'				

*All boats with two or more rowers/paddlers start together in the first Strawberry start.

** All boats and boards with only one rower/paddler will start in the second Strawberry start.

Sound Signals

Sound signals will also be used to indicate key times in the starting sequence. We will use groupings of long and short sound signals. Here is a guide:

SOUND SIGNALS	MEANING
ONE LONG sound.	The start of a race.
FIVE SHORT RAPID sounds.	There is one-minute before the next start.
THREE LONG regularly spaced sounds.	The five-minute warning before the first start of the day.
THREE SHORT RAPID sounds.	Attention: the five-minute warning is imminent.

THE FIVE-MINUTE WARNING

The five-minute warning to the first start will be indicated by **THREE LONG sound signals**. This signal begins the five-minute rolling clock that all of the starts are based on.

We will give the competitors a **gather-attention signal a few seconds ahead of the warning** with THREE VERY SHORT, RAPID sound signals, approximately 10-seconds before the warning is sounded.

THE COMPLETE SEQUENCE AND TIMELINE

Following is a detailed timeline that shows when all of the signals will be indicated.

UPDATED TIMES

EVENT / SIGNAL	SIGNALS	FLAG	BOARD	TIME
Attention, Warning Imminent	THREE SHORT RAPID sounds	-	-	8:39:50 AM
FIVE MINUTE WARNING	THREE LONG sound signals BLUE FLAG is raised "1" posted on the board	BLUE	1	8:40:00 AM
1-minute warning for Start 1	FIVE SHORT RAPID sound signals Blue Flag is up	BLUE	1	8:44:00 AM
START 1	ONE LONG sound signal Blue Flag is lowered	BLUE	1	8:45:00 AM
Start 2 Warning (four-minutes before Start 2)	YELLOW FLAG is RAISED "2" posted on the board (no sound signals)	YELLOW	2	8:46:00 AM
1-minute warning for Start 2	FIVE SHORT RAPID sound signals Yellow Flag is up	YELLOW	2	8:49:00 AM
START 2	ONE LONG sound signal Yellow Flag is lowered	YELLOW	2	8:50:00 AM
Start 3 Warning (four-minutes before Start 3)	RED FLAG is RAISED "3" posted on the board (no sound signals)	RED	3	8:51:00 AM
1-minute warning for Start 3	FIVE SHORT RAPID sound signals Red Flag is up	RED	3	8:54:00 AM
START 3	ONE LONG sound signal Red Flag is lowered	RED	3	8:55:00 AM
Start 4 Warning (four-minutes before Start 4)	WHITE FLAG is RAISED "4" posted on the board (no sound signals)	WHITE	4	8:56:00 AM
1-minute warning for Start 4	FIVE SHORT RAPID sound signals White Flag is up	WHITE	4	8:59:00 AM
START 4	ONE LONG sound signal White Flag is lowered	WHITE	4	9:00:00 AM

ON-THE-WATER DELAY

If we are unable to start the sequence precisely at 8:25:00 AM, the relative timing and sequence of events will remain the same. It will be based on a **new warning time**. We will do our best to visually communicate the new time to all competitors. You can also listen for the sound signals.

THE FINISH

There will be one finish line for all competitors. It will be between the staff with the orange flag on the race committee boat and a large YELLOW conical buoy set in the water in the general direction of the ferry terminal.

COMMUNICATIONS

CHANGES

Any changes to these instructions or the course definitions will be posted on the website and emailed to competitors no later than 5:00 PM on Saturday, April 20. Any race-day changes will be announced at the morning safety briefing.

ON-THE-WATER EMERGENCY

If there is an **on-the-water emergency** and a competitor needs **immediate life-saving assistance**, do not hesitate to call 9-1-1 or hail 'mayday mayday mayday' on Channel 16 on a VHF radio. If you have a DSC button on a registered VHF radio, push it.

GENERAL ON-THE-WATER COMMUNICATIONS

Competitors will be provided with a list of race committee cell phone numbers in case it is necessary to talk to the race committee while on the water.

The race committee and safety boats will be communicating via VHF Channels 69 and 72. Please do not communicate on these channels unless you need something important from the race committee. In any emergency situation, please declare your emergency on Channel 16.

ABANDONMENT

If at any time a competitor decides to not leave shore, not start the race, or not continue racing after having started racing, please announce your abandonment to the race committee as soon as you can safely do so. If it is safe to communicate your abandonment while on the water via cell phone or VHF, it is appreciated. But if not safe to communicate, wait until it is, even if that means when you safely make it back to shore. Whether or not you have communicated your abandonment while on the water, **please check-in at the registration desk at OWRC upon your safe return to shore.**

AFTER RACING

POST-RACE CHECK-IN

Upon returning to shore at OWRC after racing, we ask that all competitors check-in at the registration desk to confirm they are back. Beverages and food will be waiting!

SCORING

Competitors in each class are racing one another for the fastest course time. We are using a new age and distance-based handicapping system to adjust the raw time of course completion into a corrected time. Because it is new, we will be publishing two sets of results this year: One based on the raw course times, and one based on handicap-corrected times.

The starting time recorded for each competitor will be the time the starting signal was sounded for your class.

AWARDS

Awards will be provided as follows:

- In classes that have two or three registered entries, a prize for the winner will be presented.
- In classes that have four entries registered, prizes for the winner and 2nd place will be presented.
- In classes that have five or more entries registered, prizes for the winner, 2nd place and 3rd place will be presented.

We are hoping to present awards to both the corrected and uncorrected time winners. This detail will be finalized closer to the event date.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

If you have any questions, comments or concerns ahead of the regatta, please do not hesitate to contact the Regatta Committee by email at regatta@owrc.com.

APPENDICES AND AMENDMENTS

Links to the appendix documents and any amendments can be found on the regatta page at the OWRC website: <https://www.owrc.com/open-ocean-regatta>