

Sailing Instructions

The Holms Race

Saturday 12th September 2026

boatfolk



1.0 THE EVENT

1.1 A race from Portishead, around Flat Holm and Steep Holm and back to Portishead, giving a sailing distance in excess of 35nm.

1.2 There will be drinks and free hog roast available after the race from 19:30, plus provisional results from 21:00, next to:

The Lock Control Building
Portishead Marina
Portishead
BS20 7DF

2.0 RESPONSIBILITY

2.1 Yacht racing can be dangerous. The attention of owners, skippers and crew is drawn to RRS Fundamental Rule 4: "The responsibility for a boat's decision to participate in a race or to continue racing is hers alone". The safety of a yacht and her crew is the sole and inescapable responsibility of the owner or owner's representative who must do their best to ensure that the yacht is fully found, thoroughly seaworthy and manned by an experienced crew who are able to sail in bad weather. They must be satisfied as to the soundness of the hull, spars, rigging, sails and all gear. They must ensure that the safety equipment is properly maintained and stowed and that the crew know where it is kept and how it is to be used. Nothing, whether in the Notice of Race or Sailing Instructions or anywhere else, reduces this responsibility.

2.2 Nothing done by the organisers can reduce the responsibility of the skipper nor will it make the organisers responsible for any loss, damage, death or personal injury, however it may have occurred, as a result of the boat taking part in the race. The organisers encompasses everyone helping to run the race and the event, and includes any appointed organising authority, race committee and race officers.

2.3 Competitors must remain well clear of shipping, which will likely be constrained by draught. Any competitor interfering with shipping will be liable to disqualification from the race.

3.0 RULES & REGULATIONS

3.1 The race will be governed by the Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS) of the ISAF and the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea.

4.0 ELIGIBILITY & CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

4.1 Competitors attention is drawn to stipulations 4.1 to 4.6 in the Notice of Race.

4.2 All competitors to wear lifejackets for the duration of the race.

4.3 All boats shall carry an operational marine VHF radio, preferably with DSC capability, equipped with channels 12 (Bristol VTS), 16 (Emergency), 37/M1 (Race Control), 77 (preferred yacht to yacht channel).

5.0 ENTRIES/CLOSING DATES/ETC

5.1 Entries will be accepted online until Sunday 6th September 2026.

5.2 Late entries will only be accepted at the discretion of the race committee.

5.3 Mooring fees are NOT included in the entry however, Portishead Marina are offering reduced rates for moorings on Friday and Saturday nights for boats participating in the Holms Race and the PCC Regatta on the following weekend.

Boats must have registered for the race to take up this offer and discounted moorings must be reserved by 1st September 2026.

6.0 PRIZES & PRIZE GIVING

6.1 Prizes will be awarded to the first three boats on handicap.

6.2 A prize will also be awarded to the club with best three results (sum of top three positions, lowest number wins).

6.3. A prize will be awarded to the boat finishing first overall in IRC on corrected time.

6.3 Provisional results will be announced at the post race event (see section 1.2 above).

7.0 THE START

7.1 Each entrant selects their own start time; the earliest start time is 10:00 BST and the latest start time is 15:00 BST. Note HW Avonmouth is 13.48m at 08:52 and 13.65m at 21:09 BST. Sunrise is at 06:40 and sunset is 19:31 BST.

7.2 Each boat must call Race Control (VHF CH37/M1) to identify themselves (giving their boat name and sail number or other visible identification) and declare their intention to cross the start line. This declaration to take place within 5 minutes of their actual start.

7.3 Entrants should keep clear of the start line unless they are about to start the race so as not to interfere with other starting boats and to avoid being given an earlier start time than they intend.

7.4 Entrants are permitted use of the engine until one minute prior to their start.

7.5 Once an entrant has declared their intention to start, their first crossing of the start line will be presumed to be their intended start.

7.6 The Start and Finish Line is between Portishead Point (a.k.a. Battery Point, roughly 0.7NM West of Portishead Pier) and the Newcome (red lateral) buoy. This is the same as recent races (since 2020).

7.7 Please note that there are limited locks out of Portishead Marina ahead of the start. It is strongly recommended that you reserve a lock before 1st Sept 2026.

8.0 THE COURSE

8.1 As follows:

- 1 Start
- 2 North West Elbow to port
- 3 Flatholm to port
- 4 Steepholm to port
- 5 Northwest Elbow to starboard
- 6 Finish

9.0 THE FINISH

9.1 The Finish Line is the same as the start line.

9.2 At the finish each entrant must call Race Control (VHF CH37/M1) and confirm their identity (e.g. sail number, spinnaker or hull colour) within close proximity of the line, plus that they have completed the full course. Finishing yachts who do not confirm that they have completed the course may not be given a placing.

9.3 Each entrant must also note the names of the boats immediately in front and behind at the finish line.

9.4 Any boat retiring from the race must confirm that fact to Race Control (VHF CH37/M1) or by phone to the number published on the Holms Race page of the website. Please ensure that this is adhered to, to prevent an unnecessary search.

9.5 Once finished, yachts who intend to enter Portishead Quays Marina should call the marina immediately on VHF CH80 to book a lock. The marina will then call yachts into the lock by name.

10.0 COMMUNICATIONS

10.1 Between Race Officers, and entrants - use VHF CH37 (M1)

10.2 Channel 77 will be the preferred inter yacht channel.

10.3 All entrants should monitor Bristol VTS CH 12 when in their zone of control.

10.4 To contact the OOD on the day call "PCC Race Control" on VHF CH37 (M1), on low power.

10.5 It is requested that the leading boat makes contact with the OOD approx 30 mins before crossing the finish line.