



# Round the Island Race

organised by the  
Island  
Sailing  
Club



Saturday 15th June 2024

## First Timers' Guide

For more information and full entry details visit

[www.roundtheisland.org.uk](http://www.roundtheisland.org.uk)

or call the Island Sailing Club on 01983 296621

 [facebook.com/roundtheislandrace](https://facebook.com/roundtheislandrace)

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Island Race  
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Each year nearly 10,000 sailors take part in the Round the Island Race. It's the largest and most spectacular yacht race of its kind in the world, enjoyed by top professionals and newcomers alike. In 2024 the race takes place on Saturday 15th June.

This document is intended to guide entrants through the entry process and to help you prepare for race day. Staff at the Island Sailing Club, organisers of the Race, will be happy to answer your questions. Telephone 01983 296621, email [rir@islandsc.org.uk](mailto:rir@islandsc.org.uk) or write to the Island Sailing Club, 70 High Street, Cowes, Isle of Wight, PO31 7RE.

### Entering your boat

You can only enter online, but if this is impossible for you, telephone the office and they will put a hard copy in the post to you. Before you start to fill in the entry form, make sure you have read the online entry information and the Notice of Race which tells you all about the race and which types of boat are eligible to enter. No entries can be accepted after midday on Wednesday 12th June 2024.

Monohulls that don't have an IRC rating certificate or an IRC Single Event Rating (see NoR 5.2) can still take part using the ISC Rating System. This involves supplying some simple measurements on your entry form. If you have any problems obtaining this information, please contact Sonia on [ratings@islandsc.org.uk](mailto:ratings@islandsc.org.uk)

You will be allocated a rating based on a time allowance. We suggest that before you start to fill out your rating application form that you read the short article "Understanding the ISCRS". Our online only entry system allows you to store your details from year to year.

The full list of classes offered is given in the Notice of Race. It is mandatory for every boat entered to have one able-bodied person of at least 18 years of age on board.

As part of your entry, the Race organisers will need your list of crew – it is particularly important in emergencies. Don't worry if you don't have it straight away, you can revisit the website and update it later but it must be completed before the Race.

You'll also need to provide a dedicated race mobile phone number which is with you on the boat during the race. The Race Committee may use it to send out specific messages to particular boats or fleets, and you can use it at the end of the race to tell us your finishing time, sail number of boats nearby and that you have raced in accordance with the Racing Rules.

### Safety

Safety is paramount in an event of this type. It is everyone's responsibility to be satisfied that their boat is suitable and seaworthy to race, not just in the Solent but also in the open waters south of the Island and in the full range of weather conditions. Ultimately, as skipper of the boat, it is your decision whether to race or continue racing. You must also check that your boat insurance covers you for racing.

The majority of boats competing need to comply with the safety requirements of the World Sailing (WS) Offshore Special Regulations for Category 4 races.

Full details can be found and downloaded from [www.sailing.org](http://www.sailing.org) (Choose Documents and Rules then Offshore Special Regs). Sportsboats, Diam 24s and J/70 Classes have separate safety requirements described in the Notice of Race and Sailing Instructions. If you are chartering a boat, check that it meets these safety requirements and ask to be shown where items are stowed.

You should allow time to brief your crew fully in advance as to where safety equipment is kept and how it is used. Don't for instance assume everyone can use a VHF radio.

Please take time to study carefully the Safety Booklet and Sailing Instructions provided to all competitors by the Island Sailing Club. These documents will be available on the official website seven to ten days before the event. Race safety inspectors make random inspections of equipment before and after the race and you will be disqualified if your boat does not comply.

Please also make sure you read carefully the minimum buoyancy requirements for lifejackets required by World Sailing Offshore Special Regulations for Category 4 races and make sure you have one for everyone on board.



Sportsboats, Diam 24s and J/70s are required to carry lifejackets fitted with crotch/thigh straps with at least 150N buoyancy.

In very windy conditions, such as we have had in recent years, you may see a “Y” (yankee) flag displayed with your class or fleet warning signal. If we do display this red and yellow striped flag, everyone on board must wear a lifejacket for the entire race. This is one of the Racing Rules of Sailing and you may be disqualified if you do not follow this requirement.

Running this race is a huge team effort. We work closely with ABP Southampton Harbour Master, Cowes Harbour Commissioners, KHM Portsmouth and the emergency services. Commercial traffic movements may dictate that it is necessary to postpone certain classes at the start and if weather conditions are particularly severe it may mean that certain classes have to be cancelled altogether (see NoR 4.4).

### Getting your boat ready

Before the race, check your boat over thoroughly. The extra pressure when racing will expose any weaknesses in sails, running rigging and other equipment. Don't lose speed through having a dirty hull. The underwater parts can be cleaned by having a lift out, using a diver or drying out on scrubbing piles provided by many clubs.

Excess weight will also slow you down, especially in light airs, so check there aren't cruising items on board like

barbecues and folding bicycles which can be left ashore for the day.

A kedge anchor should be easily accessible but remember if your anchor is stowed on deck it must not protrude over the bow.

In such a large fleet, your unique sail number is vital and compulsory if the organisers are to record you correctly at the finish. Make sure it is clearly on your mainsail and that the numbers on your sails match those given on your entry form. It is compulsory that dodgers with your full sail number on them are clearly shown. These also assist the race officers in identification.

### Preparing for the day

Please study the Sailing Instructions carefully and acquaint yourself with the Racing Rules of Sailing 2021 - 2024, particularly those of Part 2 which apply when boats meet.

Useful guides to the Rules are available from most chandleries and the RYA [www.rya.org.uk](http://www.rya.org.uk). A full set of Rules can be downloaded from [www.sailing.org/racingrules.php](http://www.sailing.org/racingrules.php).

To help those who don't race regularly a “Layman's guide to the Racing Rules” is available on our website. While it is important to remember that it is only a guide and not a substitute for the Racing Rules, we hope that everyone will read it and play their part in ensuring that competitors have a safe and enjoyable race.

### The course

The course is approximately 50 nautical miles and runs anti-clockwise round the Isle of Wight, starting at the Royal Yacht Squadron line. Pilotage is essentially straightforward - keep the Island on your port side! No Man's Land Fort is not a mark of the course.

Please make sure you read the Local Notice to Mariners regarding the exclusion area off Seaview. This will be published by QHM Portsmouth just prior to the Race and we will put a link to this on the Race Website nearer the time. The only rounding mark is Bembridge Ledge buoy, but be aware of the hazards on route.

We publish a Safety Booklet which gives good general guidance. Peter Bruce's Solent Hazards and Wight Hazards are very instructive books too. Some experienced race skippers may take the route inside the wreck at The Needles but this is definitely not recommended. Be safe! You can use the rough guide of keeping the old Coastguard station above the level of the top of the lighthouse to maintain a safe distance off.

Tides play an important part in doing well in the race and it is always well worth studying the tide tables in advance. When the tide turns, an inshore back eddy could be just what you need. Peter Bruce has also compiled experience and knowledge into his publication Solent and Island Tidal Streams which covers the whole area of the race.



### The weather

Don't be caught out by sudden changes in the weather and make sure you have an up-to-date forecast. You can catch broadcasts by BBC Radio Solent (96.1FM), BBC Radio 4 (92.9FM) and Solent Coastguard (VHF Channel 16). There are many sources on the internet including [www.bbc.co.uk/weather/ukweather/inshore.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/ukweather/inshore.shtml) and live conditions in the start area are given on [www.bramblemet.co.uk](http://www.bramblemet.co.uk) and [www.cowesharbourweather.com](http://www.cowesharbourweather.com)

A weather briefing, which may be virtual, will be given on Friday 14th June.

### Looking after your crew

If you don't have a regular crew, be sure you have enough skills on board, including at least two people who can steer. Try to arrange a practice day for newcomers to familiarise themselves with your boat. You could check transits for the start line at the same time. We plan to have the starting transit line lights switched on during Friday, so you can sight the line early on. The intention is for everyone to have a challenging but enjoyable race, so make sure everyone has a job to do.

You could be twelve hours or more on the water. Take care of your crew, ensuring the young and not so strong get some rest. Don't push the inexperienced beyond their capacity.

Encourage your crew to wear lifejackets and insist on them when conditions warrant it. Be prepared for any type of weather, with suitable waterproof clothing as well as sun protection. Change responsibilities regularly as few people can maintain good concentration without regular breaks.

For many, this is a family race and youngsters can play their part too, even if not strong enough to handle sails, perhaps by keeping a lookout for other boats, shipping, and changes in the weather.

If you have children on board, keep them occupied and pay particular attention to their safety. The Family Trophy is presented to the best boat in the ISC Rating System Class (ISCRS) with more than half the people on the boat from the same family.

Have plenty of non alcoholic fluids on board and quality energy food. It's best to assume that no one will be free for food preparation, so pack "on the go" items that can come straight out of the cool bag - sandwiches, cereal bars, and fruit. Chocolate alone is not enough to maintain top performance. Make sure everyone does have something to eat and drink at regular intervals - even if they don't feel like it.

### Race day

Before your scheduled start sequence, keep to the designated waiting areas as much as possible.

Do not obstruct Cowes fairway, the deep-water channel or the start line. Listen to the broadcasts on VHF 22 which will keep you informed on progress. Keep your designated race mobile phone to hand as this may be used to send fleet-specific text messages. There might for instance be a postponement to let commercial traffic through. Keep well away from boats in their start sequence. Only come up to the start area once your warning (ten minute) signal has been made. Keep a sharp lookout. Yacht racing is not a contact sport and it would be sad if your race ended with an incident at the start line. Check the strength of the tide to make sure you are not carried across the line too early.

During the race, be sure to log your position as you go round, the visibility can deteriorate suddenly. Monitor your own echo sounder. It's very tempting just to watch for other boats going aground if you are creeping into Ryde Sands to cheat the tide!

Remember that the Racing Rules apply between all yachts racing but you do not have priority over boats that are not racing.



Make sure also that you understand when you can take an alternative penalty for breaking a racing rule, as this will save you from spending time in the protest room and probably being disqualified.

If for any reason you retire from the race, please inform the Island Sailing Club as described in the Sailing Instructions.

Before you reach the finish, make sure you know which of the two finish lines is yours and that your sail number is visible to the team on the central committee boat. Clear the line as soon as possible and make your end-of-race declaration by text, or by coming ashore at either the Island Sailing Club in West Cowes or at East Cowes Marina.

### Shoreside

Many competitors come ashore in Cowes before and after the race and you will certainly find the marinas, bars and restaurants full of keen race enthusiasts. An ideal meeting place is the Island Sailing Club in the High Street.

Check the website [www.roundtheisland.org.uk](http://www.roundtheisland.org.uk) near race day to see what is programmed for the race weekend.

### Shorewatch

Shorewatch is a mandatory system whereby a person nominated by you will be available by phone whilst you are racing. It is essential that this person

always has the most up-to-date list of your crew and contact details for them, so that in an incident, family members can be reached.

### Following the race

It is mandatory for there to be at least one mobile phone able to download and run the Round the Island Race Tracking App during racing. Friends and families will also be able to follow their progress. Keep an eye on the race website for further details on how to sign up for this.

For those wanting to watch the race progress, the Isle of Wight offers good vantage points for spectators.

From 0550 really keen early risers can capture the excitement of the starts near the Royal Yacht Squadron in Cowes, where the cannons are fired, and along The Green in Cowes. Assuming no delays, the starting sequence is scheduled to continue until 0720.

Yarmouth Pier and Fort Victoria, through to Totland will see the greatest concentration of boats after the starts. Tennyson Down East of The Needles commands a high vantage point. St Catherine's Point by the lighthouse and Niton through to Ventnor usually enjoy spectacular spinnaker views when the wind is in the South or West. Views over Bembridge Ledge, Seaview and from Ryde Pier are always entertaining too.

A new race record for multihulls of 2hrs 22mins and 23secs was set by Ned Collier-Wakefield on a Mod 70 Trimaran 'Concise 10' in 2016, but the bulk of the fleet returns to Cowes during the afternoon and well into the evening on a light airs day.

If you are not on the Island, and want to keep up to date with race progress, just visit the race website: ([www.roundtheisland.org.uk](http://www.roundtheisland.org.uk)) where you can see text updates and some video footage of the race as it unfolds.

Information on the vehicle ferry from Southampton to East Cowes and hi-speed passenger service to West Cowes is available from [www.redfunnel.co.uk](http://www.redfunnel.co.uk) Tourist information is available from [www.islandbreaks.co.uk](http://www.islandbreaks.co.uk)

### And the winner is...

Race results are published immediately they become available and can be seen on the website or via screens at the Island Sailing Club.

The race prizegiving ceremony will be held on Sunday 16th June when over 50 trophies are awarded.

Throughout the Race weekend you, and your crew and family supporters, are welcome as visitors to the Island Sailing Club, which has a great view of the Solent and harbour, at 70 High Street, Cowes.

**Have a safe and enjoyable race!**



## Entry categories

The race is open to the following boats and classes:

### Rated classes:

- IRC rated boats
- ISCRS rated boats
- Classic Racing Yachts racing under ISCRS
- Modern Classic Racing Yachts racing under IRC
- Sportsboats racing under IRC
- HP30 racing under IRC
- Gaffers
- Multihulls (Grand Prix and MOCRA Racing)
- Bridgedeck Catamaran Cruisers

### One Design Classes:

- Clipper Yachts
- Diam 24
- Nordic Folkboat
- J/70
- Sunsail 41