

Checklist of key briefing points

Your audience should include all the support boat crew. Encourage the OOD to listen to the shore-based part of the briefing so that he is fully aware of what you have told the crew, especially about putting boats away.

Before Launching

- Check crew properly dressed, more warmth required than for sailing - at least one in each boat should be equipped and prepared to go into the water
- Take crew to the race hut and show them where to sign on
- Collect radio, first aid kit and ignition key from the race hut
- Open the first aid container, show and explain all items to crew. Record any shortages in the OOD's log.
- Get the boat out of the garage or rib cages and check equipment:
 - ~ Check you have two paddles
 - ~ A tow rope, secured to the stern of the boat and coiled neatly
 - ~ An anchor, the warp secured to the bow, and coiled into a bucket with the anchor on top, ready for use
 - ~ A bailer, tied on
- Replace the transom bung and check the engine security line
- Check you have sufficient fuel in the tank and the tank is secure in the boat. If you need to refuel, take the petrol tank to the fuel store. If possible, get someone else to fill the tanks if you are wearing a drysuit (there's a small risk of static build-up causing a spark). The yellow cans contain neat petrol for the Honda engines on the club support boats that you're going to be using. Fill the tank a little way from the store; have the fire extinguisher from the door with you. Stand upwind and, using the correct fuel, fill the tank about three-quarters full. Don't put the funnel on the ground where it can pick up dirt.
- Show crew how to raise and lower the engine, and explain the shallow water position and when to use it. Leave the engine raised.
- Demonstrate the use of the kill cord, should be round your leg always, not your wrist or attached to your clothing or buoyancy aid. Leave the kill cord on the engine.
- Show correct radio technique - "race hut, race hut, this is rescue 1, over" and explain why you should call this way round. Keep messages short, clear and to the point
- Stress the following:
 - ~ First duty is safety of people. Boat recovery is secondary and must only be attempted if no-one else is going to need rescuing and the OOD agrees.
 - ~ Keep at least 50m from fishermen or the shore unless dealing with an incident
 - ~ When near someone in the water, the engine should be switched off unless you might drift into danger when it must be in neutral.

- ~ Don't interfere with any floating objects you might come across - they're usually something to do with the fishermen.

Launching and starting the engine

- Demonstrate how to float the boat off the trolley forwards and sideways
- Let the crew put the engine down (or part down), check gear lever in neutral, and air bleed screw open on the fuel tank. Check the kill cord is correctly fitted around the helmsman's leg.
- Squeeze the fuel line bulb until it feels firm.
- Let the crew start the engine while you hold the boat in sufficiently deep water.

Tiller steer boat	Console boat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choke out, throttle fully closed • Leave the choke out for a couple of minutes as it takes this engine a while to warm up • Choke in by the time you reach the pontoon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate combined throttle and gear control and show how to close the throttle with an 'open' hand - fingers clear of the interlock trigger • Leave the fast idle lever down • Check neutral • Ignition on, start engine

- Check for flow of coolant from under starboard side of engine once running
- Climb in and motor gently towards the pontoon. Once in deeper water, put the engine fully down. Give the engine chance to warm up before attempting to go fast
- On the tiller-steer boat, helmsman should sit on starboard side controlling throttle with left hand
- Do a radio check
- Once the engine has warmed up, prove that removing the kill cord stops the engine.

The big RIBs

- Kept in the RIB cages by the fishing lodge. All keys with the OOD.
- Demonstrate combined throttle and gear control and show how to close the throttle with an 'open' hand - fingers clear of the interlock trigger
- Separate the ignition key from the kill cord. Demonstrate where they both fit, and that the other end of the kill cord goes round your leg in use.
- Explain that the fast idle lever is only for when the engine is hot (it disables the automatic choke)
- Open the air bleed screw on the petrol tank. Squeeze the fuel primer bulb until it feels firm. Start engine (fast idle lever down), check for coolant flow. Note that if the gear lever isn't in neutral, the starter won't operate.
- Prove that removing the kill cord stops the engine.

On the water

- Warm start technique - if engine doesn't start easily, lift the fast idle lever and try again - usually only necessary in very hot weather.
- Correct driving technique, one hand steering, the other on the throttle, kill cord round leg.
- Always switch the engine off when changing helmsman.
- Let each crew member have a go - get the boat up on to the plane, explain how speed can be maintained with less than full throttle.
- Explain the use of engine power tilt (because they might move it by accident) - and tell them to leave it set with the trim indicator level. Tell them to put crew weight well forward when manoeuvring into strong wind (stops the bow blowing about)
- Encourage the crew to become familiar with the boat by trying some exercises: coming alongside the pontoon in a controlled manner, picking up a mooring, circling a buoy forwards and backwards in both directions, three point turn on the spot using forward and reverse gears.
- Tell the crew that if they think they might need an ambulance, to call for one early - they take a while to get to Weir Wood. It's much better to cancel a call for an ambulance than to find out too late that you need one.
- Similarly, if the crew think they need any sort of assistance - to sail a dinghy back, or help at the pontoon, for example, call for help early.

Putting away

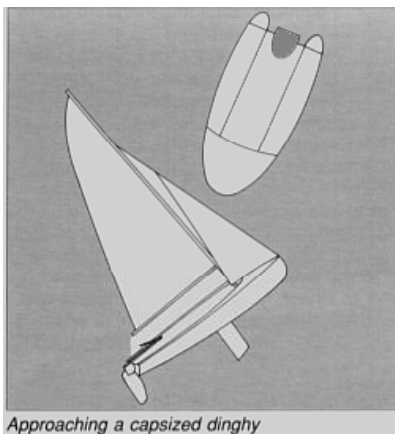
- Not until OOD says so
- **Don't** run engines with fuel line disconnected to empty carburettor
- Ensure the engine safe is locked and the compound left secure. The OOD will arm the alarm system.
- Make sure engines are left down.
- Fuel tanks come out of the RIBs kept in the cages and go back in the fuel store - close the air bleed screw before moving tanks to avoid spillage. Put the kill cord and ignition key back in the race hut.
- RIBs kept in the garages should be left with their fuel tanks in, boat should be left clean and tidy (bung out). Leave the kill cord with the boat; leave the engine down.
- Return all first aid kits to the race hut; note any problems with engines or boats or equipment on the duty sheet for the day.

Some DO's

- Think safety at all times. Check that everyone on the water is wearing a correctly fastened buoyancy aid.
- Always switch the engine off when changing helmsman.
- Visit every capsized within 3 minutes, even if you don't have to do anything when you get there
- At every capsized check that the right number of people are visible
- Talk to them - do they want your help?
- Look after your boat and its equipment - note any problems or missing equipment in the signing-on book in the race hut
- Keep 50m clear of the shore and fishermen
- Keep your speed down, and therefore your wash, particularly on calm days
- Agree breaks with the OOD
- Watch out for people getting cold and tired - eg. capsized numerous times, each capsized takes longer to recover - don't hesitate to suggest they go ashore

And some DON'Ts

- Start an engine out of the water (it will destroy the cooling water pump)
- Become involved in one incident to the exclusion of everything else
- Get too near the dam wall
- Have the engine running near people in the water - it's a mincing machine!
- Tow a boat without the permission of the OOD - see second bullet point above



Approaching a capsized dinghy

Approach a capsized dinghy from downwind (wind is coming from the bottom of the picture). Put the spare rescue crew member in the bow of the support boat to improve steering and to be ready to grab the forestay. Help to right the dinghy by getting hold of the forestay and 'walking' it up, hand over hand. This will leave you at the bow of the boat, which will tend to turn the boat head to wind making it easier for its crew to get aboard. Don't leave them until they're sorted out and ready to sail away.

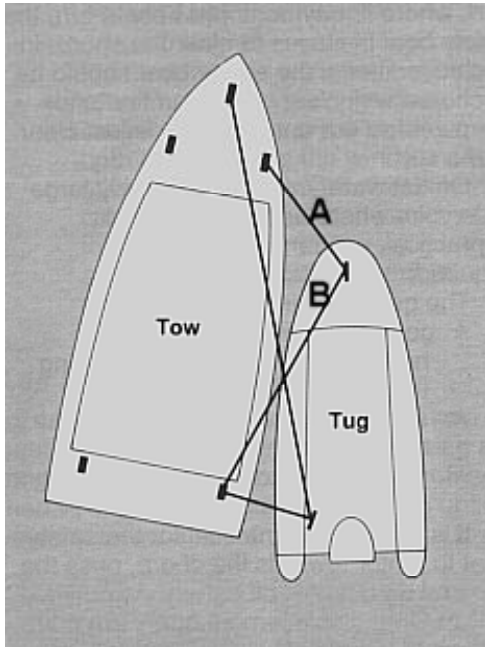
Getting a person out of the water

Approach from downwind. Stop the engine or at least ensure it's in neutral. If the person can help himself, he will generally prefer to face the support boat, but his legs will tend to float under the boat. The best method is to turn the person away from the boat. Crew members positioned on either side of him can get hold under each armpit and pull him into a sitting position on the side of the support boat. This is the only way to deal with an unconscious person as it keeps the airway open. If you have to resuscitate the casualty, lie him along the side of the boat. Use the radio to ask the OOD to call an ambulance.

Towing

Towing alongside is very effective if you get the towed craft in the right position

The boat in the picture probably isn't far enough forward - it should be on the 'shoulder' of the bow of the tug.



Ropes A and B are essential - you can use the tow's painter for A and just hold on as a substitute for B if you're feeling strong and haven't far to go. The other two ropes really aren't required unless you are going a long way, in which case it's probably easier to tow astern anyway.

Don't forget, when towing a dinghy, it should:

- Have the sails down
- The centreboard up
- The crew sitting well aft to steer - if no crew, take the rudder off.
- If it's a single hander, you may not be able to take the sail down, so unfasten the clew and if possible, roll the sail round the mast. With an Optimist, simply remove the sprit.

Windsurfer recovery

Well, you never know! The picture below shows one method. You could also de-rig the mast and roll the sail up, towing the board behind the support boat.

