

Ocean Race Course Grading

This is one of four documents specifically aimed at supporting paddlers, coaches and event organisers for ocean racing. The four documents are listed below:

- Paddler Safety Guidance for Ocean Racing and Ocean Race Training
- Event Safety for Ocean Race Organisers
- Ocean Race Course Grading
- Group Leader / Coach Safety Guidance for Ocean Racing and Ocean Race Training

Grade 1 – Entry Level

Type of course:

Triangular course.

Distance:

10 miles / 16 km (3 laps of 3 miles / 5km).

Safety ratios:

20 craft to 1 rescue asset **and** one spare rescue asset (not including the control boat).

Set up considerations:

Upwind mark downwind to downwind mark (longest leg) onto offset mark before going back to the upwind mark (To avoid craft coming Downwind). Safe beach downwind of the course.

Safety Cover on the water:

On the outside of the course. Control boat on entry and exit point.

Examples:

[Epic Bay](#), [Sussex Classic](#)

Grade 2 – Intermediate Level

Type of course:

Out and back (returning to the same point as the start).

Distance:

10 – 15 miles / 16 – 24 km.

Safety ratios:

25 craft to 1 rescue asset **and** one spare rescue asset (not including the control boat).

Set up considerations:

Can be in line of sight of the start point or around headlands / islands with simple navigation. There should be safe get out points on the course if the competitor is unable to return to the start point.

Considerations of 'slow' and 'fast' starts.

Safety Cover on the water:

Form a 'moving' corridor along the course, control boat at the furthest turn point, to confirm numbers through.

Examples:

[Celtic Cup](#), [Colwyn Bay Blast](#)

Grade 3 – Advance Level

Type of course:

A to B – following a coastline.

Distance:

10 – 15 miles / 16 – 24 km.

Safety ratios:

30 craft to 1 rescue asset **and** one spare rescue asset (not including the control boat)

Set up considerations:

The course is likely to require higher levels of line in sight navigation and knowledge of currents / tides. There should be safe get out points on the course if the competitor is unable to make it to either the start or the finish points. There should be consideration of ‘slow’ and ‘fast’ starts.

Competitors should have evidence they have competed in an entry (Grade 1) or intermediate (Grade 2) event and have a competitive result.

Safety Cover on the water:

Form a ‘moving’ corridor along the course, with a sweep boat, control boat should act as a ‘Safety Gate’.

Examples:

[FBOR](#), [ICON](#)

Grade 4 – Elite Level

Type of course:

A to B – following a coastline

Distance:

30+ miles / 50+ km

Safety ratios:

30 craft to 1 rescue asset **and** one spare rescue asset (not including the control boat)

Set up considerations:

The course will require high levels of navigation and knowledge of currents / tides. There Should be safe get out points on the course if the competitor is unable to make it to either the start or finish points. Competitors should have evidence they have competed in an intermediate (Grade 2) or advanced (Grade 3) event and have a competitive result.

Safety Cover on the water:

Form a ‘moving’ corridor along the course, with a sweep boat, control boat should act as ‘Safety Gates’.

Examples:

[Around Jersey](#), [North Cornish Coast Stage Race](#)

Open Water Crossing

Type of course:

A to B – across a large body of water.

Distance:

20+ miles / 35+ km

Safety ratios:

30 craft to 1 rescue asset **and** one spare rescue asset (not including the control boat).

Set up considerations:

The course will require high levels of navigation and knowledge of currents / tides. No safe get out points on the course. The competitor will be required to either return to the start or carry on to the finish. Competitors should have evidence they have competed in an advanced (Grade 3) event and have a competitive result.

Safety Cover on the water:

Form a 'moving' corridor along the course, with a sweep boat, Control boat should act as 'Safety Gates'.

Examples:

[Molokai](#)