

Hawk 20 Risk Assessment for Eddystone Charity Pursuit

Description of Event

The Eddystone Charity Pursuit is an annual event in Plymouth where a large fleet of yachts sail to a mark approximately 13 miles offshore and then return. The object of the event is to raise money for charity and many different classes of vessel take part, setting off at different times as determined by their handicap.

Horizons' Experience in Event

Horizons has been associated with the event for several years, both as a recipient of charitable funds raised and allowing its cadets to sail on participating yachts. Horizons' own Hawk 20 Dayboats have been routinely entered in the Eddystone Pursuit and won the event on more than one occasion.

Suitability of Hawk 20

The Hawk 20 Dayboat meets the minimum requirements for the event and is an RCD Category C vessel which is designed to be suitable for 'Inshore' use where conditions up to, and including, wind force 6 and significant wave heights up to, and including, 2 m may be experienced. Participating vessels are expected to be able to complete the course in 8 hours.

Suitability of Crew

Horizons' Boat and Sailing Operations policy require the Hawk 20 to be operated by a qualified Skipper and Mate who are both capable of sailing the boat to a safe standard having due regard to the for the weather conditions and the task required. Where Horizons' cadets are carried as part of the crew, they will be selected with regard to their age and experience taking account of the forecast conditions and the length of the voyage being much longer than that normally undertaken by Horizons. Only cadets over the age of 16 will be allowed to participate and they may be required to undertake a suitable qualifying passage to ensure they are prepared for the duration and rigour of the event.

Crew Preparation

All crew will wear buoyancy aids and suitable clothing, taking account of the forecast conditions and the need for sun protection. Crew will provide their own food, including adequate liquids. All crew will receive an event-specific briefing from the Skipper.

Boat Preparation

Horizons' Hawk 20s are maintained to a high standard and will be visually checked immediately prior to the event, with particular attention to hull condition and fixings, standing rigging, running rigging, operation of rudder and keel, sails and outboard engine.

Passage Plan

Each Hawk 20 Skipper will prepare a Passage Plan for the event which will take account of the expected weather and tidal streams, as well as including appropriate waypoints to be used in conjunction with the GPS. The Skipper will ensure that the Mate is fully briefed on the Passage Plan.

Standard Hawk 20 Safety Equipment Checklist

- Masthead Flotation
- Hand Held VHF
- VHF Mayday Procedure Card
- Fog Horn
- First Aid Kit
- Thermal Protective Aid
- Chart of local area
- Anchor and Warp
- 2 Orange Smoke, 2 Pin Point Red flares
- Fire Extinguisher
- Fire Blanket

Additional Items if operating without a Safety Boat in attendance

- Handheld GPS
- Tool Kit
- Sharp Knife (preferably serrated and rounded tip)

Additional equipment carried for Eddystone Pursuit

- Appropriate Charts + Dividers, Plotter, Pencil
- Hand Bearing Compass
- Handheld GPS + Spare Batteries
- Mobile Phone
- Tidal Atlas
- 2 x Thermal Protective Aid
- Sun Block

On the Day: Decision to Participate

The weather conditions for coastal sailing in UK waters are very variable and the Eddystone Pursuit has seen many different scenarios during its lifetime. There are clearly conditions that would be completely unsuitable for a Hawk 20 to participate, even though much larger vessels may choose to leave port. There are often conditions that are perfect for offshore sailing in any type of vessel, but wind and sea states which are marginal for a Hawk 20 can also arise. It is these conditions which present the most risk and must be carefully considered when deciding whether or not to participate.

Horizons participation on the day will be under the direction of the Operations Manager or Senior Instructor, who will make the decision whether or not to participate, having due regard for the forecast conditions. Even if a corporate decision is made to participate, individual Hawk 20 Skippers will make their own evaluation and will only set sail or continue if they are confident about the capability of their own vessel and crew. If at any time an individual craft makes the decision to retire they should inform the other Horizons' Hawks or other vessels sailing for Horizons. This evaluation must also take account of weather conditions that could lead to enhanced risk, such as poor visibility and/or light winds. In these circumstances, the Operations Manager or Senior Instructor may decide to recall the Horizons' fleet before the completion of the course.

Weather forecasts for several days ahead will indicate the likely weather conditions for the event, but the benchmark forecast used to make the final decision to participate will be the Met Office Inshore Waters Forecast issued on the morning of the event. A 'Strong Wind Warning' (forecast wind of Beaufort Force 6 or more) is at the limit for the RCD Category C design category of the Hawk 20.

The following table describes the likely decisions for various forecast wind strengths:

Beaufort	Description	Decision
0-1	Calm – Light Airs	In these conditions the event is likely to be postponed/cancelled or may be sailed over a shortened course.
2	Light Breeze	Under these conditions it is unlikely that a Hawk 20 would be able to complete the course in 8 hours, unless the conditions are favourable for the development of a sea breeze. Hence the Skipper may decide to set sail but retire early and advise the Event Organiser and Horizons.
3-4	Gentle - Moderate Breeze	These are good sailing conditions for a Hawk 20. Over a lengthy voyage, it is possible that crew members may be affected by sea-sickness or an anxiety-related condition. The Skipper will make the appropriate decision in these circumstances and will turn back if necessary.
5	Fresh Breeze	These conditions will only be suitable for adult volunteers or the most experienced cadets. The Skipper will assess the conditions in relation to the crew capability and turn back if necessary.
6	Strong Breeze	The limit for a Hawk 20. Participation would only be considered with an experienced, adult crew.
7+	Gale - Storm	Unsuitable conditions for a Hawk 20.

Procedure for Return to Port

A Hawk 20 Skipper can make a seaman-like decision to turn back at any time if they feel it is appropriate (e.g. injury, not comfortable with conditions, gear failure, crew anxiety or seasickness).

In these circumstances they will inform the other Hawk 20s and Horizons' support vessel (if deployed), as well as the Event Organisers, via VHF Radio or Mobile Phone.

Use of Support Vessel

Under more demanding weather conditions, Horizons may decide to deploy a support vessel with the Hawk 20s. 'Friendship' would be a good support craft as she is a stable platform and has 2 engines. There will be an inflated tender aboard which would be launched if necessary to make it easier to transfer people either from the sea or the Hawk 20.

'Friendship' is MCA coded to Cat 2, capable of operating 60 miles offshore. She is equipped with a high powered 25w VHF with elevated aerial, toilet and cabin. The crew compliment of Friendship will comply with Horizons operating procedures and consist of a qualified Skipper and 2 crew, one of which will be a member of the Horizons' Board of Trustees if possible.