



LOCAL NOTICE TO MARINERS No. 23(T) of 2026

Cowes Week Regatta: 1 August – 7 August 2026

Notice is hereby given jointly by ABP Southampton, the Cowes Harbour Master and the Kings Harbour Master Portsmouth that the annual **Cowes Week Regatta** will be held between the **1 August – 7 August 2026**.

During this period, heavy concentrations of sailing vessels of all types will be racing in the Solent, in the approaches to Cowes Harbour and Southampton Water and within The Precautionary Area (Thorn Channel).

Mariners should be particularly vigilant and should maintain an efficient lookout for large vessels and sailing vessels and, at all times, should navigate with extreme caution in the area.

Start and Finish Lines

There are two possible shoreline start lines and four possible finish lines in use for the regatta. There are also four possible Committee Vessel start lines. See Figure 1 for the Cowes Week start and finish lines.

Regatta Start and Finish Times

Racing, depending upon the wind conditions, is scheduled to start at 1030 BST each day.

Race finishes will take place from approximately 1400 BST onwards and most racing is expected to have finished by 1600 BST each day.

Sailing Mark Buoys to be Established

Two large, yellow, cylindrical, inflatable marks, 'Alpha' and 'Gamma' will be laid in the approaches to Cowes Harbour, see Figure 1: Cowes Week Regatta Start and Finish Lines. The approximate positions and light characteristics of the buoys are as follows:

<u>Buoy</u>	<u>Approximate Position</u>	<u>Light Characteristic</u>
Alpha	50° 46'.29N, 001° 18'.13W	Yellow, flashing 1 every 3 seconds
Gamma	50° 46'.27N, 001° 17'.33W	Yellow, flashing 3 every 6 seconds

These buoys will be laid from the 31 July and will be removed on 10 August, or soon thereafter. A committee boat may also be stationed in the vicinity of West Knoll buoy in certain conditions.

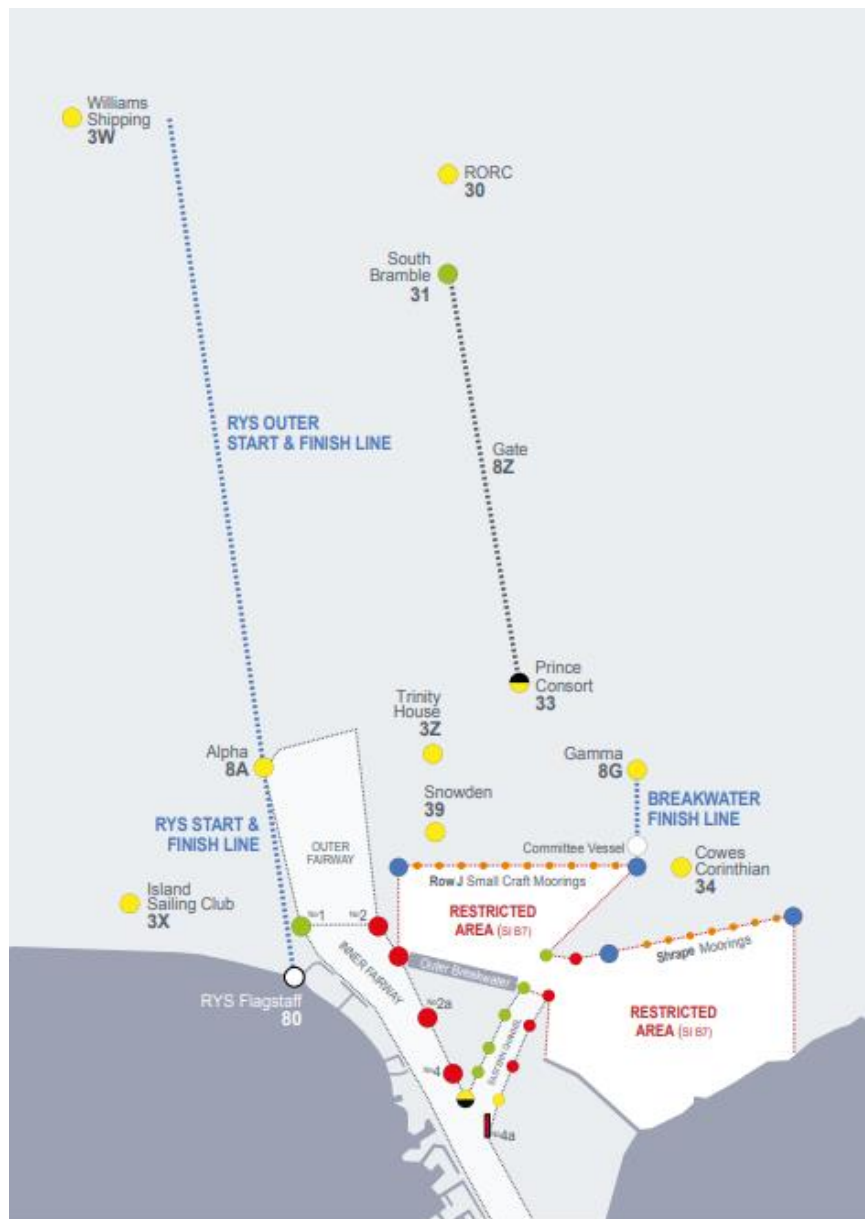


Figure 1: Cowes Week Regatta Start and Finish Lines.

The Precautionary Area (Thorn Channel)

Mariners are advised that [ABP Southampton Notice to Mariners No 05 of 2026 Port of Southampton – Precautionary Area \(Thorn Channel\)](#) provides advice on the tracks followed by large vessels through The Precautionary Area in various tidal conditions (www.southamptonvts.co.uk).

As permitted by the International Sailing Federation Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS 42.3 (h) – (i)) a boat may use her engine, or other means of propulsion, without retiring, to avoid the risk of collision with commercial shipping that is underway. Thus, boats are advised to have an alternative means of propulsion ready for immediate use if there is any possibility of a close quarters situation developing between them and a commercial vessel.

Within the Precautionary Area, all instructions given on VHF Channel 12 by the Southampton Harbour Master's patrol launch (VHF call sign 'SP') or its accompanying RIBs should be acknowledged and promptly carried out.

Further information can be found on the Cowes Week Regatta website: <http://www.cowesweek.co.uk>

Advice for All Mariners during Cowes Week 2026

Safety of Navigation within Cowes Harbour

The list (and links) below summarise the most important issues covered by Local Notices to Mariners and the General Directions:

- [General Direction 3.2 & 3.3 – Speed and Wash](#)
- [General Direction 3.7 - Departing Marina or Moorings](#)
- [Safety of Navigation within Cowes Harbour](#)
- [Cowes Chain Ferry](#)

Use of Engines by Sailing Vessels (see [General Direction 4.6](#))

The Master of any vessel fitted with sails and an auxiliary engine when navigating the Inner Harbour south of the Shraper Breakwater shall proceed with the engine running and ready for immediate use. Competitors in Cowes Week are reminded of the permission granted to them to use propulsion, of any form, to keep clear of a merchant vessel that is under way. In situations where the wind is at all light and an engine is available, it would be commensurate with the ordinary practice of good seamanship to have that engine ready for immediate use, well before a close quarters situation arises.

This local notice to mariners will self-cancel at 2359 on 8 August 2026.

Jon Kidd

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29 July 2026

Owners, Agents, Charterers, Marinas, Yacht Clubs and Recreational Sailing Organisations should ensure that the contents of this Notice are made known to the masters or persons in charge of their vessels or craft.