

SARL Race Brief

Before presenting the brief be sure to thank your field for coming to the race. Many traveled great distances with no expectation of reward – just to see fellow racers and friends, run the race and have a good time. If they place and rack up some points, all the better.

The brief sets the tone for the race. If you run a professional brief, the participants will be likely to respond in kind.

Stay in control.

Be courteous but demand full attention. No conversation in the back of the room. Your racers deserve better and it's up to you to give that to them. Every bit of information you are about to impart is critical for their safety and successful completion of the race.

It's best to have a marked up printed copy of the course for each racer so notes can be taken as they see fit in conjunction with an overhead projected view when possible.

Go over the entire course while pointing out potential hazards and Air Space information.

Point out any landmarks such as lakes, water towers, large roads and airports.

Mark the turn points and if they are airports, including elevation and CTAF frequencies.

Try to use no more than 2 frequencies during the race if possible. When turn points are airports this might be a little difficult.

Start your brief with starting order, given last to first. This way each pilot can listen for the name/race number after his or her aircraft that they need to follow.

Proceed to the starting (ground) procedure. If you have ground handlers, this is a good time to introduce them. Hopefully your ground handlers will have orange safety vests to identify them as people the racers should pay attention to on the ground.

Go over taxi instructions, particularly if using a multi-taxi way airport. If necessary, take your fastest aircraft pilot (who will start the race) aside and make sure he knows how to get from the parking area to runway for the start since everyone will be following him/her.

Review starting procedure, how the starter will flag off each racer and what intervals. Be specific about what you want from the racers as the aircraft in front of them takes the runway. Do they hold short at the line? Or if the hold short line is too far from the runway

will you have a handler bring them to the junction of the taxiway and the runway. Decide the runway that will be used for launch and altimeter setting.

Launce intervals should be between 15 and 30 seconds. Go over the procedure for your specific race. Sometimes a flagger is available and, if not, use the “wheels up of the racer in front” as the interval for all remaining racers.

After briefing the launch procedure, set an engine start time paying specific attention to safety when engines start. Clear your area!!!

After briefing them on the start, brief them around the entire course, including any hazards along the way. If a turn point is at an airport, give CTAF and turn altitude above pattern altitude in MSL.

One such detail might be the SARL standard of “The less radio traffic the better”, which is to say racers should not expect and should not be given turn call acknowledgements. Racers will call inbound to each turn with, for instance,

“Race two-six, turn two”

This call advises other racers where Race 26 is, and if another racer is at Turn 2 a follow-up call is warranted. For safety purposes the race aircraft MUST talk to one another.

An important safety exception is in the case of a turn at an airport. If there is local traffic at that airport, each racer is advised to report such traffic something like this, “Race 26 be advised there is traffic on the left downwind to one-eight at turn two”

If the finish line offers any challenges, bring those up now. Be sure to identify the finish line well, referencing landmarks natural or man-made, or any special markings you have made to identify the finish.

Enroute safety:

Stress that any passing is to be made on the outside of a turn. In the case of a course that changes turn direction, this will change where “outside” is. In the inevitable case where a racer asks if they can pass on the inside if they are 1) well clear, 2) have a high overtake speed or 3) any other dreamed up justification, remind the field that passing aircraft has the responsibility to maintain sight of the aircraft being passed. As many fly low wing aircraft, there is no way a pilot can maintain sight with an aircraft he/she puts to his belly. Such a case transfers responsibility of the remaining clear to the aircraft being passed – and he/she may not even be aware of the situation; therefore, may not know what directional changes he/she can make and still avoid a mid-air collision.

ALL PASSING WILL BE DONE ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE TURN. There should be no exceptions, except, perhaps, passing on a straight section of the course where passing aircraft will be able to keep the aircraft being passed in sight at all times. How absolute this rule is, it's up to you, the Race Director.

Enroute Emergencies:

Each race should have a race frequency declared. Where airports are used as turn points, planning should be done to make the turn points with the same CTAF frequency. Everything should be done in the planning stages to prevent pilots from having to use more than two frequencies so that they can flip-flop between them.

The Race Frequency should also be the emergency frequency. Transmitting on 121.5 may be the proper technical thing to do, but when all available local help is on a different frequency (Race Frequency) it's a poor choice. Stay on race frequency, declare the emergency and location on the course, and then deal with it as able. In the event of an emergency on the course all race aircraft either assist as able or get out of the way of those who can.

PASSING:

From the Rule Book:

57. Passing The Pilot of the passing Aircraft shall be solely responsible for the safety of the maneuver - this shall not be an excuse for breaking any of the other rules governing the Event i.e. low flying. Supplementary Regulations may be published to regulate passing during a specific Event however the follow applies to all instances: A pass initiates a contract between the passing Aircraft and the Aircraft being passed. It is the responsibility of the Pilot of the passing Aircraft to maintain visual contact with the Aircraft he is passing throughout the maneuver, until he can no longer see the Aircraft he has passed. At that time the Pilot of the Aircraft that was passed has the duty to let the passing Aircraft know that the maneuver has been completed, and that the Pilot or Crew of the passed Aircraft has visual contact with the passing Aircraft. The passing maneuver should be accompanied by radio calls on the assigned Race frequency in effect at that point of the Course and initiated by the passing Aircraft, e.g., the passing Aircraft makes the call, "Race xx, Race yy is passing you on your right, level/slightly low/slightly high". After the pass has been completed, the passed Aircraft makes the call, "Race yy, you're clear". In the event passing is to be executed close to a turn, but still short of the turn, the Pilot of the passing Aircraft should consider the upcoming turn direction when deciding on which side of the Aircraft ahead he should execute the passing maneuver. If an upcoming turn is left-handed,

he should pass on the left so as to put himself on the inside of the turn, rather than pass on the right and then cross in front of the Aircraft he has just passed. Under no circumstances will a pass be effected on the inside of a turn execution. That is, if you cannot be conclusively ahead of an Aircraft you want to pass by the time that a turn comes up, you must stay on the outside of the turn and continue your passing attempt after both Aircraft are level on the following leg.

EMERGENCIES:

Mayday – Emergency Only. Make your Mayday call on the current frequency. Get safely on the ground and report your position if able. The following aircraft please remain overhead to locate the landing site and assist directing emergency crews. The aircraft ahead should turn back to help determine their position, remain overhead, and direct rescue crews. Other aircraft should relay the emergency through alternate race frequencies. All remaining aircraft must slow to cruise power, climb as desired, turn to the inside of the course, and return to the starting point. The race will be officially terminated.

Abort – This is a non-emergency call. Make your radio call on present frequency; get safely on the ground, give position if you can. Call Race Central for assistance as needed. Race continues for all other racers.

Summary:

Welcome
Communications
Start
Route Finish
Safety – passing rules, Abort and Mayday
Emergencies

Plan your briefing well and use notes or briefing cards to make sure you cover everything. This is where all your event planning and preparation comes together. Make it count!

