



Swim and SUP the Sound
Event Guide for contestants

(Created By: Julie Schneider, Mike Rowe and Mark Street 2019)

Welcome and thank you for supporting VISAR's annual fundraiser Swim and Stand Up Paddle (SUP) the Sound. 100% of your entry fee goes towards the operating budget to maintain our rescue vessels, bases and purchasing equipment as well as bringing in medical professionals to teach the latest skills in search and rescue.

Please take a moment to carefully read through the contents of our event guide which will go over safety instructions, course details, weather disruptions and our new sign in and out of the water procedure. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us: info@visar.org or 345-4357.

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1. Rules, Reminders and Safety Tips for Swimmers and SUP Competitors

- **General Information for Participants**

- This is an open water swim and SUP course. Each entrant is responsible for his or her own safety and knowledge of the course. Course maps can be found on VISAR's website under events, in this guide and on the dive boat that will transport you from Leverick Bay to the Bitter End Yacht Club on race day.
- Pay attention to schedules, start times and ferry departure times.
- Alterations to schedules and timing may be made by the collective VISAR Safety Team.
- Buoys – have been placed specifically for this event. Please refer to your course map found on VISAR's website under events. Follow directions carefully. Orange buoys for swimming and green buoys for SUP.
- Kayaks will accompany swimmers to provide floatation devices and other assistance to swimmers in distress. VISAR Safety support boats and BVI Lifeguards (if able to attend the event) will back up the kayaks to provide emergency assistance if necessary.
- The finish line will be marked by one white and one blue banana banner on the beach at Leverick Bay.
- There is a three hour limit on the race. Any swimmer or SUP'er who has not entered Leverick Bay at that time may be asked to board a support boat.
- Water or beach starts and /or finishes MAY be used depending on the

status of the start location. For 2023, the start will be off BEYC’s beach for the 2 mile swim and SUP, Dive Boat for the 1 mile race and Levericks dock for the half mile swim.

- **Before** and after the race you must sign in and out of the water. The board will be on the dock at the Bitter End Yacht Club for the 2-mile swim and SUP start, for the 1-mile swim the board will be on the dive boat and with the volunteer on the dock at Leverick for the half mile swim. You must sign into the water before jumping in. We will check the board to make sure everyone has signed in and will hold the race start until this is done. Once you cross the finish line, you will collect your water and SIGN OUT of the water, then proceed thru the line for the rest of the goodies. Please see example below...

Fig. 1: Example of entry documentation provided to competitors for Swim and SUP the Sound

Race Number	Name	Signature Check--In	Signature Check--Out
85	Celia Lion	CL	

- **Timing System:** Manual timing will be used for the event and official times will be emailed to the contestants no later than two business days after the event. First place winners of each category will be announced at the awards ceremony.
- **Hydration & Nutrition** – VISAR will provide water at the start and at the finish line. Should you need water while on the course, all safety kayakers, VISAR Rescue Vessels and the Dive Boats will be carrying water with them. At the end of the race, you will be provided with water bottles and a full lunch buffet.

- **Distance of the Race Course** – May change due to conditions on the day and is finally decided on by the Race Director and VISAR helms.
- **Unofficial Results** - All results announced by Beach Announcers when events initially finish are “unofficial” and must be indicated as such when made. The “official confirmation of results” will follow after a review of check sheets for accuracy and announced at the awards ceremony.
- **Weather and Marine Life**—In the event of an environmental condition such as wind, rain, hail, hurricane, tropical storm, adverse sea conditions or harmful marine life that prohibits the race to take place, VISAR will do everything they can to reschedule. In the event we cannot reschedule, no refunds will be processed, and your entrance fee will be considered a donation.
 - In the week leading up to the race, VISAR will communicate with informed sources to watch and monitor the weather.
 - You will be informed via email and VISAR’s Facebook page, should the race be postponed or cancelled, please check your emails the morning of the race. If you do not receive an email, the event will go on as scheduled.

2. SUP Safety Briefing

Safety statement from VISAR’s Course Director: The wearing of a Personal Floatation Device (PFD) is universally considered a hazard and a hindrance to all surf-oriented board sports, as a result of reduced agility both on or in the water which in itself can put the individual at risk.

Falling, retrieving, and recovery are inherent, natural components of SUP boarding. SUP’s present no inherent risk of entrapment, swamping or suffer from the potential disabling consequence of capsizing, being inherently safer from those points of view than a kayak, canoe and “unsinkable”.

- **SUP’ers Bib Numbers** – Racers should wear a provided bib # on the chest. It must be fastened with four (4) safety pins and clearly visible. Racers without bib numbers will be disqualified. The alternative or additional

option is to provide permanent marker race numbers on both shoulders (and calves if necessary) of each racer so as to be recognized by officials. This can be done at the registration table.

- Everyone must wear a (quick release) leash.
- Use self-rescue techniques if needed such as paddling assuming a kneeling or sitting position or paddling pose using your hands.
- If you are in distress, signal your distress by waving your paddle vertically side to side above your head while straddling your board, or wave your arms above your head. A rescue boat will come to your aid.
- Stay with your board at all times as it is more visible in rescue situations than a lone swimmer and will provide an adequate platform for safety and flotation.
- The race will begin at the Bitter End Yacht Club beach. Before you enter the water, you MUST SIGN IN (see Section 1: 'new for this year'). The race start may be held until all competitors have signed in.
- The race ends at the beach at Leverick Bay where there will be one blue banana banner and one white banana banner as the finish line. Once you cross the line, collect your drinking water and SIGN OUT of the water, then proceed thru the line for the rest of the goodies.
- SUP'ers – On race completion you must retrieve board and paddle at the finish line and move them to a safe location.

3. Swimmers Safety Briefing

- Starting – The SUP'ers will start first, followed 15 mins later by the 1 and 2-mile swimmers. Both groups will be asked to enter the water 2 minutes before the start and to stay well behind the starting line which will be setup the morning of the event.
- No individual athlete support boats are to follow the field during racing. However, a support kayak is welcomed.
- The 2-mile race will begin at the Bitter End Yacht Club beach. The 1-mile

race will begin from a dive boat in open water, you will need to jump off the platform to enter the water. Before you enter the water, you **MUST SIGN IN** (see Section 1: 'new for this year'). The race start may be held until all competitors sign in.

- All swimmers must wear the provided swim cap and they may use goggles. If you've entered the assisted swim category, you may use fins, mask and snorkel as well.
- Slower swimmers should pace themselves at the rear of the pack at the start. Please be considerate of other swimmers, especially at the start and around the first marker buoy.
- **If you need assistance**, remove your swim cap and wave it in the air to catch the attention of the nearest kayak. If you can, proceed toward the kayak; otherwise wait for the kayak to come to you. Note that once you hold onto a kayak, buoy or safety boat, you are out of the competition. The kayak will provide the distressed swimmer with a floatation device and will signal the support boat to come and pick up the swimmer.
- **If you need water**...water bottles will be tossed from the kayaks to swimmers requesting them. Please wave your arm at the kayaker to get her/his attention to request water, do not take off your swim cap. Do not touch or hang onto the kayak and please toss the bottle and the cap back in the boat. Do not touch or hold onto the water station kayaks.
- The finish line for the 1, 2-mile and half mile swimmers will be at Leverick Bay. Remember your race and time ends when you cross the finish line, not when you stop swimming.
- The finish line is at the beach at Leverick Bay where there will be one blue banana banner and one white banana banner marking the finish line. Once you cross the line, collect your drinking water and **SIGN OUT** of the water, then proceed thru the line for the rest of the goodies.

4. Racing Course

Fig. 2: One-mile course; start from a dive boat

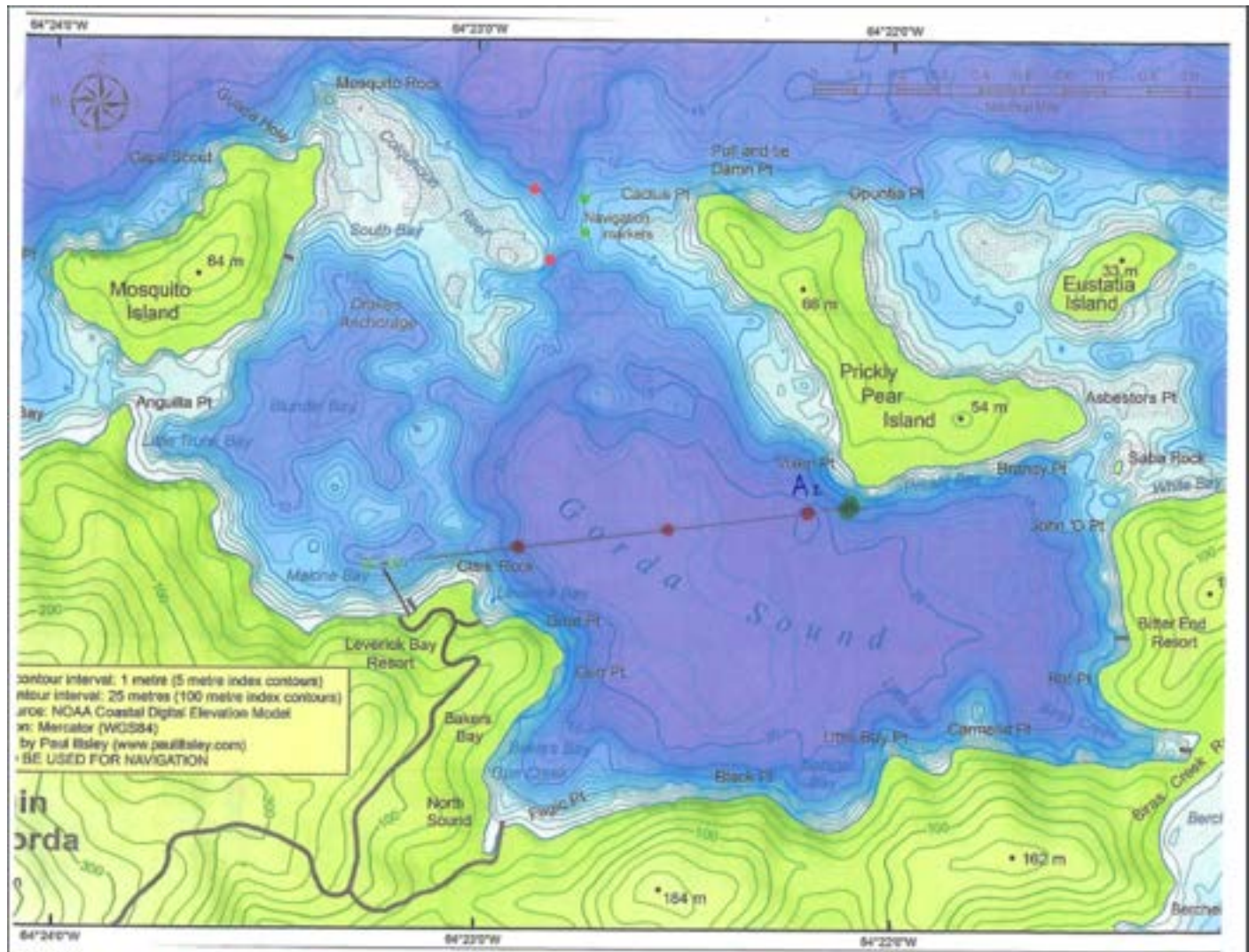


Fig. 3: Two-mile course; leaving from the Bitter End Beach

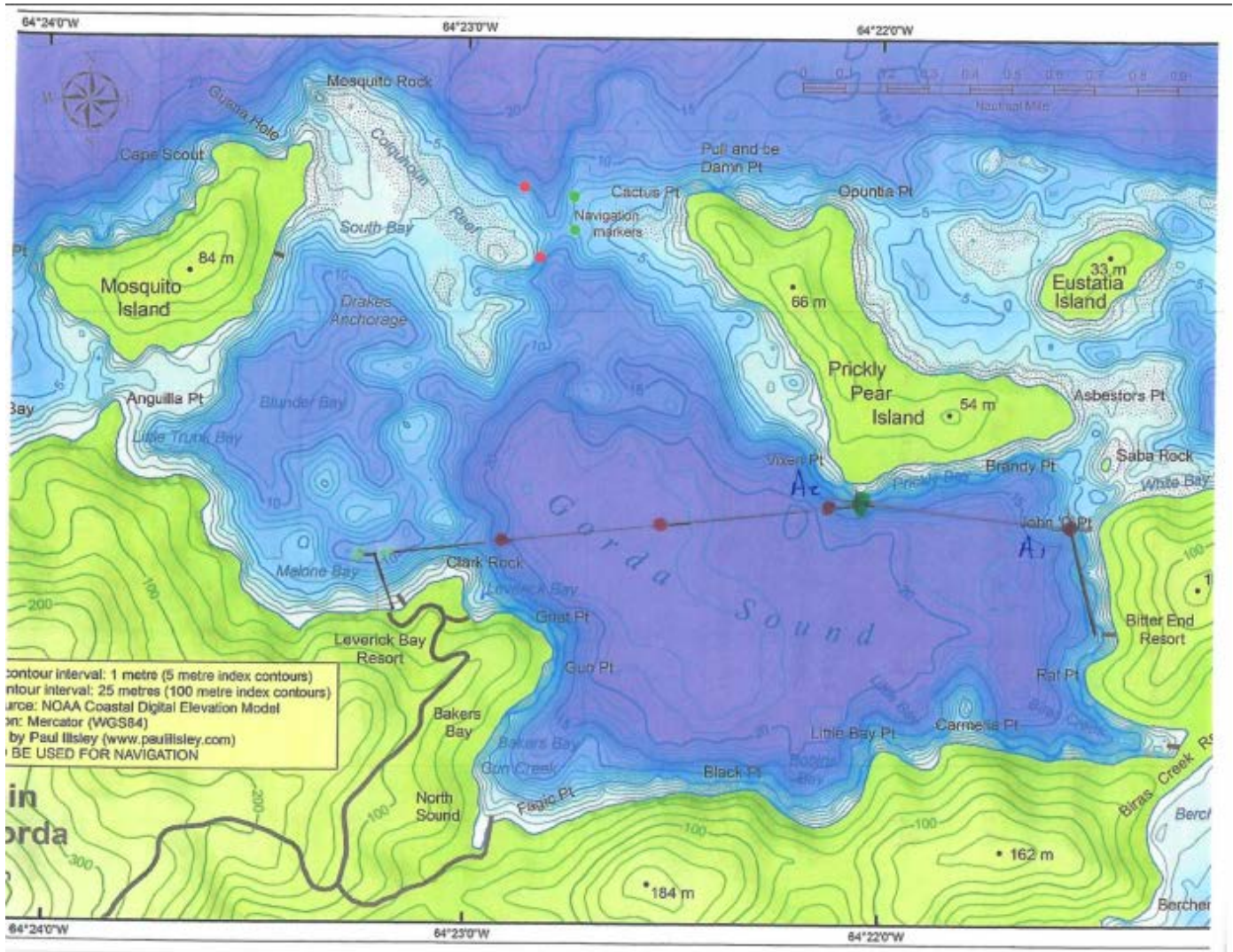


Fig. 4: SUP course; leaving from the Bitter End Beach

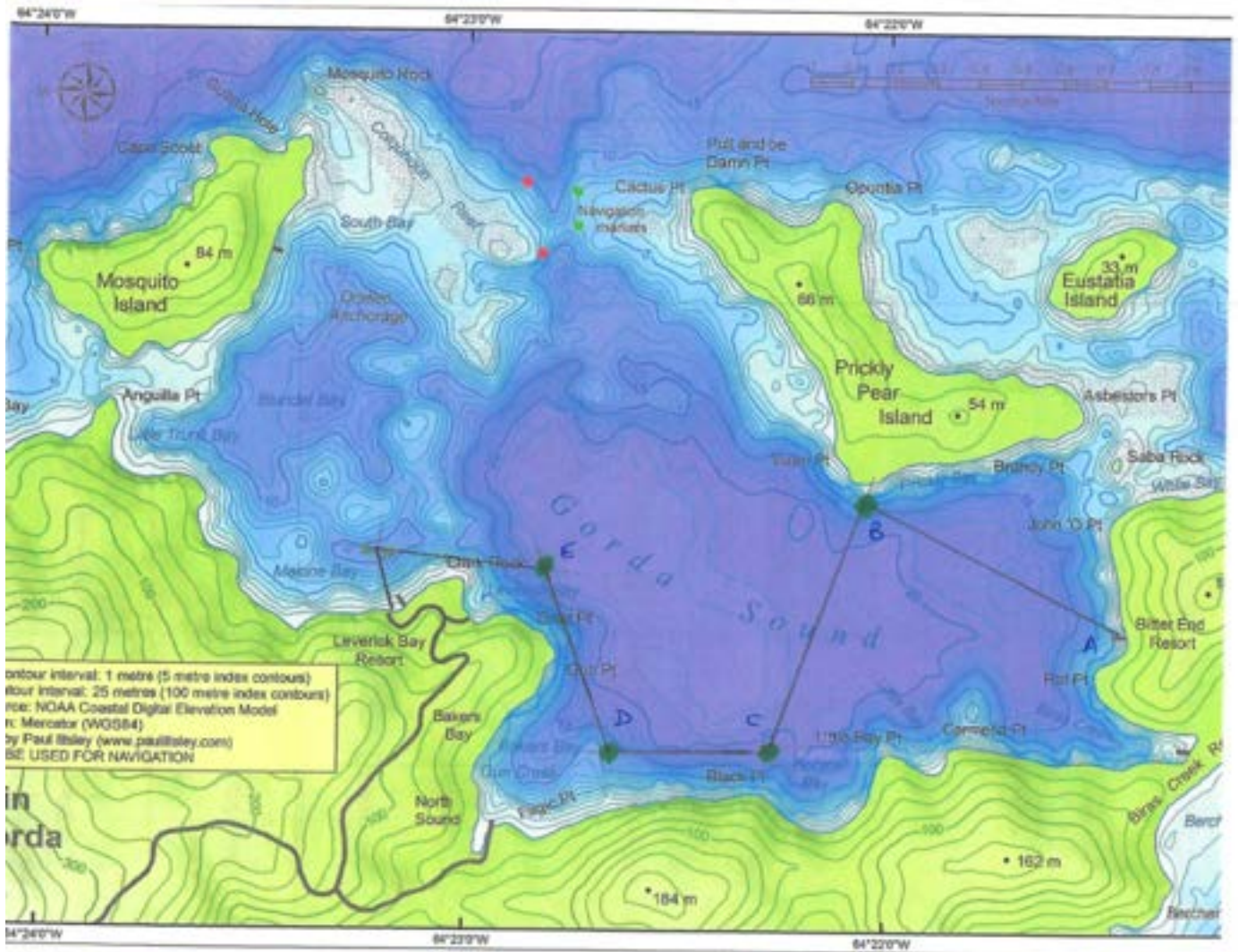


Fig. 5: Half-mile course; leaving from the fuel dock at Leverick Bay



5. Race Day Safety Team

- Jet Ski Operators and Procedures: there will be one jet ski on the course with a member of the VISAR crew on board *or* a BVI Lifeguard should they be available that day.
- Both VISAR Rescue Vessels will be on the course and monitoring the contestants. Oxygen and defibrillator will be available on the water for immediate response to contestants.
- A lifeguard may or may not be in attendance the day of the event. However, VISAR crew members and Scuba Diving Instructors or Dive Masters will be all along the course.
- There will be a medical station set up with a fully trained VISAR crew member at the tent selling lunch and raffle tickets. It will be pointed out to you in your briefing. Should you need immediate assistance after crossing the finish line, please notify any of our volunteers in VISAR

shirts.

- An ambulance will not be on site, but should anyone need to be transported to the clinic or hospital, VISAR's rescue vessel will be on station as well as a VISAR coordinator to arrange an ambulance once on Tortola.

6. VISAR's Emergency Action Plan

- Injury to a Swimmer/Drowning/Distressed Swimmer: should an injury to a swimmer occur on the course, the swimmer has been asked to take their cap off and wave it in the air. This will indicate to the Race Day Safety Team (RDST) they need assistance. The Race Day Safety Team will assess the situation/injury and should they need back up, will blow their whistle indicating immediate assistance needed by the VISAR Rescue Vessel.
- Injury to a SUP'er: should an injury to a SUP'er occur; they have been instructed to waive their paddle/arms in the air. They should hang onto their board or kneel/sit on their board, indicating that they need help. This will indicate to the Race Day Safety Team that they need assistance. The Race Day Safety Team will assess the situation/injury and should they need back up, will blow their whistle indicating immediate assistance needed by the VISAR Rescue Vessel.
- Deteriorating Weather: should a sudden storm come through such as lightning, high winds, poor visibility or heavy rains, during the race; all swimmers will be asked to swim to the nearest Safety Team kayaker, hang on to the kayak and wait till a VISAR rescue vessel or dive boat picks you up. VISAR will be monitoring the weather very closely and should a storm look like it will be passing, we will delay the start of the race.
- Unauthorized craft entering the swimming zone: the Race Director will be monitoring Gorda Sound for boat traffic along with VISAR rescue vessels and support vessels at regular intervals and when needed will hail on channel 16, informing all boaters that there is an open water swimming and SUP race in Gorda Sound. The week of the race, VISAR Staff Member will email the management of Saba Rock, Bitter End Yacht Club, CYCS, Oil Nut

Bay, Necker, VISR and Mosquito Island, Eustatia and Speedy's Ferry informing them of the race time, date and location.

- Missing Swimmer/SUP'er: if the VISAR Safety Team are alerted to a missing swimmer/SUP'er on the course. The senior helms will get a crew together and start search patterns and the VISAR Staff Member will make sure a coordinator is aware.

If at the conclusion of the race, a swimmer/SUP'er have not signed in, the senior helms will get a crew together and start search patterns and the VISAR Staff Member will make sure a coordinator is aware.

7. Pre-Race Safety Checks

- Jellyfish: in the days leading up to the race, a VISAR crew member will check The Sound for jellyfish and any other marine life that could be harmful to the contestants. Should jellyfish or other marine life be found in the water, the Safety Team will determine if the race will go on.
- Water Safety: operations Manager will work with Dr. Gore to ensure the water quality standards are safe
- Checking of Buoys: two weeks before the event at a Monday night meeting, crew will test all buoys to ensure there are no leaks, and the equipment including lines are in full working condition.
- Course Map: To ensure the safety for all competitors, a large map of the course will be placed at registration. Should you have any questions the Race Director will be able to take questions at the briefing.

8. Post-Race

- For 2023, you will receive a tyvek wristband indicating your with the event. When you go through the lunch line your band will be marked that you've been through the buffet line. Lunch is provided by Leverick Bay with support from Road Town Wholesale. Please note you may get as much food as you would like but are only allowed through the line once.
- After lunch, there will be some family beach game activities going on. All are welcome to participate!

- Romasco's ferry will be leaving Leverick Bay at 2:30pm. If you decide not to take the ferry, please tell Julie from VISAR so we can take you off the list.

9. COVID19 Protocols

- As of May 1, 2023 there are no COVID19 Protocols to adhere to!