

The 2026 British International Harmsworth Trophy Electric Boat Challenge



General Rules

(updated April 2026)

Organised by: The British International Harmsworth Trophy Limited
c/o Royal Motor Yacht Club, Panorama Road, Sandbanks, Poole BH13 7RE
Email: harmsworthchallenge@gmail.com

With grateful thanks to:
Cowes Harbour Commission, The Royal London Yacht Club,
The Royal Motor Yacht Club and The Royal Yacht Squadron

Introduction

The British International Harmsworth Trophy Electric Boat Challenge (the Challenge) will take the form of a time trial from Poole to Cowes and back. The Trophy will be awarded to the fastest electrically-powered boat to complete the Course in any calendar year. The successful Driver and Challenger names will be engraved on the Trophy (which remains at the Royal Motor Yacht Club) and an appropriate presentation will be made at the RMYC at the conclusion of the year's Challenge Series.

In 2026, a Challenger may only enter one vessel during the year for the Challenge and only one Challenge is permitted. Potential Challengers must give a minimum of six weeks' notice of the date of any Challenge.

Once a Challenger has set the fastest time, any attempts in future years must beat this record to win the Trophy

Challengers' Responsibility: All Challengers (including the crew onboard and the owner) must read the Risk Statement and Indemnity on page 4, as well as the Boat and Crew Information on page 3. Challengers, and accompanying crew, are deemed to be accepted, at the discretion of the Organisers, on submission of a completed Entry Form and payment of the £1,000 Entry Fee, plus a facility fee which is dependent on the size of the vessel. To apply and for more information contact: harmsworthchallenge@gmail.com.

The Course (including Starts and Finishes at Cowes and Poole)

The full Course will comprise two separate stages (details below) which must be completed using the same set of batteries and without any other form of propulsion, fuel or outside intervention whilst the vessel is on the Course. The Course must be covered within a single day and can only be undertaken, during daylight hours, between the months of May to October.

If required the Challenger will be allowed to recharge in Cowes for up to 4 hours. The overall time for the Challenge will be the time taken to complete both stages. Time spent recharging in Cowes (up to a maximum of 4 hours) will not be included. If a Challenger spends more time in Cowes, their Stage 2 start time will be deemed to be 4 hours from the time they crossed the Stage 1 finish line and they will be considered to be on the Course from this time.

Aside from the start and finish details shown below, Challengers are free to choose the most appropriate course for the conditions on the day, but they must familiarise themselves with all current Notices to Mariners applicable on the date of their Challenge and obey all Local Regulations, Bye-Laws and Speed Limits. *They should pay particular attention to the speed limit and wash restrictions in Cowes Harbour ([CLICK HERE](#)) and the ABP Southampton Precautionary Area ([CLICK HERE](#))*

POOLE START – Stage 1: Timing will start when the Challenger passes between the Committee Boat and Bar Buoy (50°39.29N, 001°55.14W).

COWES FINISH – Stage 1: Timing will stop when the Challenger crosses the Royal Yacht Squadron Line.

COWES START – Stage 2: Timing will start when the Challenger crosses the Royal Yacht Squadron Line or 4 hours after the time they crossed the Stage 1 finish line – whichever is the earliest.

POOLE FINISH – Stage 2: Timing will stop when the Challenger passes between the Committee Boat and Bar Buoy.

No outside assistance is allowed during the Challenge whilst on the course.

Charging Arrangements in Cowes

There are two x 75KW 'Fast Chargers' available for use at Trinity Landing and one at Shepards Wharf. It is strongly recommended that they are pre-booked well in advance as there are many on-water events taking place in and around Cowes during 2026, many of which will see the available berths booked up. To pre-book please contact the Moorings Team at Cowes Harbour Commission on 01983 297821 or email: shepards.chc@cowes.co.uk.

The Boat and Crew

The Boat and Onboard Equipment

The vessel can be designed for leisure, commercial or military use but will be required to have at least two passenger seats, including the helm, and at least two people on board throughout the Challenge. Foiling boats are permitted to take part, but Unmanned Surface Vessels (USV's) are not eligible.

Onboard Equipment

The responsibility for the design and construction of the boat rests solely with the Challenger. The following equipment is mandatory for all vessels taking part in the Harmsworth Trophy Electric Boat Challenge:

- Fire extinguisher(s) appropriate for the battery technology installed.
- Engine cut-off switch (kill cord) for all crew.
- A well-secured mooring cleat and a towing rope suitable for the size and weight of vessel.
- An operational VHF radio and an AIS transponder.
- All boats must be able to be manoeuvred ahead and astern and have neutral capability, operated by the driver.

Crew Safety Information

Every crew member must take responsibility for their own equipment and be prepared for any eventualities regarding their own safety. The following is mandatory for all crew taking part in the Harmsworth Trophy Electric Boat Challenge:

- Lifejackets must be worn by all crew whilst the vessel is underway. These must be of a suitable type and size for the person concerned, with all fittings and attachments in proper working order.
- All crew must wear suitable protective clothing whilst on the water – and it is recommended that this is fire retardant.
- All crew must wear a helmet whilst the vessel is underway – the choice of which is the responsibility of the wearer.
- All crew must carry either a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) or a portable Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB).
- All crew must carry a mini flare pack on their person.
- At least one crew member must hold a current RYA First Aid Certificate and a VHF Operators Certificate.
- All boats will carry a minimum of two crew members. Crew members must be over 18 years old.
- All crew must all be familiar with, and adhere to, the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea.
- All crew onboard must complete the 'Signing On Sheet' prior to leaving Poole.

Important Note

Scrutineering will take place at Poole and Cowes to ensure compliance with these requirements. In the event that the Challenger does not comply with the above requirements, the Challenge will not be accepted.

RISK STATEMENT:

(To be read by all crew members taking part and the owner of the boat)

Individuals must accept that, by engaging in active water sports – such as the Harmsworth Trophy Electric Boat Challenge – their physical safety may be endangered.

Anyone intending to participate in, or become involved with, the Challenge – either as a participant, skipper, crew, team member, owner or otherwise agree and acknowledge that:

- (i) They are aware of the inherent risk involved and accept responsibility for exposing themselves to such risk.
- (ii) It is their decision and sole responsibility to assess whether the Challenge is too difficult for them or their crew.
- (iii) They have satisfied themselves that they have the necessary skill and knowledge to take part in the event and deal with the conditions that may arise during the Challenge.
- (iv) They will not participate in the Challenge whilst under the influence of alcohol, drugs or whilst unfit to participate.
- (v) They are responsible for the safety of themselves, their crew, their boat and their property, whether afloat or ashore and that the management of their boat is solely their responsibility.
- (vi) They are satisfied that the boat and crew are adequate to meet the conditions that may arise during the course of the Challenge.
- (vii) It is solely their responsibility to decide whether or not to start, or continue with, the Challenge and they will provide their own safety vessel.
- (viii) Ensuring the efficiency and suitability of helmets and lifejackets worn is solely their responsibility.
- (ix) To be bound by the General Rules of the Challenge and to complete the Organiser's 'Signing on Sheet' prior to taking part.
- (x) They will accept the decisions of The British International Harmsworth Trophy Limited and officials nominated by it in relation to their individual Challenge and the Challenges of other boats and crews.
- (xi) The Organisers may need to cancel a Challenge, either before or whilst it is taking place, for reasons of force majeure.
- (xii) Their boat is adequately insured, with cover of at least £3,000,000 against third party claims.

INDEMNITY:

(To be read by all crew members taking part and the owner of the boat)

All individuals taking part in the Challenge will be required to save harmless and keep indemnified:

- (a) The Directors of the British International Harmsworth Trophy Limited and their respective officials and servants
- (b) The Trustees of the British International Harmsworth Trophy
- (c) The owners of all the premises and locations at which the Challenge is held, and
- (d) Any other boat owners, drivers, passengers or mechanics engaged in the Challenge (together with the "Indemnified Parties") AGAINST all actions, claims, costs, expenses and demands in respect of loss of or damage to the property or of personal injury sustained to the Indemnified Parties to the extent caused by the participants, their crew, their boat, their mechanics, support team, representatives or agents.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Persons under the age of 18 are not permitted to take part in the Challenge.

**THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR A CHALLENGER'S DECISION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EVENT,
OR TO CONTINUE WITH THE EVENT, IS THEIRS ALONE**