

# Marshal Handbook



Year 2012  
Racing Season



# **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this document is to explain the general expectations of being an HCGB Marshal and identify the main responsibilities of the various marshaling roles.

This document will not tell marshals how to do every aspect of their job, in every situation that will ever arise. It can be argued that this can best be done through training sessions and actually gaining experience by doing the job at a race meeting. However the document is intended to emphasise a few important points and highlight the many important factors and responsibilities of the marshaling team.

Ever since motor racing began the role of the marshal has been important in the organisation of events. A marshal is there to ensure the safety of the racers and the public as a whole. If racers are confident in the marshal team they will enjoy the racing more, being able to push themselves and their machines right to the limit, having faith that they are in safe hands. Exciting, but safe racing will also naturally lead to more people wanting to become involved in the racing and the HCGB as a whole.

This document will explain the marshalling structure within HCGB race meetings and provide an insight into the relationships between the various duties to show how they integrate together to form an effective and essential part of any race meeting. It is important to realise that no one marshalling duty is more important than another. Each discipline has an essential and well defined set of responsibilities and only by understanding each others roles, as well as our own, can we develop into a truly effective force, commanding the respect of all associated with the sport.

Heather Black  
Chief Marshal

Sam Keates  
Assistant to Chief

## **HCGB MARSHALLING**

The Hovercraft Club of Great Britain has good reason to be proud of its marshals and the very considerable contribution which they make to both establishing and maintaining the sport. The Club is grateful for the time marshals devote to their duties, not only during races, but whilst practice is happening, and at times away from the course, during briefings and at the training sessions.

Marshalling is a challenging, satisfying and vital role within the sport. When done well, it rightly receives the respect and recognition of all those, both from within and outside of the sport.

It should be noted that this document applies to the HCGB Inland racing season only. Other events such as cruises and open water races are not covered in this document, although are promoted and encouraged by the club as a whole.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF MARSHALS**

Marshals are volunteers, and the HCGB appreciates that individuals choosing to marshal also have other needs and commitments. However, race meetings depend so heavily on the marshal team that a commitment to officiate at a meeting must never be undertaken lightly.

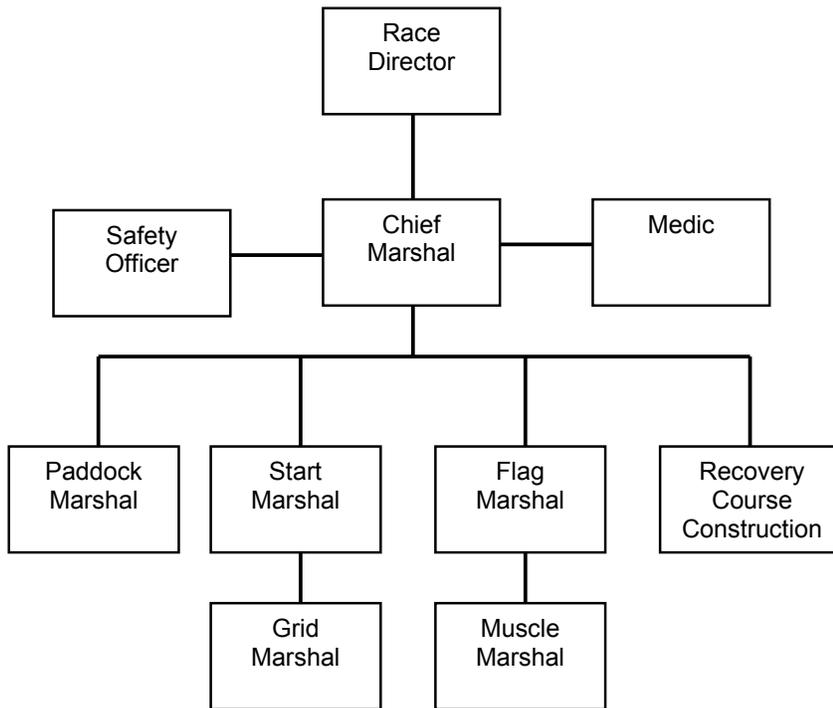
## **What makes a good marshal?**

- Someone who is reliable, dedicated and conscientious at all times.
- Someone who can work as part of a trained and disciplined team.
- Someone who can work under pressure in a professional and disciplined way.
- Someone who will never leave their duty uncovered without permission.
- Someone who understands that motor racing can be dangerous and always acts accordingly, conscious of the safety of others as well as their own.

## **All marshals must:-**

- Come prepared and be willing to work hard!
- Be aged 14 years or over
- Sign on daily (mandatory).
- Accept the risk associated with motor sport and agree that no claim will be made to HCGB for any damage caused or injury received.
- Arrive on time to all official marshal duties.
- Be adequately dressed for the duties assigned to them.
- Have a suitable supply of provisions available – e.g. food, drink, sun-cream
- Be suitably trained to carry out the duties effectively.
- Take responsibility for any HCGB equipment used.
- Not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

## THE MARSHAL TREE



Please note: - This tree shows only the positions of the different marshal entities. It is by no means a communication tree, as at some point it may be necessary for different marshals to speak to each other. However it should be noted that during racing communication should be restricted to race information and should be kept to a minimum to ensure the radio frequency is available at all times for emergency situations.

# **MARSHAL ROLES**

## **The Chief Marshal**

The Competitions Committee of the HCGB appoints a Chief Marshal for each season of racing. This is a senior appointment and calls for a detailed knowledge and experience of all the disciplines of marshalling. The Chief Marshal also needs to command the respect, confidence and trust of all members of the marshalling force. The leadership element of this role is vital and the Chief Marshal should be able to provide direction to the marshal team as a whole. The team should have the confidence to turn to the Chief at any given point and ask for assistance / advice / support – before / during / after a race meeting. This is one position that has responsibilities prior to a meeting, as well as on race days.

### **Main responsibilities:-**

- Liaise with other HCGB members (particularly local branch members) to understand the requirements of each race course.
- Attend and participate in the course walk before racing commences.
- Deliver a marshals' briefing prior to each day of racing.
- Ensure that all marshals are signed on prior to the commencement of each day's action.
- Select appropriately skilled and experienced individuals for each of the marshalling duties.
- Inform marshals at sign on of their respective posts and duties.
- Play a leading role in ensuring that all HCGB marshals are suitably trained and able to carry out all aspects of their specific marshalling duties.
- Ensure that marshals have the appropriate equipment, in working order, to carry out their role
- Judge that marshal volunteers are capable of undertaking their responsibilities
- During an event, walk the circuit visiting every marshal post.
- Cover or arrange cover for any marshal that needs to leave the course at any point.

- In conjunction with the Race Director, coordinate all marshal activities during a race – recovery/medical/course rebuild etc
- Liaise with Race Director and other officials during races.
- Ensure all equipment is in working order and stored correctly and safely after each event.
- Ensure that all matters affecting marshalling are brought to the attention of the Competitions Committee and the HCGB Council and addressed when necessary.

### **Paddock Marshal**

The paddock marshal is the last person to see the driver before they head out onto the course. In this role you need to be aware of the legalities of the race entry system, ensuring that drivers are suitably dressed, and have paid insurance etc. You will also be tasked with triggering the timing system before the craft enters the grid. You will be tasked with ensuring the race programme runs to time. Damaged craft will also be reported to you, and you must ensure that all craft are deemed safe before they enter the course. As the Paddock Marshal is invariably the competitors first contact with a race official, a friendly and helpful approach by the marshal can easily set the day off right, especially if it is the competitor's first time at the circuit and he/she is unaware of what happens where and when.

Main responsibilities:-

- Ensure all craft entering the course have the appropriate insurance sticker for the meeting.
- Check the identity of drivers entering the course and that they appear on the list of "Signed On" drivers, who have signed the necessary insurance indemnity form. This list will be provided before the first practice session of the day by the Administration Co-ordinator.
- Check lanyard operation and fitting during practice sessions. In the event of any lanyard failing to work, refer to the Race Director or Chief Scrutineer who will notify you of when the craft is able to operate.

- Check that the driver is wearing secured life jacket, helmet and gloves, and that all limbs are covered.
- Ensure that the Chief Scrutineer is made aware of any damaged craft and craft involved in red flag incidents for re-scrutineering.
- Stop any craft that has a potentially hazardous scrutineering infringement and report to the Chief Marshal or Race Director immediately.
- Set up and operate 10- and 5-minute boards with audible signal.
- On the 2-minute board, hold any craft that are not already at the paddock exit. If there is a queue, note the last craft that arrived before the 2-minute board was shown. When the race starts, release held craft after all operational craft have left the start grid. Note paddock starters in case of a re-start.
- Check lanyard operation and fitting, insurance stickers, lifejackets, helmets, gloves etc of drivers entering a race after it has started. Notify lap scorers of late starters and keep a note in case of a re-start.
- Ensure that craft enter the course safely during practice and racing.
- Control speed of craft in the paddock to walking pace. Report persistent offenders to the Race Director.
- Where electronic lap scoring is used, activate the tag on the craft duct before any craft enters the race course.
- Liaise with race control about any defective or abnormal tag readings.

## **Start Marshal**

As the name suggests the start marshal is the individual who physically starts the race. Although not responsible for the craft whilst on the course, you will need to be fully aware of the race or practice progressing as you will also need to show the last lap board and the chequered flag. Communication with all flag marshals to check the course is clear in preparation for the next race is essential.

## Main responsibilities:-

- On the first day of every meeting identify pole position and confirm the accepted 4-3-4 grid is applicable. Consultation with Chief Marshal or Race Director may be necessary. Pass this information to the Administration Co-ordinator.
- Mark out the grid to the agreed format for the meeting and with a minimum distance of one craft width between each craft in a row, and a minimum of one craft length between each row of craft.
- Position and ensure the operation of the starting lights each morning.
- Check that all marshals are in position and that the course is clear at the end of each session.
- Operate the chequered flag to signal the end of practice sessions.
- Remove any craft/driver that is not eligible to be in a race. The lap scorers will report any irregularities in this respect to the Start Marshal.
- Start the race with the aid of starting lights (preferred option) or a Union flag.
- In the event of an aborted start, signal the relevant course marshals.
- Operate the last lap board and chequered flag.
- Ensure the correct positioning of craft on the start grid according to grid sheets provided by the Administration Co-ordinator. Place at the back of the grid any driver not appearing on this sheet after checking with Race Control.
- Check lanyard operation once the craft is in position and check that the craft bears the correct insurance sticker for the meeting. Check that the driver is wearing secured life jacket, helmet and gloves, and that all limbs are covered.
- Liaise with Administration Co-ordinator in respect of problems with grid sheets.
- Operate 2- and 1-minute boards with audible signal.
- Check lanyards are fitted and attached to all drivers after the one minute board has been shown.
- Remove dead craft from the grid after the 1-minute board has been shown.

- Operate the HOLD board when necessary (only after the 2-minute board).
- In the event of an aborted start or red flag, re-grid all the craft that were on the original grid. Craft not on the original grid will be placed at the back of the grid.

## **Grid Marshal**

Working on the grid is not the easiest of jobs, as you are one of the last officials a driver will see before the lights go green. At this point the drivers are high on adrenalin, and are not always paying attention on the orange individual in front of them. You need to stay focused on your job at all times and be aware of moving craft as drivers may be coming towards you from all directions whilst attempting to find their grid slot.

Main responsibilities:-

- Ensuring drivers are suitably prepared to start the race.
- Ensuring drivers are in their correct grid positions.

## **Flag Marshal**

Flagging is a skilled art which comes with training and experience and when done well this duty does command the respect of drivers at all levels of competition, although this might not always seem to be the case. However a bad flag marshal will lose the respect of drivers and officials, and can even contribute to serious racing incidents. The duty calls for total concentration at all times, regardless of the weather, distractions from members of the public, or indeed your favourite driver participating in the race you are marshalling.

Good flagging will result in great racing as the drivers will feel safe that they can push themselves to the limit, with the confidence that the marshal team is making the correct decisions regarding the racing, and should the worst happen, they will be there to deal with any eventuality.

A flag marshal should be able to read a race situation correctly and have a basic understanding of a racing hovercraft, and how they handle and manoeuvre. Remember that you are the vital link in passing information to a competitor; lives can depend on you doing your job properly and in a professional manner. Remember that all times you operate under the control and direction of the Chief Marshal. You must never leave the safety of your post whilst on flagging duty, unless with prior permission from the Chief Marshal.

A flag marshal should always be looking at the course AFTER his/her flag point. (If you are at Hover 2 you should be watching the course between Hover 2 & Hover 3.) This can sometimes mean you can't clearly see craft that are coming towards you – if this is the case, ask a muscle marshal to be a second set of eyes and warn you of any impending dangers.

The flag marshal is very often, and invariably quite unfairly, the most maligned official in the sport. The type of criticism too often levelled at this duty is “too much, too little or too late”, which goes some way to explain why good flagging is such a difficult and important role within the sport.

The club recognises without doubt that good flag marshalling is one of the hardest jobs it asks its volunteer force to undertake. It also goes without saying that at all times the club recognises the major contribution that this duty makes to the smooth and safe running of any meeting.

Quite rightly, the HCGB takes the disregard of flag signals very seriously and this can result in the offending driver receiving a penalty, which leaves him less than happy and all too often blaming the Flag marshal for all of his/her troubles – this is a particular problem when HCGB marshals are participating in a European or World Championship event, where some rules relating to flag decisions are different.

### Main responsibilities:-

- To understand the meaning of flags currently in use on a marshals post.
- To make effective decisions concerning which flags to use during a race / practice session (unlike some motor sports this decision is down to the flag marshal and not the race director)
- To communicate to racers by means of flag signals.
- To supervise the course between your flag point and the next point around the course.
- To communicate with other flag marshals and race officials using the HCGB radio system.
- To delegate jobs to appointed muscle marshals.
- To report incidents during race meetings to the chief marshal, race director, paddock marshal, start marshal, recovery team, course rebuild team.
- To report damaged/noisy craft to Paddock Marshal/Race Director for further scrutineering / black flag decision.
- To liaise with and when needed work with course medic at times of serious incident.
- Competent and confident in the use of all marshalling equipment.
- To act as a role model and mentor to the muscle marshals at their point.

### **Muscle Marshals**

When starting marshalling with the HCGB, unless you have previous experience with other motor sport marshalling, your first appointment will invariably be as a muscle marshal. The importance of the role is often underestimated. The right or wrong actions can directly affect the drivers' actions and therefore the safety of all concerned and the race programme as a whole.

The muscle marshal should always operate on the advice and knowledge of the flag marshal. When attending an incident, the muscle marshal should be aware that the flag marshal will stay at their post and so you could end up working alone. It is highly likely that the racing will continue whilst muscle marshals are working on the course so the safety of yourself and others is imperative.

### Main responsibilities:-

- Always work under the instructions of your flag marshal.
- Never go onto the track until asked to do so.
- The muscle marshal is often the first person on the scene at an incident. This can be very stressful and unpleasant; therefore team spirit and discipline are essential in such situations.
- If a driver needs medical assistance or you feel the race needs to be stopped, report your concerns to the flag marshal immediately. Do not move an injured driver unless under direction from the course medic.
- At the end of a race or practice session and before the next one begins; ensure your section of course is clear of any obstacles.
- Assist in the removal of any damaged or abandoned craft at a suitable time.
- Assist the course construction team with any repairs to catch netting or course markers.

### **Recovery Marshal**

The recovery marshals are an integral part of the team, keeping the course clear of stranded craft and returning the racers and their craft to the paddock. The time spent on recovery can be crucial in the successful running of a meeting to the publicised race timetable. Basic knowledge of craft design and how they work is advantageous. Recovery marshals will converse with flag marshals and also the Chief regarding how best to recover a stricken craft.

### Main responsibilities:-

- To ensure the safe return of craft and driver to the paddock.
- On occasions to assist with ferrying marshals to their marshal points.
- Use the recovery vehicle as a screen between public and casualty during times of serious incident.
- Responsible for the recovery vehicle and trailer during operation.

## **Water Recovery**

The water recovery team follow similar guidelines to the other recovery marshals. They are responsible for the safe return of craft and driver to a safe point on land. Water recovery should only be attempted when racing or practice sessions have been stopped. This is for the safety of drivers and marshals. Due to the nature of incidents on water it is imperative that water recover members are suitably equipped to deal with the situation. They should be strong competent swimmers and must wear a life jacket whilst carrying out recovery duties.

Main responsibilities:-

- To recover any drivers who get into difficulty on the water part of the course
- To recover any disabled craft after the race is finished
- Position or recover any course markers required
- Monitor and move, as appropriate and with sensitivity, any birds/ducks etc that enter the course

## **Course Construction**

In some situations this job will be carried out by the recovery teams. Ideally though a separate team will be available to re-construct the course after incidents or make alterations to the existing course, after consultation with the Chief Marshal and Race Director.

Main responsibilities:-

- Re-building and replacement of course markers after an incident.

## **Medical Services**

The medical role is very much a specialist function and of course can only be undertaken by those who fully meet the medical criteria of both the HCGB and the profession itself.

The medics attending a meeting come under the control of the Race Director and Chief Marshal. They are appointed by the HCGB Competitions Committee. They are required to provide themselves with the equipment they deem necessary for the performance of their duty. They will only respond to an incident after instruction from the Race Director or Chief Marshal. Once attending an incident they may need background history of the driver or the incident itself. They may also ask a marshal to continue with any basic first aid being administered whilst the medic deals with other issues. The medic may also require assistance from marshals when moving or stabilising a casualty.

### **Other roles**

Although not officially classified as marshals there are a whole host of other jobs that are carried out during a race weekend. It is important for marshals to be aware of these roles and ensure these individuals are working in harmony with the marshal team. This is particularly important for press personnel who may be unaware of the dangers of motor sport and specifically hovercraft racing.

- Race Director – has overall responsibility for the race meeting including the safety of the course, briefing the drivers and determining when novice drivers are competent to participate. Act as arbitrator in disputes and manage incidents.
- Safety Officer – responsible for recording and reporting any incidents at a race event. Will work closely with the Race Director/Chief Marshal/Medic.
- Scrutineers – responsible for checking the craft are safe to be on the course and have followed the HCGB construction guidelines.
- Lap scorers – responsible for counting the numbers of laps a craft has done. This is a back-up for the Electronic Lap Scoring System (ELS). They are also responsible for producing the results sheets.
- Paddock wardens – responsible for checking that all areas of the paddock are being used in a safe manner, according to HCGB guidelines.

- Commentator – responsible for commentary on the race, both to the public, and also other drivers etc who are in the paddock/camping area.
- Video Team - responsible for producing the video links that are played on the internet to be viewed around the globe.
- Press personnel / photographers – responsible for publicity shots and general photography.

Note that although the HCGB has a few regular photographers and members of the video team who are fully aware of the racing this is not always the case. Therefore any of the people participating in any of these roles do so at the discretion of the Race Director or Chief Marshal and should be directed by course marshals to stand in the safest place possible, and not to interrupt the racing, endanger themselves or distract the marshals.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Radios**

Certain marshals on the course will be given a 2-way radio to assist with communication between points. It is essential the radio is used only when needed and the correct protocol is followed.

Each marshal with a radio will have a specific call sign depending on their location. Flag points are called “Hover 1, 2, 3 so on”; other points are given their working title “Grid, Start, Chief etc”

Radio communication should be clear and accurate at all times. Marshals with a radio must pay attention to their radios, as vital communication must get through to the relevant people at all times. Failing to do this could result in a more serious incident or slowing down the race programme.

Radio communications should be kept to a minimum, and should only be used for official race matters. More than one person talking on the radio system at any time will effectively stop the whole network from working so it is important that marshals wait for one communication to finish before starting another. Unless it is absolutely essential, all radio communications should cease from when the 2 minute board is shown until the second lap of the race.

## Radio Calls

Press the button and hold it down, then speak slowly and clearly. When you have finished speaking, release the button.

### To start a call

- Listen to check nobody else is making a call – this is most important
- Say your position eg Hover 3
- Then say who you are calling eg Hover 3 to Paddock
- When they have responded then give your message

### To respond to a call

- Confirm who you are eg Hover 3 here
- Wait for the message
- Respond that you have heard and understood the message

### Clearing the course

- The Start/finish marshal will name your position and ask if you are clear
- Respond with your position name and if you are clear
- If you are not clear state the reason briefly eg craft to be recovered, course repairs needed
- When your part of the course is clear inform the Start marshal

## Flags

- Stationary Yellow Flag – Caution.
- Waved Yellow Flag – Extreme Caution – Be prepared to stop.
- Red Flag – Race stopped. Slow down and stop safely at first opportunity. Only proceed under marshals instructions.
- Yellow & Black – False start – craft to return to start grid.
- Black & White Chequered Flag – To complete a race or practice session.
- Union Flag – Start of race (used when traffic light system is not available)
- Black Flag – (Board with chalk number on it) – Noise or safety issue. Craft bearing that number to stop safely at the first opportunity and only proceed under Race Director's instructions.
- Yellow Board with Black Diagonal Cross – Leader on last lap

## **Boards**

On the grid:-

- White board with “2” – 2 minutes until race starts – shown with 2 audible blasts on a whistle.
- White board with “1” – 1 minute until race starts – shown with 1 audible blast on a whistle.
- White board with “H” – the race has been delayed – after the situation has been resolved the situation will revert to the 2 minute board again.

In the paddock:-

- White board with “10” – 10 minutes until start of next race – an audible siren will be sounded.
- White board with “5” – 5 minutes until start of next race – an audible siren will be sounded.
- White board with “F1” – signals Formula 1 and F1X race.
- White board with “F2” – signals Formula 2 race.
- White board with “F3” – signals Formula 3 race.
- White Board with “F503” – signals Formula 503 race.
- White Board with “F35” – signals Formula 35 race.
- White board with “J” – signals Junior race.
- White Board with “N” – signals Novice race.
- White board with “O” – signals Open race.
- White Board with “P” – signals practice – shown with formula board.

## **Red Flag Incidents**

For a flag marshal calling a red flag can be a worrying and difficult decision. Your adrenalin may be pumping and your natural reaction may be to wave the red flag and then see what happens. Flag marshals should not be scared to call a red flag, however a red flag should always be a considered decision. Many racing incidents can be covered by a waved yellow flag as this tells all racers that they should “exercise extreme caution and be prepared to stop”.

If you call a red flag you must use the following radio protocol “Red flag, Red flag, All Marshals, Red Flag”. Use a calm tone, and ensure your communication is clear. At all other times please avoid using the words “red” or “flag” as this can cause confusion for other marshals.

If you see a serious incident, it is critical that you wave a yellow flag while you're contemplating whether the session needs to be stopped. Wave a yellow flag, and count to 10 in your head, whilst you make a further judgement on whether it should be a red flag or not. This extra time can help you to see the situation more clearly and often allows a driver time to get up and run clear of the course, or at least indicate that he/she is ok. If it is a red flag situation, stay in your position and show the red flag to all drivers until all oncoming craft are stationary. The most important thing is to communicate the red flag to oncoming drivers. Moving from your post whilst other craft are still moving could cause a further serious incident.

## **EQUIPMENT**

The marshal role you undertake will determine the type of equipment you need. All equipment is supplied by the HCGB, but the marshal using the equipment is responsible for it while it is in their care. Any defective equipment or issues with it should be reported to the Chief Marshal immediately. Only trained marshals should use the equipment provided.

Flag Marshals – All flag marshals will need a red flag and a yellow flag. Marshals at Hover 1, Hover 2, and Hover 3 will also need a false start flag. All flag marshals should also have a fire extinguisher on their point. Flag marshals positioned at water transitions or on the edge of water should also take a throw bag and a torpedo buoy. On occasions it may be necessary for Hover 1 to have an additional Chequered Flag to assist the drivers when visibility of initial chequered flag is difficult.

Start Marshal – Start marshal will need the last lap board, and chequered flag, plus the Union flag in case the traffic light system is not available. The traffic light system will be set-up in position ready for the start marshal to use. 1 minute, 2 minute and Hold boards and also a whistle. Stop watch.

Paddock Marshal – All of the “formula” and “time” boards to be used in a variety of combinations as described previously to alert the drivers as to what event is next. Audible siren is also needed. Fire extinguishers should also be placed at the entrance/exit of the paddock. The paddock marshal will also need the ELS timing device. Three clip boards are also required; first with a copy of the drivers signing on sheets for checking, second with a copy of the race programme to record start times etc and thirdly the red flag board to record reported vehicle defects and red flags that must be signed off before any craft can re-enter the course. Watch & stop watch.

Course Construction / Recovery – Suitable vehicle and trailer are essential obviously, but the post thumper, a mallet and spare pins, posts and netting are useful, as is a bag of strong cable ties.

### **Incentives to marshal**

With your skills and attitude to the job you will have the knowledge that you are enabling great racing, by giving drivers the confidence to push it to the limit, and therefore providing great entertainment for the spectators.

Marshals at HCGB meetings will with the agreement of the Chief Marshal and race organisers receive discounted site fees for any days that they offer their services. At certain courses marshals may also receive meal tickets and the opportunity to queue jump at food establishments within the HCGB race site.

At the HCGB AGM there is an award for best official, voted for by the club members. All officials have the opportunity of winning this award and gaining further recognition of their marshalling efforts.

**Marshalling is fun!**

## **SUMMARY**

The objective of the HCGB is to be the best and this includes having the best marshalling force in the business. Marshalling is unquestionably a very important role in motor sport and it is true to say that, without marshals the sport may continue but would not be as safe, competitive, enjoyable or popular. Marshalling is very much about good teamwork and working together in a disciplined and professional manner.

Understanding each other's roles and responsibilities, as well as our own, will go a long way to developing team spirit, leading to improved efficiency in the way in which we all work together.

### **If nothing else please remember the 4 'Pros' of Marshalling**

**'Pro'tect** – ALL marshals should be on the course to protect the drivers, craft, other marshals and general public from harm. They should also be working to protect the accurate running of the race programme, and the good name of the HCGB.

**'Pro'fessional** – ALL marshals should remember it is important for a marshal to create a professional impression for racers and the public. The job should be seen as the role of responsibility that it is. Although nobody is getting paid individuals should treat it with as much importance as a paid job.

**'Pro'-active** – ALL marshals should be ready to deal with any incident before it happens. If we can be pro-active and stop incidents happening then we will not then need to react to the incident itself.

**'Pro'mote** – ALL marshals should be promoting the HCGB as a whole. Don't forget that, although as marshals you are there for the racing, there are many other elements in the world of hovercraft, including cruising, building, model hovercraft and more, and as an ambassador of the HCGB you should be conscious of the image you present to the public.