

RACE MANAGEMENT MADE SIMPLE

*“For Dummies”*

Maintain Your Humor At All Times  
GSBYRA Junior Sailing Series # 3  
June 2002

## RACE MANAGEMENT MADE SIMPLE

At the GSBYRA Junior Sailing Meeting in the fall of 2001 several suggestions were made that it would be useful to have a short, how to, basic orientation to race management for Friday, Junior Regattas and Club races since many people have little experience. It is highly recommended that people interested in the subject should pursue race management seminars offered by US SAILING. The GSBYRA periodically offers these seminars: information about the schedule of classes can be found on the US SAILING website.

This will focus on “on the water” management using the dinghy starts from Appendix Q of the Racing Rules of Sailing 2001-2004.

### **SO YOU ARE A VOLUNTEER!**

Fear not there are so many poor sailing courses run currently – why not take a chance. There is a low risk of failure if you apply some simple guidelines. Besides someone needs to run races and it is time to put the shoe on the other foot.

### **BEFORE YOU GO OUT**

#### **Identify the Classes That Will Be Sailing**

If you don't know the relative speed of the class boats, you can look it up. In general it is not wise to sail big boats and small boats together on the same course. For example, in junior regattas 420s and Optimists should not sail on the same course. (Sometimes this can be done if the windward legs are different lengths or you use a trapezoid and run one group on one side and the other on the other side of the trapezoid for the windward leeward segment of the course.) Different windward and leeward marks were used at the Brant Beach Yacht Club at their annual spring regatta. 420s and Sunfish sailed the same course, Optimists has a shorter upwind and downwind leg. It worked fine.

#### **Notice of Race and the Sailing Instructions**

Notice of Race and Sailing Instructions: A Notice of Race and Sailing Instructions are a requirement for most invitational regattas (See Appendix J of The Racing Rules of Sailing. Appendix K provides a Sailing Instruction Guide. A more simplified approach uses a Sound-Signal Starting System and brief instructions - see Appendix Q of the Racing Rules of Sailing.

See attached – Course Design Ideas

## **Scoring**

Use the US SAILING prescribed method. See the Racing Rules of Sailing 2005-2008. Appendix A – Scoring. Tie breaking procedures are carefully spelled out. Refer to the Racing Rules of Sailing 2005-2008. Look for updates.

For the Optimist Class the “overall method” is used. See information posted on [www.USODA.org](http://www.USODA.org) . This method scores the Red, Blue and White fleets as one fleet and then breaks the final results down into the order of Red, Blue and White final standings within that overall fleet. Usually awards for overall performance as well as awards for placement with the fleet are given. The Green Fleet (the novice fleet) is scored and started separately. The Green Fleet guidelines are posted on [www.USODA.org](http://www.USODA.org).

## **Knowledge of Sailing Area**

You should have a general knowledge of the sailing area – shoals, docks, tides, channels and boat traffic.

## **Weather Forecast**

Know what is expected to happen in terms of the wind direction and conditions. You should have some guidelines in mind about when the wind is too strong and when the conditions, such as light wind, are not a true test of skill and grounds for abandonment.

## **Time Constraints – Parameters**

How much sailing is to be done? Is it a series? When do participants expect to get started and when do they think they will be finished for the day? Are there printed instructions such as a Notice of Race that set this out or is this just an informal race? You need a watch with a countdown timer. The automatic horn starting system is great.

## **Course Design**

See examples posted in the “Course Configuration” attachment. Note the problem with windward/leeward/windward is that if there are multiple starts you will have traffic problems. Also closing the start/finish line on a small course ruins the second windward leg – it causes unnecessary boat separation. See also attached Optimist instructions and review Appendix L of *The Racing Rules of Sailing 2005-2008* for more ideas.

## **RC Boat**

It should be big enough to keep equipment dry and well designed to be seaworthy. For some regattas at the Club level, the boat should not be too big (less than 25). The engine needs big enough to plan the boat off with a couple of people on board.

## **Boat Equipment**

1. Anchor and ground tackle with an adequate rode.
2. Stern lines
3. A bow line
4. A towline, just in case.
5. Extra PFDs for passengers plus the unknown
6. Standard safety equipment, i.e. flares, whistle, pump, PFDs, fire extinguisher

## **Race Committee Equipment**

1. Starting line flag that can be easily seen and ability to set the flag up on the port beam toward the aft end
2. Race Committee Flag (if available)
3. Automatic starting horn or whistle
4. Loud hailer and a storage container for it. Tufts coach describes a donut contraption to hold horn. (I have use a small plastic trash can.)
5. Sailing Instructions
6. US Sailing Rule Book
7. Clipboard with rubber bans to hold paper
8. Binoculars
9. VHF radio
10. Pencils and ballpoint pens
11. Waterproof container for stuff
12. Compass to get bearings
13. Count down stop watch

## **Other Stuff**

1. Extra bailers
2. Extra water
3. Sun block and sun glasses
4. Duct tape and electrical tape
5. Extra line
6. Adequate clothing
7. Hat to keep sun off

## **Marks and Starting Buoys**

You need a starting buoy and 3 to 4 inflatable marks that large enough to be seen. They should be no smaller than 18” in diameter. The marks that are 24” or larger in diameter should have a counter weight so that they sit up in the water; also be sure the anchor line is not so long that the line can get easily hung up on boats while rounding. Smaller marks (18” to 24” Bemas) may use a plastic coated mushroom anchor. This helps protect the inside of the RC boat or safety boat and the mushroom is easily to drag a few feet to make small changes. This is particularly important for the starting buoy.

## **Support Boats and Safety Plan**

Even in informal settings we need to focus on safety. Have some safety boats and a mark set boat. If the wind is very shifty you will need two mark set boats.

## **Radios**

You should have communication between the RC and the safety boats and the mark set boat.

## **“Skippers and Crew” Meeting.**

Tell them what you are going to do. Pass out some Sailing Instructions if you have not already done so. They do not have to be complicated for a Club race.

## **YOU ARE READY TO GO OUT**

Since you know where you are going, go there and anchor. Oh? You don't know? Figure it out – at least the approximate location before you go out.

As you leave the dock, check the direction of the wind and check it again as you get to the racing area. Stop the boat to check the wind.

## **SET THE COURSE**

### **Starting Line**

Use either a bearing compass with a wind indicator or use the flag in the boat that you are going to use for the line. A compass can be used to get a bearing on the wind direction. Subtract 90 degrees and that gives you a rough idea as to the direction from the boat where you will be setting the starting mark. It is important to get the line square (so the line is not favored on either port or starboard). If I err, I would rather see the line be a tad port favored but only a bit. When you take the reading on the wind direction, take it a couple of times, even a steady breeze will oscillate a little.

### **Windward Mark**

Set the windward mark directly up wind from the middle of the starting line. Be sure it is long enough to get the boats spread out enough so that there is not an unnecessary pile up at the mark. Be sure to check the wind periodically – most wind oscillates and also the wind direction at the windward mark may be different than the direction at the starting mark – if so, the mark could be placed a little more toward the direction the wind will come from as boats approach the mark. Yes, a bend in the windward leg. If the variance is more than 10%, maybe the course is too close to shore, then you need to reset the location of the racing area.

## **Course Size**

Again, I am a little old fashion. The course length should be medium – not collegiate or high school 15-minute races but I shoot for about 30 to 45 minutes. The race needs to fit the regatta and the level of skill. I like windward work and with a spinnaker you need down wind work. Short races place too much of a premium on the start in my opinion. I also feel that if there are a lot of boats, the windward leg has to be long enough not to give an unfair advantage to the boats that start at the corners of the starting line. To give you another opinion, Edmund Laviano likes the amount of downwind work to be equal to the amount of windward work. Dan Thompson from Newport, California (Dan campaigned a Finn back in the 70's) told me a gate in the middle of a long downwind leg can restore fleet contact and that makes things more interesting. This, of course, is more applicable to a big course.

There is a purpose for the reach particularly in heavy conditions – it is a little easier to jibe. But also the reach in a good breeze will test the ability to set a spinnaker. Only experience crews can successfully fly a symmetrical chute on a reach. The angle should be right to carry the chute. The ability to fly the spinnaker will separate the wheat from the chafe in a breeze.

## **Leeward Mark**

Be sure it is downwind from the middle of the finish line if the finish is up wind.

## **Finish Line**

By the way if this is a big race with lots of competitors shorten the line a bit – it makes it easier to score the finishes. However, if it is too short they will cover each other up and you would be able to read the numbers.

# **RUNNING THE RACE**

## **The Start**

Call the individual boats that are over – if there are a lot – 10% or greater have a general recall. OK you made a mistake and the start is really screwed up and you did not make a decision because you were unsure or the wind shifted right after the start. ABANDON THE RACE and start again – it is OK.

## **The Finish**

Use a tape recorder. Bigger fleets require two finish boats and a couple of people running straight sheets (listing of boats as they finish).

**REMEMBER DO NOT MOVE MARKS AFTER BOATS HAVE ROUNDED THE MARK BEFORE THE MARK YOU ARE MOVING (INCLUDING THE FINISH LINE)**

**ADMIT YOUR MISTAKES**

**IT IS SUPPOSED TO BE FUN!**

**MAINTAIN A SENSE OF HUMOR.**

**BE CAREFULL OF ORAL INSTRUCTIONS – ACCORDING TO APPENDIX Q – YOU CAN USE ORAL INSTRUCTIONS BUT MANY TIMES COMPETITORS CANNOT HEAR THEM. THINK ABOUT THE USE OF SIMPLE VISUAL SIGNALS FOR SOME THINGS SUCH AS CHANGE IN COURSE CONFIGUARATION (TRIANGLE TO WINDWARD, LEEWARD, WINDWARD) BETWEEN RACES.**

**IF THE WEATHER IS GOOD – LET THEM SAIL. IN A SERIES I RECOMMEND “BANKING” A RACE IF CONDITIONS ARE GREAT. YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT TOMORROW WILL BRING.**

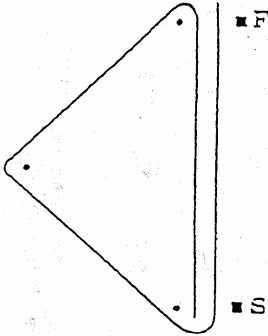
**DON'T HANCUFF YOURSELF WITH A NOTICE OF RACE (NOR) OR SAILING INSTRUCTIONS (SI) THAT ARE TOO SPECIFIC AND DETAILED. BE SURE YOU ARE GIVEN ENOUGH FLEXIBILITY TO MAKE CHANGES IF NECESSARY.**

**TAKE A US SAILING COURSE AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS - [www.USSailing.org](http://www.USSailing.org)**

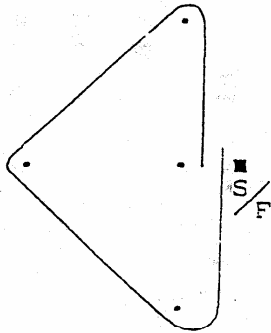
# COURSES

- (a) Courses will be designated by oral instructions from the Race Committee.
- (b) Courses will not be shortened.

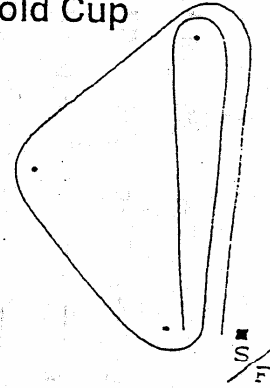
Triangle Windward



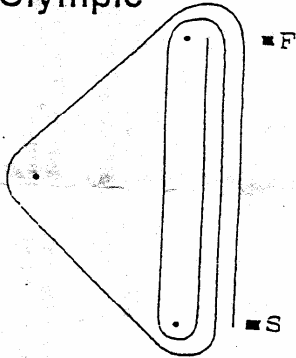
Modified Triangle



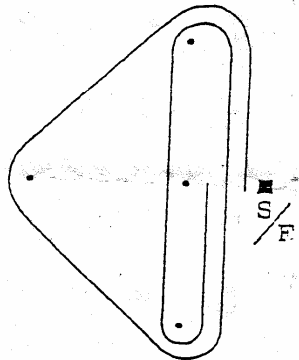
Gold Cup



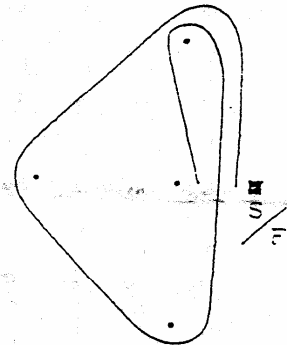
Olympic



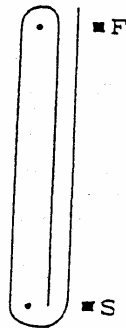
Modified Olympic



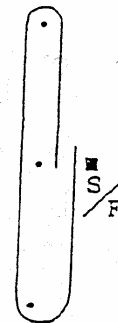
Modified Gold Cup

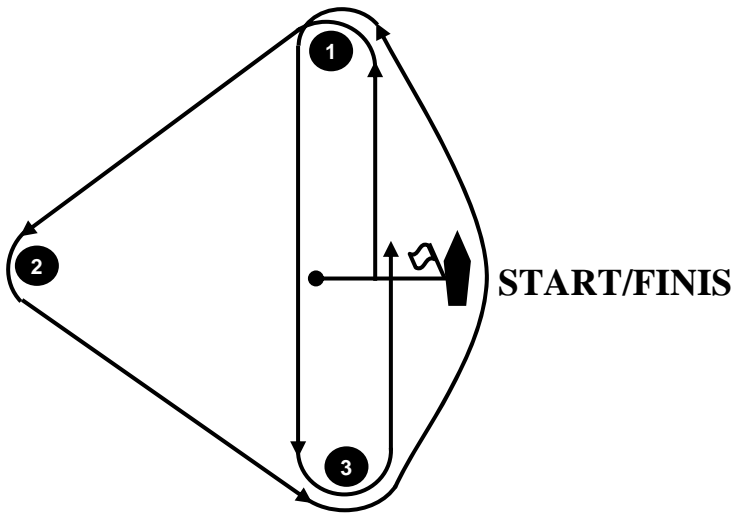


Windward/  
Leeward/  
Windward

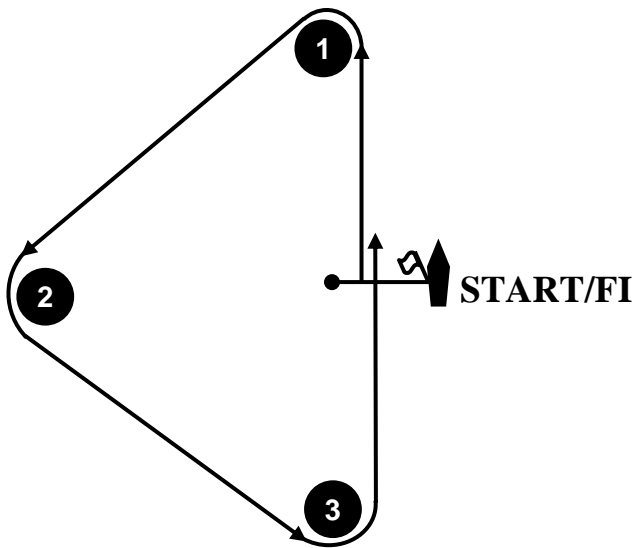


Modified  
Windward/  
Leeward





Course 1



Course 2