

YSS Start Racing

This is some introductory notes with some basic information about starting racing. All you need to know will be talked about on the course but this might help you know what to expect on the course and familiarise yourself with some of the ideas before the start. You are encouraged to have a read through and bring any questions along to the course.

RYA Youth Sailing Scheme

The RYA has a programme around youth racing which includes the racing scheme, coaching, racing events, academies and the performance programme.

Racing Scheme Overview

This is the teaching side and covers some set courses with specific syllabus. There are several levels and will increase in complexity as you gain experience and as you progress through.

- Start Racing - This Course
- Club Racing - Intermediate
- Regional Racing - Advanced
- Championship Racing

For each of these courses the syllabus is split into five key competencies, and the level covered in this start racing course is outlined below.

Starts	Boat Handling	Speed	Tactics	Strategy
Start Sequence Boat handling to be on the line at the start Actions if over the line	Improved tacking and gybing Bearing away Leeward mark rounding Approach and landing Capsize recovery MOB	Has knowledge of 5 essentials	Wide in Tight out where appropriate Has a basic understanding of the racing rules	Finding and using an appropriate weather forecast

By the end of the course you should know enough to get out and try some racing, we would encourage you to try racing at Largs Sailing Club. There are also some activities run by RYA Scotland and the class associations. These are mostly based around the pathway boats Optimist, Topper, Feva ILCA and 29er.

They have class academies either one day or two days of training at several weekends through the winter at locations around Scotland including Largs. These are suitable for all experience and abilities

<https://www.rya.org.uk/gbni/scotland/performance/class-academies>

The classes also run weekend travellers series and week long national championships and even world championships. If you are able to put the time and dedication into your racing then there are a lot of options for you where you can meet other sailors from around the country or around the world.. Or you can just use it as a way to spend more time on the water having fun and challenging yourself.

Starts

A good start is where you cross the line at full speed, in the right position, going in the right direction as the starting gun goes. This is hard to do and many experienced sailors struggle with this so don't worry if you don't get it right the first time. For this course we are going to be introducing the idea of race starts.

- How to identify a start line and start from the correct side.
- How we let you know when the start is they are signalled,
 - Using flags or lights to communicate about the start
 - Using a whistle or horn to attract attention
 - Having a set time for the signals
 - 3 minutes, 2 minutes, 1 minute, Go (Typical for training)
 - 5 minutes, 4 minutes, 1 minute, Go (Typical for club racing)
- If you are on the wrong side at the start what do you need to do?
 - You need to recross the line to get back to the correct side then you can start again without getting in anyone's way.

This is a bit more advanced than we are going to be looking at but gives you an idea of some more advanced techniques.

▶ Starting & Boat Handling - Self Coaching Tips with Penny Clark - Single & Double Hander

Boat Handling

You have already learned how to tack and gybe, but when racing it is important to learn how to do it in the most efficient way possible for the conditions. During the course we will do some coaching and demonstrations on how to improve your tacking and gybing.

These are some videos showing some more advanced techniques, we probably won't get to that level just yet but they give you an idea of some ways that tacking can be improved.

▶ Topper - Tacking - Sailing Tips with Shirley Robertson - RYA Champion Club - Club Dinghy Sai...

▶ OPTIMIST SAILING - How To Tack | [Medium Conditions]

▶ OPTIMIST SAILING - How To Gybe | [Medium Conditions]

▶ GYBING - OPTIMIST SAILING TIPS with James Parker Mowbray - RYA Optimist Coach

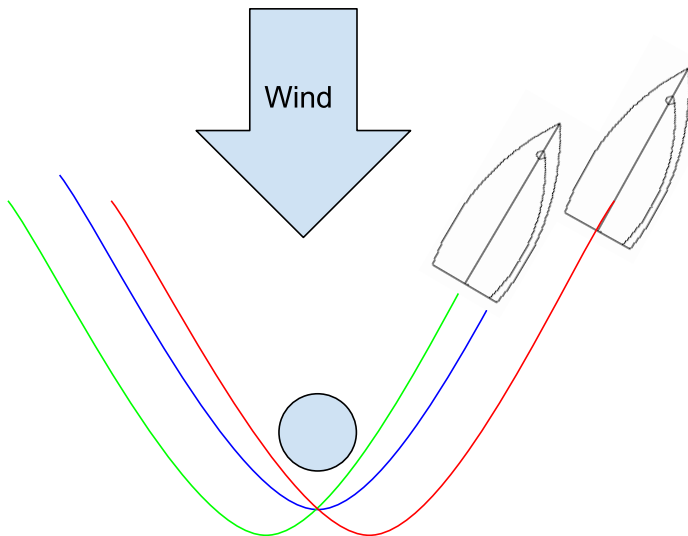
▶ THE TACK - GOPRO - Learn to Sail - TOPPER - Dinghy Sailing Techniques - RAW footage

▶ Topper roll tack

▶ Topper gybe

Mark Rounding

A race has a start, we go around buoys or marks a few times and end at the finish. Learning to go around the mark efficiently can help you gain places. The basics for this is keeping the turn smooth if you try to turn too quickly the boat will lose speed. Moving on from the basics, how do you make the turn for best advantage? What we normally say is *Wide in Narrow out*



All of the boats in the drawing turned at the same rate, but the green path is half a boat length to windward of the red path, it may not seem much but they are in clean air and can control the red path boat.

[▶ PRACTICING MARK ROUNDINGS - DINGHY SAILING TOP TIPS for Winter Boating](#)



[▶ Laser Sailing Top Tips - Windward Mark Rounding - with Olympic Double Medallist Shirley Ro...](#)

[▶ Laser Sailing Top Tips - Leeward mark rounding - Double Olympic Gold Medallist Shirley Rob...](#)

Speed

Making best use of Five Essentials as helm & crew, Ask yourself **Can This Boat Sail Better**

<p>Course</p>	<p>Are you going in the right direction? What could affect this Tide, Leeway</p> <p>What is your route to where you are going?</p>	
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Trim	<p>How does your body weight affect the boat front to back. What happens if you are too far back, or too far forward. Position front to back,</p>	
Balance	<p>What affects the boat balance side to side. How should the boat be sailing?</p>	
Sail set	<p>Are the sails filling properly? How do you tell if they are too far out, or too far in? If the sail isn't right how can you fix it?</p>	<p>Use of telltales</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Near On fluttering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tiller Towards you or pull sail in ● Both flying level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Just right ● Far one Fluttering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tiller away from you or let the sail out
Board	<p>Position of the Centerboard/ Daggerboard.</p>	<p>The centerboard stops the boat slipping sideways, do you need it more when going upwind, across the wind or downwind?</p>

[▶ "The five essentials" Can This Boat Sail Better - with Sam Waites - Mountbatten Centre Plymo...](#)

[▶ 5 Essential Sailing Tips with Olympic Medalist, Shirley Robertson,](#)

Hiking

The balance of the boat can be adjusted by moving your weight in and out or by easing the sails to spill the wind. When you are overpowered the further out you can get your weight the more you can bring the sails in and the more of the wind you can use to drive the boat forward, and the faster the boat will go.



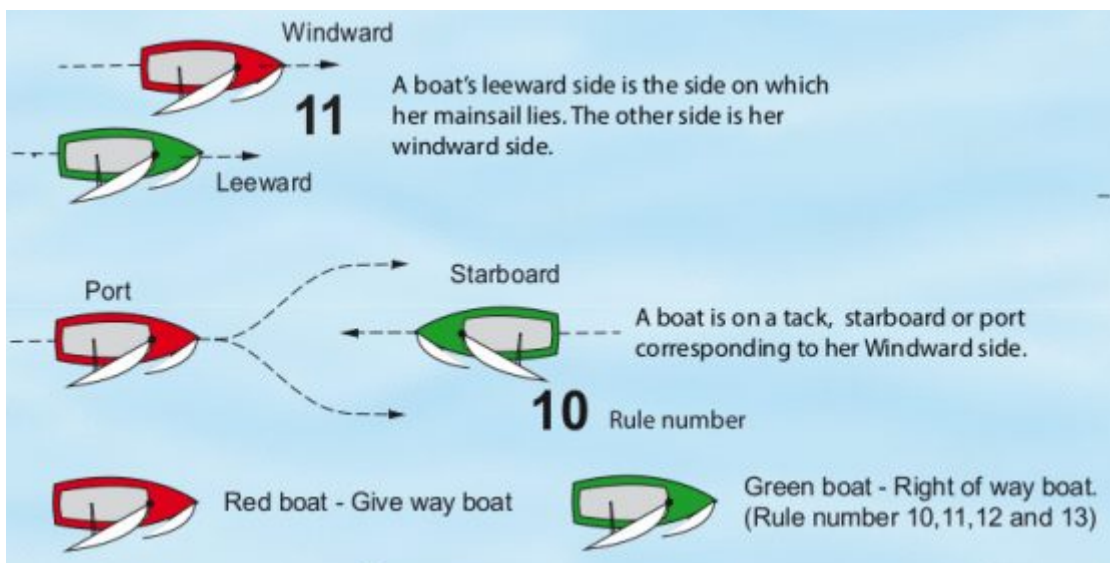
We get our weight out by hiking, getting into a bad hiking position can risk injury and will often hurt more than a good position. A good hiking position is best demonstrated on a boat, but the video below has some good tips.

Tactics

When sailing we have rules about how to avoid collisions between boats. The basic idea is that when boats meet one will keep going in the same direction, and the other will alter course to keep clear. When we are racing this happens more often, as boats will often be close together. The rules are also designed to make racing as fair and enjoyable as possible.

There are quite a few rules in racing but for this course we are only concerned with the four rules in Part 2 section A. You should have heard three of them already. In the rule book the wording is slightly different but they are basically as you have been taught.

The key part is that one boat will have the *right of way* over another boat when the other boat is required to *keep clear* of her.



How You Know It	Racing Rule
Port/Starboard - If the wind is on the right, you are in the right	Rule 10 On Opposite Tacks When boats are on opposite <i>tacks</i> , a <i>port-tack</i> boat shall <i>keep clear</i> of a <i>starboard tack</i> boat.
Windward boat keeps clear	Rule 11 On the same tack, overlapped When boats are on the same <i>tack</i> and <i>overlapped</i> , a <i>windward</i> boat shall <i>keep clear</i> of a <i>leeward</i> boat
Overtaking boat keeps clear	Rule 12 On the same tack, not overlapped When boats are on the same <i>tack</i> and not <i>overlapped</i> , a boat <i>clear astern</i> shall <i>keep clear</i> of a boat <i>clear ahead</i> .
Don't Tack Into other boats	Rule 13 While Tacking

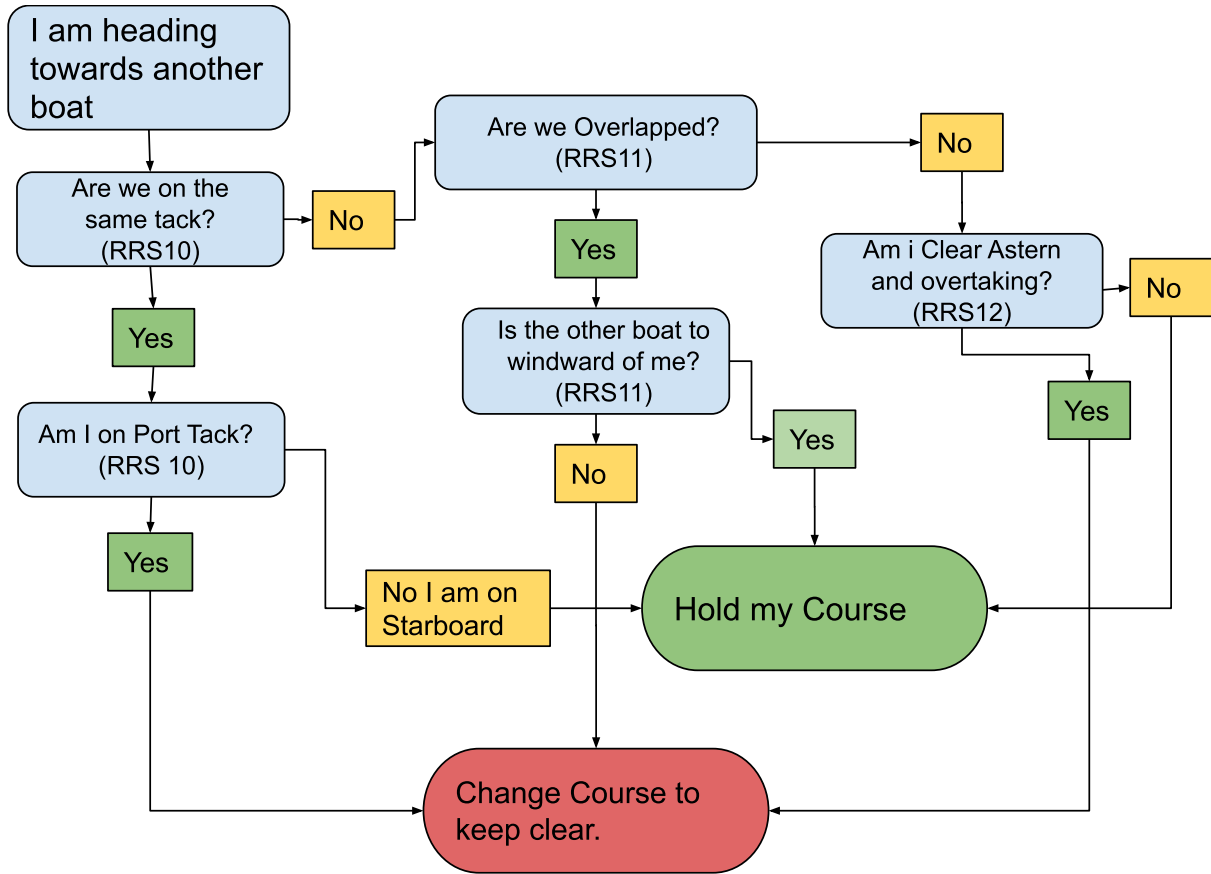
	After a boat passes head to wind, she shall <i>keep clear</i> of other boats until she is on a close-hauled course. During that time rules 10, 11 and 12 do not apply. If two boats are subject to this rule at the same time, the one on the other's port side or the one astern shall <i>keep clear</i> .
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How do I know if I am on a collision course?

You will be on a collision course if the other boat is getting closer, and in a fixed direction from you.

How do I know if I should keep going, or change course?

Going through the checklist of questions below will cover the most common situations.



What if I am in the right but they don't avoid me?

If it becomes obvious that the keep clear boat isn't going to get out of the way then you need to alter your course to avoid hitting them.

A rule is broken, Now what?

If you break a rule you can take a penalty and continue racing. Generally if you think you have broken a rule then turn the boat in a complete circle doing one tack, and one gybe. Try and stay out of everyone else's way while you are doing it.

If you aren't sure what rules apply then try to remember what happened and ask your instructor once you all get ashore.

What about another boat?

If you think someone else has broken a rule then you should immediately shout "Protest" in a dinghy. That is all you need to do till the end of the race.

If the other boat does its turns then forget about it and continue the race. If they don't do their turns then talk to an instructor after the race and we will go through and work out what happened.

Strategy

Sailing is very weather dependent so it is important to know how to obtain a weather forecast. There are loads of weather forecasts available, some are more useful than others.

What do I want from a weather forecast?

Key bits of information to get from a forecast would be;

- Strength of wind, will it get stronger or lighter? (Should I reef?)
- Direction of wind, will it make launching difficult (Lee Shore)?
- What temperature can I expect (Sun hat or Woolly hat)?
- Will it be raining? (Extra Layers, waterproofs)
- Will it be foggy? (Can I see where to go?)

Where can I get my forecast?

You can get forecasts regularly after the news on the TV and Radio, however they are often quite general, cover large areas and don't always mention wind strength. The Met Office (<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/>) does a range of forecasts for large areas of the UK and you can also get one for a specific location. A very useful map that they do is the [rainfall radar](#), this can show where around the UK it is currently raining and what direction the rain is going in.

There are also loads of sites on the internet that give forecasts for specific locations and will often include wind strength and direction.

- Windguru - <https://www.windguru.cz/328>
- Windfinder - https://www.windfinder.com/forecast/largs_ayrshire
- MetCheck - www.metcheck.com
- Windy - <https://www.windy.com/>

The current conditions at the club can be checked at <https://www.largssc.co.uk/weather/live>

Things to watch out for.

Most of the forecasts come from computer models of the atmosphere. A lot of the sites will use the same model but present the data in different ways. Some like the Met Office have their own models and do additional checks before publishing. The different models can give different forecasts, this is often because they cover different sized blocks some are 5km on side and some are 1km. If all the models you check say much the same then you can have good confidence in the forecast.

Check the units that the wind forecast is for. Wind is often measured in miles per hour, metres per second and knots. In sailing we often use knots, pick a preferred unit and try to stick with it so you can relate a forecast with how .