

Committee Boat Clinic

May 8, 2012

The weather may change but calculated tides won't. Look up the tide for race day. <http://www.dairiki.org/tides/>

I look at a variety of weather forecasting and measuring sites for a week prior to race day, many are on our website. Some sites I look at are:

<http://i90.atmos.washington.edu/ferry/Ferryjs/mainframe1.htm>

Relatively recent observations of wind speed and direction for race day.

http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/station_page.php?station=wpow1

Relatively recent observations of wind speed and direction for race day.

<http://www.sailflow.com/>

Local predictions.

<http://forecast.weather.gov/MapClick.php?CityName=Seattle&state=WA&site=SEW&textField1=47.7385&textField2=-122.375>

Local precipitation predictions.

<http://cliffmass.blogspot.com/>

General predictions.

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/marine/zone/west/sewmz.htm>

NOAA marine forecast.

<http://www.arh.noaa.gov/satloop.php?sat=goes§or=4gvf>

Satellite coverage for the Gulf of Alaska.

The Gulf of Alaska is a major weather maker for Puget Sound.

If for some reason you can't be CB that day try to get a substitute immediately plus alert the fleet captain.

Committee boat equipment.

Crew. I like to bring enough crew with me to sail the boat after the start. Some people with great experience and energy can manage the CB by themselves but what's the fun in that?

Briefcase. It contains score sheets and clip board, race instructions and laminated starting sequence instructions.

Race committee, one start, postponement, rabbit start and shorten course flags.

Air horn(s), calculator, pens and paper.

Numeral boards. Bring enough numeral boards for a few choices.

Anchors. Bring one extra. I have personally thrown anchors overboard without fastening anything to them. Bring an extra one.

Reels of anchor line (shots). Most shots are 60'-80' whittled down from 100'ers.

Buoys. Bigger is better. Take two. You can fasten one to your anchor line if you want to go sailing after the start.

White, blue and prep flags on poles.

Loud hailer.

Leave the dock at least an hour before the start. It will take 20 minutes to get to the start area. 20 minutes to get the line set and CB anchored. 10 minutes to get settled with score sheet, flags and horn. Give yourself time to make adjustments.

Having a good long, fair start line is more important than starting on time. It's better to start five or ten minutes late than having a line that's horribly skewed and/ or way too short and/ or rushing to the point of injury.

Setting the start line. The start line should be fair meaning that a yacht coming up in irons in the middle of the line should see no advantage other than being on starboard tack.

The journey to the starting area will give you an idea of current conditions. Don't set a course that relies on the wind to build unless you're prepared to shadow the fleet to possibly shorten the course at a mark.

Figure out where you want to anchor first. I like to set the pin end of the line in about 50'-60' of water. I like to anchor the CB in 30' of water. If you don't have a deep sounder have another yacht help you set the line.

Line up some features on land from offshore to help you set the line and make a note of where 50' is. Motor in and see how long a line is available to anchoring depth. When anchoring depth is reached turn around and head offshore perpendicular to the wind making at least a 200' line or two boat lengths per boat. That's about a minute and a half at 4 knots.

Head up into the wind and come to a stop while the crew attaches the anchor to the shot. Drop the anchor and reel out the line. Hold the reel on the black plastic and it will spin freely. **Watch your prop.** Scope on the anchor should be at least 1.5 to 1. If you're in 50' of water that means a 75' shot. More is better in a breeze. If you feel that there's too much scope with the shot(s) attached gather it up and tie it together. It's not good to have a lot of line at keel depth. The same is true when anchoring the CB. Hang around the pin after setting it to see if it's fast to the bottom. Loitering will help the wind and current stretch the shot so you can properly gauge the start line while you anchor the CB. **Watch your prop.**

Motor back toward shore keeping your previous way points. When you arrive at anchor depth and start line length head up into the wind a hundred feet so the anchor rode will drop you down to a fair line.

You can adjust the line with anchor rode but as previously mentioned too much rode becomes a hazard. If the line is really bad move your boat and the pin if needs be. A fair line is worth both the trouble and wait.

Set the course numerals. Check them. I've set them backwards.

Light air.

Don't start a race in less than 2 knots of breeze. That's ripples on the water and boats are under way.

Courses between buoys south of the marina are appropriate.

If the breeze comes up after the start all that means is that the sailors will have some playtime afterward. Work with what you have.

Moderate breeze. Be mindful of the current. If 8'-12' of water is moving chances are that the slower boats in the fleet won't finish. Don't go to South Whidbey when a lot of current is moving.

South Whidbey is an option if there is very little tide.

Remember that there is a six hour time limit for the noon start and three hours for the 6:30PM starts.

Heavy air.

Safety of the fleet is paramount. Our racing rules state that no races will be run with wind speeds over 23 knots. If wind speed has not reached that threshold but you feel that the conditions are too severe to race such as large whitecapped swell because of opposing wind and tide, first postpone.

Broadcast to the fleet on **VHF channel 72** that the race has been postponed.

Broadcast your intentions to the fleet every 15 minutes.

If the conditions don't improve by an hour after the scheduled start, cancel the race via VHF.

If you're out on the water going to the start and threshold conditions worsen hail the fleet via VHF, fly the postponement flag and retire to the marina.

Don't send the fleet to Scatchet Head on a big southerly with a large flood tide.

Starting the race.

Enter participants on the score sheet. If three or more boats from each division are present there will be two starts. If not fly the one start flag which is a white pennant with red circle inside.

The fleet captain has laminated a large font start sequence sheet.

Starting Sequence: Preparatory flag is blue with white square inside.

Warning: 4-6 air horn blasts approx a minute before 5 min 1st start sequence.

Preparatory: 1155/1825 hrs **White** (Division 1) flag up and warning sound
1156/ 1826 hrs **Preparatory flag** up and preparatory sound

1159/ 1829 hrs **Preparatory flag** down, and long sound

Division I Start 1200/ 1830 hrs Division 1 flag removed, **Blue** (Division II) flag up and start sound

1201/ 1831 hrs **Preparatory** flag up and preparatory sound

1204/ 1834 hrs **Preparatory** flag down and long sound

Div II Start 1205/ 1835 hrs **Blue** Div II flag down and starting sound

Any yacht **over early** will receive a short air horn blast and identification by hailing or VHF. Let them know when they have properly restarted after returning to the prestart area. The loud hailer works great for this task. Sit back and enjoy! If you've sent the fleet off on a distance race you have an opportunity to sail, just make sure you're back for the finish. Some of these boats are fast! **Skippers! If there's no CB, take your own time!**

Finishing the race.

Sound an airhorn blast when the first part of a yacht crosses the line.

Write down their elapsed time on the score sheet; hour, minute, second.

When all yachts are accounted for, ship your anchor, retrieve the buoy(s) and return to shore.

Return everything to the locker and the fleet captain will figure out the scoring.

Thank you very much for making race day possible!

Racer's responsibility at the start line.

If it's not your start, stay well away from the starting area.

The ideal start is to be on the line with rights going full speed at the horn.

The first three rules of racing are "Don't hit anybody." **Call out your rights.**

Have a bow watch.

Be prepared for evasive action, have a way out.

Be prepared to avoid other yachts without right of way.

Be prepared to avoid out of control yachts.

If you're too early for the start, luff or bail out by jibing away.

If you're the slow boat in a start don't attempt a port start.

Be prepared to tack if you attempt a port start.

Make sure your trimmers know how to ease sails quickly.

Define "big ease", "blow the main", "blow the vang" to the crew.