

*Racing Rules
for
Beginners*

*by
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If you enjoy the excitement of sailing a catamaran, learning to race will make it even more fun. This handout is intended to provide the necessary information you will need to get started in racing and to make your first races more fun.

First of all, we were all beginners once. We all got in people's way and felt we had no clue what was going on in the race. So if you feel that way, rest assured we have all been there. CRAM is a laid back sailing group who will be happy get you through the learning curve quickly.

BEFORE THE RACES

The standard CRAM racing rules will be available at registration. These are the official racing rules for CRAM. The rules fall back to the US Sailing Racing Rules of Sailing for items not covered in the CRAM rules (available at <http://www.ussailing.org>). Read the sailing instructions. Also, make sure you attend the skipper's meeting. Class flags, as well as last minute updates to sailing instructions are announced at this meeting. Relax, and make sure your drain plugs are in.

ON THE COURSE

The vast majority of catamaran races are held using a triangular shaped course or a windward/leeward course (no "B" mark). Figure 1 shows a typical course. Note that the marks are labeled A, B and C. These marks correspond to the list of courses CRAM uses (also available at registration). Simply follow the letters around the appropriate buoys.

NOTES:

1. Your boat can not be sailed through the start/finish line during a race unless you are starting or finishing. If you do, you must "back out" the same way you came in. If you do this and do not unwind yourself, you get disqualified from the race.
2. All courses are sailed in a counter-clockwise manner.
3. See the registration committee for a course decal for your boat.

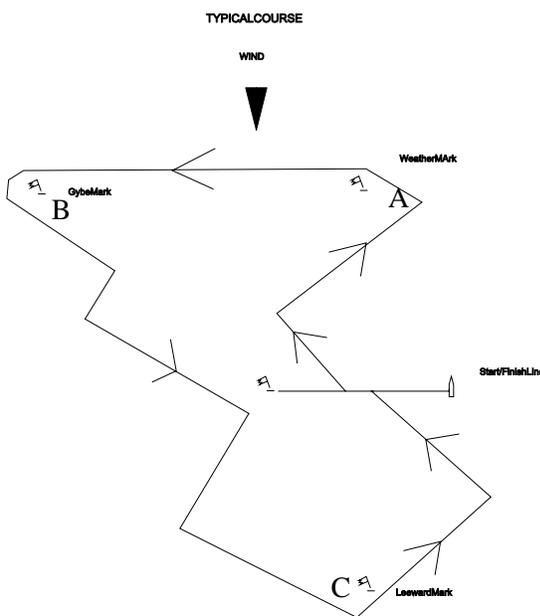


Figure 1

COURSES

<u>Course #</u>	<u>Course</u>	<u>Finish</u>	<u>Options</u>
1	S A C A F	Downwind	Gate
2	S A C A C A F	Downwind	Gate
3	S A C A B C F	Upwind	
4	S A B C A C F	Upwind	
5	S A C F	Upwind	Gate
6	S A C A C F	Upwind	Gate
7	S A C A B C A C F	Upwind	
8	S B C F	Upwind	
R	REVERSE COURSE		
II	TWICE AROUND		

AT THE START

A catamaran race is started with the boats approaching an imaginary line between the Race Committee boat and the leeward pin, which is typically a flag or small buoy approx. 100 yards away. A sequence of flags and guns tells the skippers when the race begins. The object is to be as close as possible to the starting line, but not over it. If you cross over the start line before the official start of the race, you must return completely back behind the line and restart. Boats that are over early have absolutely no rights and must stay clear of all other boats. An "Individual Recall" flag will be flown if someone is over early and the offending sail number may get called.

The Starting Sequence

- 5 minutes The **Class** flag is raised and a gun is sounded (Warning flag)
- 4 minutes The Preparatory Flag Up (Blue/White)
- 1 minute The Preparatory Flag Down
- 0 Class flag down (Start)

This sequence continues until all fleets have started. It is important to determine at the skipper's meeting what your class flag looks like. Also note that the Race Committee may not start the next fleet immediately after the previous fleet starts and they may mix up the order when you start. Watch for your Class Flag.

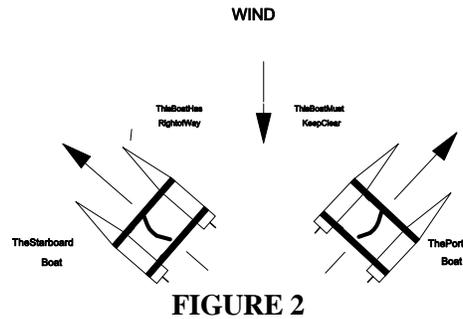
RULES FOR THE START

There are two important rules that must be considered when starting:

RSS Rule 10: The PORT TACK boat shall keep clear of the STARBOARD TACK boat.

A starboard boat by definition is a boat with the wind coming from her starboard (right) side, and a port tack boat is one with the wind coming from her port (left) side (See Figure 2).

PORT/STARBOARDRULE



AT THE START

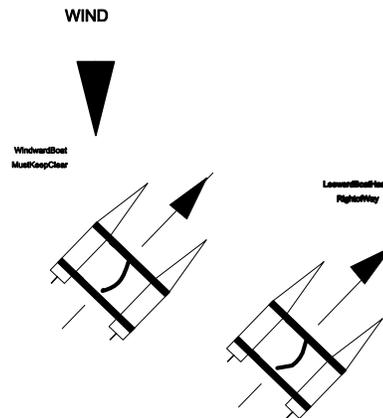
RRS Rule 11: The WINDWARD boat shall keep clear of the LEEWARD boat.

A leeward boat by definition is a boat farthest from the wind, the windward boat is the boat closest to the wind (See Figure 3).

In practical terms, these two rules mean that:

- 1) Your start should probably be made on a starboard tack, so you have the right-of-way. Nothing is more dangerous than a fleet of starboard boats, when you are on a port tack.
- 2) When you are approaching the start line, stay clear of leeward boats. The leeward boats have the right-of-way.

WINDWARD/LEEWARDRULE



A common mistake new sailors make is to barge. Barging is when a windward boat tries to force her way into a group of leeward boats (See Figure 4). The boats starting properly have no obligation to let a barging boat start and will typically take you up high of the committee boat, which means you must restart. This is not a desirable situation, and should be avoided.

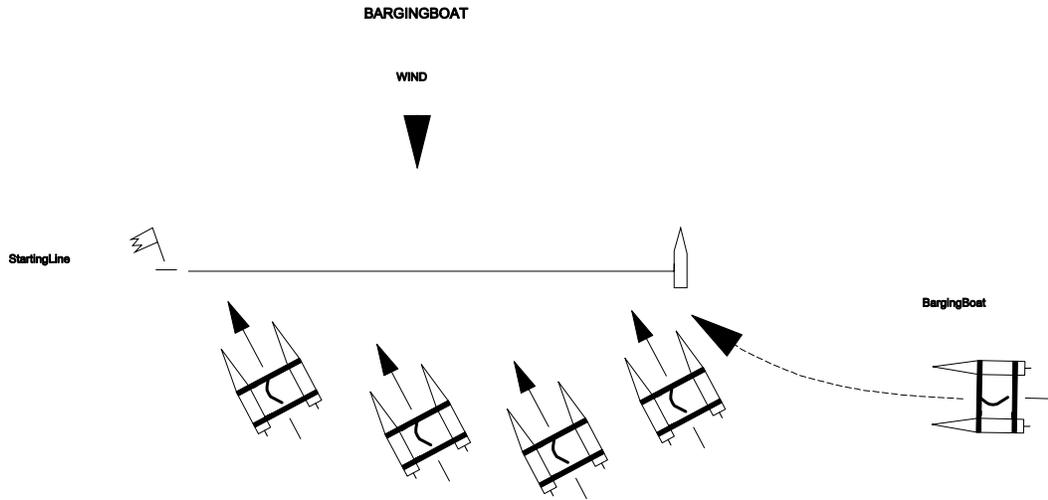


FIGURE 4

OUT ON THE COURSE

Just as with starting, there are two keys rules to consider when out on the course:

Rule 10: The port tack boat shall keep clear of the starboard tack boat.

Rule 11: The windward boat shall keep clear of the leeward boat.

This means that when you are on a port tack, watch out for starboard boats. When faced with a crossing situation, ALWAYS fall off and go behind them. You will not lose any distance if done properly, and it sure beats spending the rest of the weekend patching fiberglass (See Figure 5).

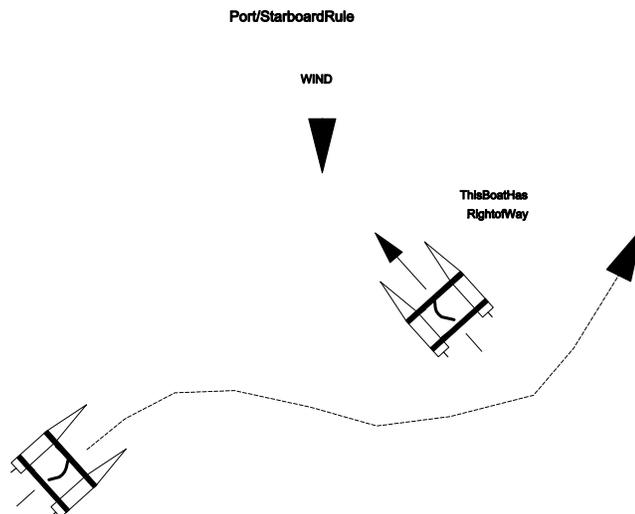


FIGURE 5

This also applies to boats when one is going upwind and one is going downwind. This can get confusing, so pay attention to the angle of the sails to determine who is on starboard.

Secondly, when sailing adjacent to another boat on the same tack, the leeward boat has right-of-way. So if you are the WINDWARD boat, STAY CLEAR. (See Figure 6).

Windward/Leeward Rule

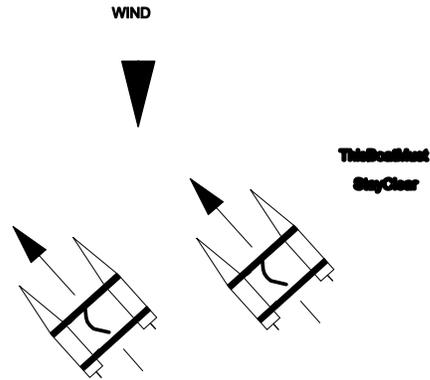


FIGURE 6

THE WEATHER MARK ("A")

When approaching the weather mark, the most important point to remember is that the starboard boats have right-of-way. Because of this, approaching the weather mark on port is EXTREMELY RISKY!. Try to get on a starboard tack somewhat before the mark (at least 200 yards). (See Figure 7).

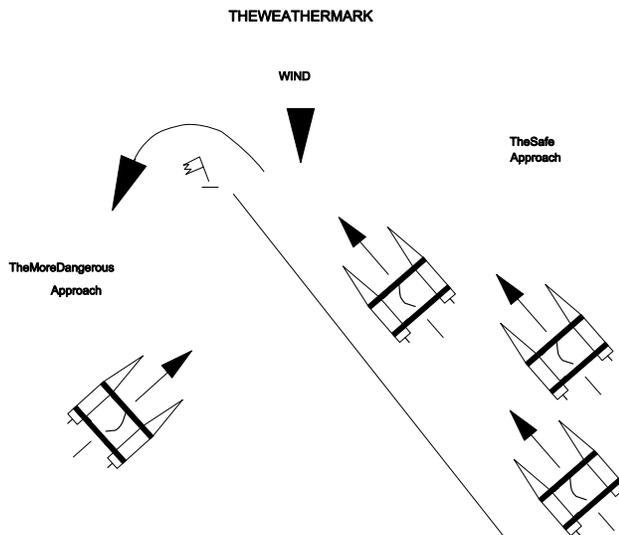


FIGURE 7

NOTE: If you hit a mark for any reason, sail clear and immediately do one 360 degree turn. You have no rights while doing this turn.

THE DOWNWIND MARKS (B & C)

When approaching the downwind marks, a new rule comes into effect. When two boats are overlapped in the “zone” (defined by CRAM as a TWO BOAT LENGTH CIRCLE to the mark, the inside boat must be given room to round the mark REGARDLESS OF TACK (starboard or port).

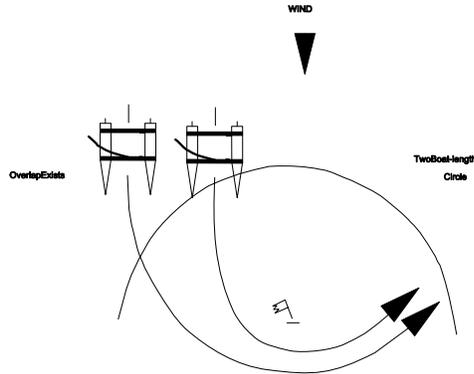


FIGURE 8

Case 1: The boats are overlapped and the outside boats must allow the inside boat to round the mark unhindered (Figure 8).

THE DOWNWIND MARKS (B & C) (cont.)

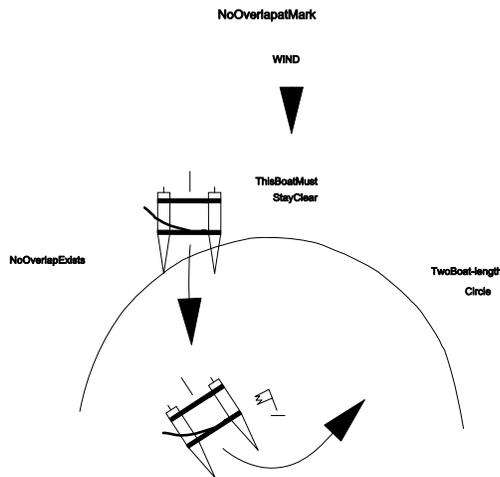


FIGURE 9

Case 2: One boat is clear ahead. In this case the inside boat has no right-of-way and must stay clear. The outside boat is clear ahead and may round the mark as close as it desires, leaving no room for the inside boat (See Figure 9).

FINAL COMMENTS

Above all, relax and have a good time. It is easy to get the feeling of being overwhelmed by all the rules and the fact that you may not be as fast overall as the other guys. Keep in mind that these "other guys" have typically been racing for a long time. Everyone has had their "first races" with the accompanying share of mistakes. Stick with it. The sailors in the club are more than willing to help you with the boat setup, rules, hot setups, etc. Just ask. Good luck and enjoy yourself.

SUMMARY OF KEY RULES

<u>RULE #</u>	<u>SITUATION</u>	<u>BASIC DESCRIPTION OF RULE</u>
14 & 31	While Racing	A yacht must not touch a mark or another boat
10	Opposite Tacks	The port tack boat must keep clear
11	Same Tack	The windward boat must keep clear
18	Rounding Marks	The inside boat with an overlap must be given room to round the mark



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