

Stockton Sailing Club

Beginners Guide to Racing

When first joining Stockton Sailing Club (SSC), most of our new members claim they have no interest in racing. However, once the novelty of day sailing wears off, they find that racing is more stimulating than day sailing. They also notice how much fun the racers are having! So eventually they overcome their fear of looking foolish and enter their first race. After they discover that racing is not difficult (only winning is) they realize how much zest and excitement have been added to their day's sailing pleasure. In addition, they discover they have acquired a whole group of new friends who enjoy the camaraderie that exists between friendly competitors. With this in mind, we have prepared this Beginner's Guide to help you get started.

Stockton Sailing Club schedules Spring, Summer, and Fall races.

If all of the following seems daunting there are a couple of ways to gain some experience before skipping your first race. You can contact your Fleet Captain or Regatta Committee and see about crewing for a more experienced skipper. This will allow you to gain valuable experience and at the same time not to have to worry about everything that is going on around you. Helping out with Race Committee is another good way of gaining more experience. In fact, many experienced skippers will do race committee to learn as it gives a totally different perspective of racing.

Register to Race

Although you will usually be allowed to register for a regular race on race day **it really does help the race committee if you register online (www.stocktonsc.org) beforehand.**

An exception to this is our *Wednesday Night Fun Race* which you *sign up for on the night of the race*. The Wednesday night race committee will put a sign-up sheet in the clubhouse.

Wednesday Night & Saturday Fun races are a little more relaxed and are a good place to start.

If you don't have an assigned PHRF number yet... the race committee may give you a provisional number on the day of the Wednesday Night or Saturday Fun Race.

Saturday races usually start at 12 noon

Sunday races usually start at 1 PM

Wednesday Night Fun races usually start at 6:30 PM

PHRF Handicap Number

Every boat is assigned a PHRF handicap rating number. This rating allows different boats to race together. The application for PHRF handicap rating is online (www.stocktonsc.org) under

"Regatta Forms" or you can pick one up from the Regatta Committee. Submit your completed form to the Regatta Committee or put it in the "Regatta box" located near the door to the Clubhouse.

Skippers Meeting

Skippers meetings may be held prior to the day's racing. The Race Committee discusses any special instructions pertaining to the racing. If any of the instructions are unclear, please speak up as there is always someone else who is also confused.

Course Sheet

Course sheets are available (also online by clicking on regatta forms). The course sheet shows the location of the course markers by number and the different possible courses. Each course is identified by a number and lists the order the markers are to be passed. For example, if the course indicates 33 followed by E the skipper would first sail to marker 33 and round it counter-clockwise so that the marker passes the port (left) side of the boat. He would then proceed to marker E, also rounding it counter-clockwise so that the marker passes the port (left) side of the boat. All SSC marks are to be left to port except the gate mark.

Starting

When first starting to race one of the most confusing aspects of sailing is the start of each race. The time remaining until the start is signaled by the race committee using a series of flags raised and lowered at specific times. The raising and lowering of each flag is accompanied by a sound signal. The first flag that is displayed is the class flag. This flag identifies the next class that will start. This flag is raised precisely 5 minutes before the designated class is to start. One minute later (four minutes before the start) the P flag (blue background with a white square) is raised. three minutes later (one minute before the start) the P flag is lowered. One minute later (the start of the race) the class flag is lowered and the boats may then cross the starting line and sail to the first mark of the course. Your course number is displayed on a board near the flags during your start sequence. This procedure is repeated until all the classes have started.

| Time Until Start | Flags |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 5 minutes | Race Committee raises the class flag |
| 4 minutes | Race Committee raises the P flag |
| 1 minutes | Race Committee drops the P flag |
| Start | Race Committee drops the class flag |

Only the fleet that will be starting should be up close to the line and all others should stay back out of the way. The fleet starting must be on the pre-start side of the starting line (not on the same side of the line as the first mark) when the class flag is dropped. If a boat is on the 'course side' of the starting line at the starting time, they will be recalled by the race committee and must re-cross the starting line without interfering with other boats.

Finishing a race occurs when any part of the boat crosses the Finish Line. Once finished, it is courteous to keep clear of any subsequent boats finishing and to avoid obstructing the Race Committee's view of the finish line.

BASIC RULES of SAILBOAT RACING

The International Sailing Federation Rules (ISAF) and SSC Sailing Instructions are in effect during the races. While these rules may seem daunting and incomprehensible at first, in reality, it is not necessary to know every rule and they are quite simple. The main purpose of the rules is to keep boats from crashing into each other. The rules can be broken into a few simple categories; determining who has right of way, limitations on what a boat can do, and other. Following these rules is not only good sportsmanship, but will make your day on the water a safer one. Copies of the SSC Sailing Instructions are available online under Regatta Forms.

If you believe that you have seen a breach of the rules, you are required to hail 'protest' to the boat that you believe broke a rule. If the boat that has been hailed accepts that they broke a rule they can take a 720 degree turn (two complete circles) penalty at the first reasonable opportunity. A 720 turn penalty is performed by turning the boat through two gybes and tacks. If the offending party does not exonerate himself of the infraction, a protest committee may be formed to hold a hearing on the protest. The protest committee may disqualify either, both, or neither of the boats.

Who Has Right of Way

Opposite Tack Rule

Port/Starboard When boats are on opposite tacks, the boat on the port tack (boat with the boom over its right side) must stay clear of any boats on the starboard tack (boat with the boom on its left side).

Same Tack Rules

Clear Ahead/Clear Astern A boat clear astern (behind) must stay clear of a boat clear ahead.

Windward/Leeward When overlapped (when any portion of one boat is even with the hull of the other boat) the boat to windward (upwind) must stay clear of the boat to leeward (downwind).

Limitations

Changing Course

When a right of way boat changes course she shall give the give way boats room to keep clear.

Acquiring Right of Way

When a boat gains the right of way by her actions she shall give the newly burdened boat the room to keep clear.

Same Tack Rules

Passing to Leeward When a boat comes from astern to overlap on the leeward side another boat, the leeward boat must not sail above its proper course while overlapped. This rule restricts the leeward boat from taking advantage of its right-of-way to push the windward boat off course. 'Proper course' means a course that it would make sense for the leeward boat to sail if the windward boat wasn't there.

Changing Tack Rule

A boat must not tack unless it can stay clear of other boats. A boat while tacking may not cause another boat to change course to avoid it.

Other

Rounding Marks

When boats are about to round a mark, the outside boat must give each boat overlapping her on the inside room to round the mark. At a windward mark, this only applies if the boats are on the same tack. At a leeward mark, this applies to boats on opposite tacks as well.

If a boat touches a mark it is rounding or a mark that is part of the starting line, it must do a 360 degree turn to clear itself of the infraction while staying clear of other boats.

Avoiding Collisions

A right of way boat shall, if reasonably possible, avoid a collision with a give way boat.

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