

Step by step instructions for how to set a starting line and course

These instructions are based on numerous mistakes made over time and hopefully learned by

Before the race, check a number of online hourly weather forecasts and make note of the expected wind speed and direction at the time of the scheduled start and for a couple hours after. Note forecasted direction shifts and speed changes. Make notes and keep these in mind when setting your line and course. Bring a GPS with you if you can to help measure your starting line. For Wed Night Series races, check on the Sunset time and plan the course accordingly. WNS races finish by rule at 8:30, but if the sun sets at 8, you want the race to end before then.

Motor out to the starting area. The OYC starting area is in the vicinity of the Shoal Marker .4NM WNW of Channel Marker 2. Stop the boat to test the wind. You can assure wind direction a few ways: Put up a flag, read the wind off a tape attached to a pole on the boat, or face the wind until you hear it equally in each ear. If you can set a starting line such that the wind is coming from, and expected to keep coming from, the direction of Channel Marker 1A or Course Mark "R", proceed to set your starting line as per the instructions below. If not, you will need to set a Weather Mark ("W").

Setting a Weather Mark:

The Weather Mark ("W") is an orange tetrahedron found in the large storage box on deck, along with the anchor lines and mushroom anchors. The yellow tetrahedron in the box is a Temporary Mark ("T"). An inflator is in the same box. It can be plugged into the cigarette port on the dash or you can use clips to attach it to the battery in back of the boat. If using the Cig port, should it shut off just wait a minute or two for it to cool down then depress the white button above it to re-set. **Do not over-inflate the mark...**In hot weather it will expand and could blow out its plug

Determine where you want to set your starting line. If the best area seems to be in close proximity to the Shoal Marker, configure the line in such a way that when the boat is anchored the shoal marker is just off her starboard bow for Southerly winds (SE/S/SW) or the pin is set just to the Southeast of it for Northerly winds (NE/N/NW). These will keep the marker out of play for the starting fleet. If you plan on a W-P course configuration, do not place the pin in the area of the Shoal Marker. If using a W-P configuration make sure the line is at least 75-100 yards away from the marker.

Look to anchor the boat and pin in shallower water. Some GPS Coordinates for shallow areas are below. Also, if you start at the Shoal Marker and motor to the SSW, you will find many shallow areas.

Move to the middle of where you envision the line being and determine wind direction as per above then pick out a point directly upwind on land and drive towards it for at least ¼ nautical mile or more. The longer the better. For perspective, the distance from the Shoal Marker to the entrance of Lucky Creek towards the Sailing Club is ½ nautical mile.

Keep in mind that the place you choose to set the mark must have good clearance 45 degrees to either side downwind...Boats on port and starboard tacks will be approaching the mark on these angles so the fleet needs clear sailing to the mark from either of these directions. Watch for land and shoal markers on these lines.

Keep an eye on the depth finder, ideally planting the mark in 35 feet or less of water so you can use just one line. All lines are measured to ~50 feet. Use bowline knots to tie the line to the anchor and mark. Lower the anchor until you feel it on bottom before letting loose of the mark. Be extra careful to not get the line tangled in the propeller. Drive straight back downwind to the starting line area.

Setting a Starting Line:

You will be starting the fleet toward a "W", Marker 1A or Course Mark "R". Move the boat to a spot where the wind is coming directly from whichever one is in play. Face the mark/wind then hold both arms directly out to your sides. Sight down them noting points on land where you are pointing. Drive 150 or so yards (450 feet) towards the spot to your left and anchor your Pin ("P") there following the same directions as for "W". **The Pin is always set to Port of the anchored Committee Boat.**

From the pin, drive 300 or so yards (900 feet) back towards the spot you noted to your right then drive upwind from there about 75 feet before dropping anchor. Let out your entire anchor rode and use it to adjust and square the line to the wind and mark. **If you think the starting line is too long, it isn't.** The USAF Race Committee Manual says we should have a starting line of over 300 yards or three football fields for Wednesday Night Series races. People need room to maneuver in a fleet of unlike boats that behave differently.

You should now have a starting line that is perpendicular to the wind with "W", "R" or 1A directly downwind from the middle of it. If the wind shifts, and you need to get the race started due to a time limit, do not adjust the line to the wind.

Shallow spots:

10 feet – N 35, 28, 7.2 by W 80, 57, 17
11 feet - N 35, 28, 9.4 / W 80, 57, 22.8
13 feet – N 35, 28, 5.3 / W 80, 57, 17.9
15 feet – N 35, 28, 5.2 / W 80, 57, 20.0

20 feet – N 35, 28, 14.4 / W 80, 57, 21.3
22 feet – N 35, 28, 8.0 / 80, 57, 15.8
25 feet deep – 35, 28, 6.5 / 80 57 14.4

Setting a course:

Wednesday Night Series RC may provide separate courses for the Spinnaker and the Non-spinnaker fleets by signaling the Spinnaker Course under Flag #1 and the Non-Spinnaker Course under Flag #2 on distinct flagstaffs. This is, of course, to give the Spin Fleets a longer race. When doing so, make sure to avoid having the fleets finishing from two different directions.

Also for Wednesday Night Series races, the number of times to round the Weather Mark (W) in any W-P configuration may be denoted by a numerical flag, for instance W-P-2 = W-P-W-finish, W-P-3 = W-P-W-P-W-finish, etc.

If marks are to be rounded more than once before finishing, a numerical flag displayed beneath the course flags signifies the number of times to round each. **If a Weather Mark (W) is employed, it will not be re-rounded.** Examples: W-B-X-2 = W-B-X-B-X-finish / R-Y-2 = R-Y-R-Y-finish.

When using a "W", ALWAYS consider the direction the fleet will be taking to its next mark in the course and avoid having the fleet crossing over each other. Example: If the wind is coming out of the Southwest (Lucky Creek / Sail Club) area, you would not want to post a course of W-R since all the boats rounding "W" and heading straight to "R" would be plowing right through those who are still heading to "W". A way to avoid this is to set a course of W-P-R, bringing the fleet back to the port end of the starting line before they head to "R". Whenever you do this, you must consider moving the Committee Boat if it looks like it would interfere with the fleet heading to the next mark. There is a good chance you would be moving it anyway to shorten and square your finish line to the direction from which the fleet will be returning.

Wind speed and the forecast must be considered. You should set a course that allows the slowest boat in the fleet an opportunity to finish. This is in large part why we allow for a two race courses. A 5-10 MPH wind will give us about an hour to an hour and a half race to the marks at the dam and a bit less than that to "R". Wed Night races have a time limit ending at 8:30PM

The following is not meant to be a comprehensive list of options:

Suggested race courses based on wind direction, in order of strongest to weakest wind strength

From the SE (general direction of Marker 1A): 1-B-X-2 and 2-B-X or BX or X or W-P-2 (or 3) or W

From the South (mid way between the Sail Club and 1A): 1-W-P-R-Y and 2-W-P-R or W-P-R or W-P-2 (or 3) or W

From the SW (general direction of the Sail Club): W-B-X or W-X or W-P-R-Y or W-P-R or W-P-2 (or 3) or W

From the West (blowing across the channel back towards Marker 2): W-B-X or W-X or W-B-X or

From the NW: 1-W-B-X and 2-W-B or W-p-2 (or 3) or W

From the North (the general area of Beatties Ford Landing): 1-W-B-X and 2-W-B or W-B-X or W-P-2 (or 3) or W

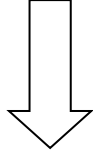
From the NNE/NE (the general Direction of R): 1-R-Y and 2-R of R-Y or R or W-P-2 (or 3) or W

From the NE/ENE (the general direction of Marker D2): 1-W-R-Y and 2-R or W-R-Y or W-R or W-Y or W-P-2 (or 3) or W

From the East (just south of the island at Marker 2): 1-W-R-Y and 2-W-R or W-R-Y or W-R or W-P-2 (or 3) or W

The first leg should look like this:

**Weather Mark or
"R" or Marker 1A**



WIND

PIN

CB