

## Simple Sailing Strategy

**Stay out of trouble**, sailing a clean race is faster than assuming all other boats are going to abide by the RRS.

**You must always be planning ahead.** Things happen faster in RC Sailboats than in bigger boats. It is like chess, you must not only be thinking about the current leg of the course, but keep your eyes peeled on how you should sail the next leg. Boats ahead of you can tell you a lot about what to expect and how to take advantage of the wind.

### Starting

1. Clean air & freedom to tack is better than a perfect start in a pack of boats
  - a. Don't put yourself in a position where you cannot change tacks
  - b. Don't worry about tacking away & ducking boats to get that clean air.
2. Time your approach
  - a. Never get too far away from the line in case of wind drop. I generally try and stay no more than 15 seconds away from the line by sailing back and forth behind and parallel to the line. It is also easy to confirm favored end of the line.
  - b. As it gets close to starting look for open regions along the line
  - c. Don't be caught DEAD RIGHT as the leeward boat, realize that someone is going to try and sail over the top of you on the line. Let them go if you are early, but don't get caught by the next group wanting to sail over you and blocking your options.
3. Know the favored end of the line – see #1.
  - a. If starboard pin is favored, sometimes it is best to start in the 2<sup>nd</sup> wave.
  - b. Port tack starts are dangerous & must be timed perfectly, instead work your way along the line on starboard towards the port pin and tack over when you can.

### Windward Leg & Windward Mark plus offset

1. Don't initially sail all the way to the lay line
  - a. It is too hard to judge the exact location of the lay line, tack early you may get a lift. Reposition yourself when you have a better understanding of exact lay line position.
  - b. Watch and take advantage of wind shifts.
  - c. Middle of the course is safer than extreme sides, but watch which side is doing better for the next leg.
2. Don't play follow-the-leader, you will not gain any positions since the boats are so similar in speed. The exception is if one side of the course is heavily favored. Here you must play follow the leader, but think about tacking for the lay line early or late.
3. Plan your approach to weather mark.
  - a. Don't get caught in the nasty mess of boats at the weather mark. Plan to go high and around them rather than being trapped. It is faster.
  - b. Port tack approach:
    - i. Plan your port tack approach to arrive on the starboard tack lay line outside of the zone (*4 boat lengths*). You have no mark-room rights if you

- tack within the zone and cannot sail higher than close hauled, e.g. you have no rights to “shoot the mark”.
- ii. Pay attention to the line of starboard tack boats approaching the mark. Make sure you can lay the mark before tacking below them. It is safer to duck boats and over stand the lay line. This way you can sail around the mess of boats at the mark.
- c. Starboard tack approach:
  - i. Make sure you are laying the mark.
  - ii. Don't be afraid of tacking outside the zone to make sure you can sail above the mess at the windward mark.
- 4. Missing a mark costs more time than taking an extra tack earlier.
- 5. Don't miss the offset mark by falling off the wind too soon after rounding the weather mark. Many times, it can be nearly a close-hauled course to the offset mark.

#### Downwind run and leeward mark plus offset

1. Plan your approach to the leeward mark immediately if you want to be the inside mark room boat upon entering the zone (*4 boat lengths from mark*).
2. Remember the RRS. A starboard tack boat (boom over port side) has the right of way over a port tack boat, even if the starboard tack boat is sailing by the lee. A leeward boat has the right of way over a windward boat and can sail higher than the direct line to the next mark. A boat passing to leeward, within 2 boat lengths of another boat, cannot sail above his proper course. Within the zone at a leeward mark, the inside boat has the right of way regardless of tack. Room includes room to gybe.
3. In heavy air
  - a. Don't let your sail out too far. The natural twist in the sail can cause the upper portion of the sail to roll the boat in a nasty manner to weather.
  - b. Learn how to wiggle the rudder if the bow is digging. This causes the bow to lift on the bow wave. This can be a life saver.
  - c. You will bury the bow, lift the rudder, and broach. Learn how to quickly get out of irons after a nasty broach. The winner is often the one who can get going again the fastest.
4. In moderate to light air
  - a. Don't move the rudder too much.
  - b. Steer a straight course.
  - c. The wind shadow with these boats is relatively minor. Don't get overly concerned with clear air unless there is a wall of boats behind you.
5. Don't get tangled in a mess at the leeward mark, sail around people. Don't go too far outside the offset mark. This is lost ground on the last next windward leg.

#### Finish Leg

1. See windward leg
2. Don't hit the finish mark! You have not finished until you do a penalty turn and re-finish.