

EPSC Start Racing – Improve your sailing

Start racing

Turn up, get out on the water in good time and follow the race. Please don't worry about 'getting in the way' we all know that none of us can race without new sailors learning to race. Have fun... You've got to be in it to win it!!

When are races held?

A program is sent out to all members and is published on the club website and also on the noticeboard in the clubhouse. We sail every Sunday throughout the year and on a Wednesday evening in the lighter months.

What boat can I sail?

Virtually any dinghy may be raced. We use a handicapping system to allow boats of different types to race against one another and still let the best sailed boat win! At Emberton, any boat with a PY of 1000 or above and no keel may race. (Portsmouth Yardstick, is an internationally recognised handicap system- the faster the boat, the lower the number).

How good at sailing do I need to be?

We usually say if you can sail a triangular course, you're good enough! You may wish to crew in a double handed boat a few times first. Racing is by far the quickest way of improving sailing skills and every one of us started off knowing very little and we've all got more to learn! If in doubt, ask one of the instructors for guidance.

How do I let people know I'm new to racing?

One of the joys of sailing at a smaller Club is that most people will already know that you are new to sailing before you take to the water and will, while you are on the water give you as much room as possible. Most importantly try not to panic if a boat is coming towards you if you think they haven't seen you, just shout 'Hello' or something equally polite.

What rules do I need to know?

A boat on port tack (the wind coming from the left, the boom on the right) gives way to one on starboard tack (wind from right, boom on left). A boat on Starboard tack with right of way may shout "Starboard" if you are on Port tack and they think you are about to get in their way.

A boat to windward (closest to where the wind is coming from) gives way to a boat to leeward (the boat further away from the wind).

At a mark, the boat on the inside, nearest the mark, will usually need to be given room to round the mark without hitting it or you!

These basic rules should prevent most collisions. There are many more and as you become more experienced it is worthwhile investing in the latest copy of the racing rules book. (e.g. The Rules in Practice by Bryan Willis, pub Fernhurst Books). Rules can be downloaded from ISAF website [http://www.sailing.org/tools/documents/ISAFRRS20132016Final-\[13376\].pdf](http://www.sailing.org/tools/documents/ISAFRRS20132016Final-[13376].pdf)

How do I enter a race?

At Emberton just turn up, get sailing and as long as you cross the start line you have entered the race. If you follow the course and finish you get a place but you don't have to do the same number of laps as the leader. Just make sure the person running the race has your name entered correctly on their paperwork.

What course do I sail?

The OOD will set a course and display it on a board on the island. The board will display two bits of information:

The start line; at Emberton we generally run races from the island hut as wind conditions change we have to start in different directions. These are designated A, B, C and D (White letters on a black background). Looking out on the main lake with the race hut behind you A starts are always to your port/left, B starts to the starboard/right side of the lake. We don't use C and D very often but they are on the clubhouse side of the island and will be easily identified by the first numbered mark.

The course; the number and order the marks are to be rounded the colour of the background denotes the direction in which it is to be rounded. Red means pass to port (keeping the buoy on your left), round it anti-clockwise. Green means pass to Starboard (keep it on your right), round it clockwise.

Take note, most races require you to sail through the start-finish line at the end of each lap.

There is a large map on the wall in the clubhouse showing the approximate position of the marks. If you are still unsure, ask someone to point out the buoys to you from the shore or even on the start line (We've all had this done for us at some point!). When on the water, follow someone who looks like they know where they are going! If you capsize it can be disorientating – this happens to the best sailors!

How do I start?

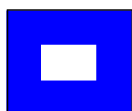
Be near to the start line 5 minutes before – you may want to hang back to see what others are doing. This is the flag sequence:



Pennant 1 hoisted UP - 5 minutes to start with sound signal



Preparatory signal hoisted UP - 4 minutes to start with sound signal



Preparatory signal lowered DOWN - 1 minutes to start with sound signal



Pennant 1 lowered DOWN on 0 to start with sound signal

What about those crowded start lines?

When you first start racing, you could hang back a bit at the start, crossing the line after all the keen ones have finished getting in each other's way. However there is another way... A Pursuit race.

What's a pursuit race?

At least four times a year we run a Pursuit race/series. Using the handicap system, the boats taking part start in order of speed, slowest go first (e.g. Mirror) fastest go last (e.g. a Supernova) and everyone else is spread out in between. The aim of the race is to overtake the slower boats and to prevent the faster boats from overtaking you.

The starts because they are staggered, are much easier for the beginner. There will probably be only 2 or 3 other boats starting at the same time. The starting intervals are

displayed on the notice board before the race. You will also be given a number to look for on the island.

How do I finish?

In Pursuit races, everybody finishes at once when the bell rings, but keep sailing until the rescue boat notes your position. Your position is when the bell goes, so no overtaking afterwards please!

In Handicap racing, the finish line is normally the same as the start line. You'll finish after the OOD has sounded 2 rings of the bell and put up the shortened course flag (a blue square on a white background).

Each boat that finishes received a ring of the bell unless you have been rescued and towed in!

Just keep sailing until you cross the line and you hear the bell for you. It is polite to thank the OOD at this time. A wave is sufficient!

How do I find out where I finished?

In Pursuit racing the results are as seen on the water – the boat in the lead wins the race. This is usually one of the faster boats that has worked hard to overtake and lap the slower boats.

Handicap races, have calculations made by the OOD to make allowances for the different types of boat racing. Results are entered onto Sailwave by the Results Secretary Results will also be made available as soon as possible on the website and usually a printed official copy will be posted on the results board in the clubhouse.

How do I qualify for a series?

Usually by completing half the number of races in any race in a series, plus 1 qualifies you to compete for prizes in the series. The more races you do you stand a better chance of improving and winning a prize.

Any other questions?

Ask questions: you won't be the first or last to ask it!

Who to ask – well anyone rigging a boat or dressed in sailing kit at the club! They'll help if they can and will only be too pleased to talk 'sailing' to you. Promise!