



## Race Training Exercises



**This booklet looks at the latest exercises designed to enhance Racing Skills**

**Alan Olive & Harvey Hillary**

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**Illustrations by Philip Twinning**

**Photographs by Peter Bentley, David Cockerill**



# PART 1

## 5 STEPS TO SUCCESS

### **1. INTRODUCE THE DRILL ON SHORE.**

When using a training drill for the first time, it's important to fully explain the rules, set-up and objectives of the exercise before going afloat. Briefing and discussing the exercise will help avoid any misunderstanding and ensure quick transitions between drills with minimum confusion. Try to involve the group in the briefing, tying in personal experience into the aims and objectives of the exercise so that the relevance can be fully understood.

### **2. USE A DEMONSTRATION, EITHER ON LAND OR WATER.**

Try to provide a best practice blue print of a drill whenever possible. In its simplest form this may be a diagram of the exercise on a white board, but whenever possible, try to use previous Video footage of the drill being performed well or by using Shore Based Drills to break down a new skill into small components. More kinaesthetic teaching methods are often far more effective at passing on a new technique and can enhance the success of on the water training.

### **3. RUNNING THE DRILL**

Be sympathetic when running drills for the first time as they rarely go to plan. Start with an exercise in its simplest form so that the group has a better chance of performing the exercise successfully. Then as more sailors get to grips with the rules and manoeuvring required, then increase the difficulty and fully explore the educational potential of the drill.

### **4. ON THE WATER FEEDBACK**

As a coach, your goal must be to train out bad habits and train in good techniques. Ideally, you will be able to recognise poor practice and be able to give suggestions as to how best to correct the fault on the water. Try not to address too many faults at any one time. Focus on underpinning techniques first, working towards fine-tuning specific skills as sailors becomes more proficient at the drill.

### **5. DEBRIEF AND ADAPTATION**

For most sailors and especially at elite level, the most effective learning occurs on the water. However, It is during the de-brief that both the coach and the sailors can summarise the days activities, the lessons learnt and any relative differences within the group. Use Video footage and sailors own experiences to re-enforce positive experiences which can then be summarised at the end of the session or re-visited at a later date. A final tool is to encourage the sailors to adapt techniques practiced for different situations or to tailor a skill to their own personal style.

## USING THE MANUAL

Exercises in this book will be presented in the following way:

**DRILL TITLE:** Standard 'tag names' help enable coaches to be consistent which in turn avoid confusion when teaching new groups or when working with other coaches.

**COLOUR CODING:** Suggested ability level of the group required for an exercise. Fits the RYA's template for race training with START (Green), INTERMEDIATE RACE (Amber) and ADVANCED RACE (Red). Note: Some exercises will suit multiple skill levels depending on the variations used.

**GEAR:** Specifies the marks and additional coaching resources required by the drill.

**DESCRIPTION:** Sets out the rules of the exercise and if it is to be competition on skills based.

**AIMS:** Explains the objectives of an exercise, the skills that are to be targeted and how they're relevance on the racecourse.

**SETUP:** Outlines how to run the exercise, tips on laying the course and additional comments on best practice for coaches.

**VARIATIONS:** Ideas on how best to adapt the drill to suit different abilities and group sizes or to add an element of progression or variety

**TOP TIPS:** Advice to help the drill run smoothly.

**COACHING POINTS:** Best practice techniques and coach focused instruction to help get the most out of the exercise. Also provides a guide to providing feedback on the drill.

## EFFECTIVE COACHING TIPS



- **KISS** – Keep it Short and Simple: Focused sessions with specific training goals are far more likely to help skill acquisition within a group. Try not to over reach by cramming too much into each session. This will increase briefing time and potentially confuse sailors or lose focus within the group.
- **SESSION PLANS:** Outline training goals including variations and progressions. Preparation here will result in a much clearer briefing and that's 50% of the way towards a good session.
- **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** Test the sailors at the end of the day to assess whether your session plans have been translated into effective learning. This is far more useful than simply scoring how good you were at running the session.
- **ABSTRACT TRAINING:** Try not to fall into the trap of running exercises with unclear or unrelated goals. Sailors always put more effort into rehearsal if they can relate the technique to personal experience or to specific scenarios on the racecourse.
- **TIME TO LEARN:** When introducing new skills, allow sufficient time for individuals to practice techniques and encourage 'thinking time' between repetitions to assess their own progression.
- **LEARNING STYLES:** People learn in different ways so be prepared to adapt your delivery style to the individual. Asking questions will not only help to assess progression but will also help the sailors to reinforce their understanding by talking about the skill.
- **PROGRESSION:** Try to include this in your session working towards an element of overload. Pressure is an excellent way of encouraging adaptation both physically and within motor skills. Warm up – Introduce skill – rehearse in controlled environment – test in a racing situation – refine and adapt.

## CONTROLLING GROUPS

- **HOLDING PATTERNS:** Control is critical and this is especially true in junior, low ability or Skiff classes where groups can separate rapidly. To avoid this always have a set holding exercise and course area that sailors can revert to in the event that you have to rescue a capsized boat or re-lay the course.
- **WIND SPEED AND TEMPERATURE** directly impact the number of successful exercises you will be able to run per-session. Larger or more diverse groups also influence this.
- **GOOD PRACTICE:** Encourage sailors to come close to the rib at the end of every exercise. This will give you the opportunity of passing on coaching points and brief them on the next activity. It also keeps the group together and stops you having to charge off after individuals.
- **COMMUNICATION:** Wait until boats are alongside or holding position before passing on instructions. Use a whistle to gain a boats attention and position yourself to windward to help carry your voice.
- **USE FIRST NAMES:** Placing Duck tape on Buoyancy Aids with the sailors names marked clearly will help. Also engage eye-to-eye contact and use consistent, enthusiastic body language.

### COACHING CHECKLISTS

Weather and forecast	Time available.
Ratios of safety boats to sailors/boats	Facilities available
Types of boat.	Insurance (club, personal, Rescue boat, sailors)
Rescue facilities	Medical conditions of the students/ coach/helpers- Medical form
Sailor's ability, size, gender and age	Communications with shore, sailors, emergency teams- MOB, radio
Other club activities	Hazards associated with sailing at that club/area
Tide and tidal flow.	Risk assessment & form

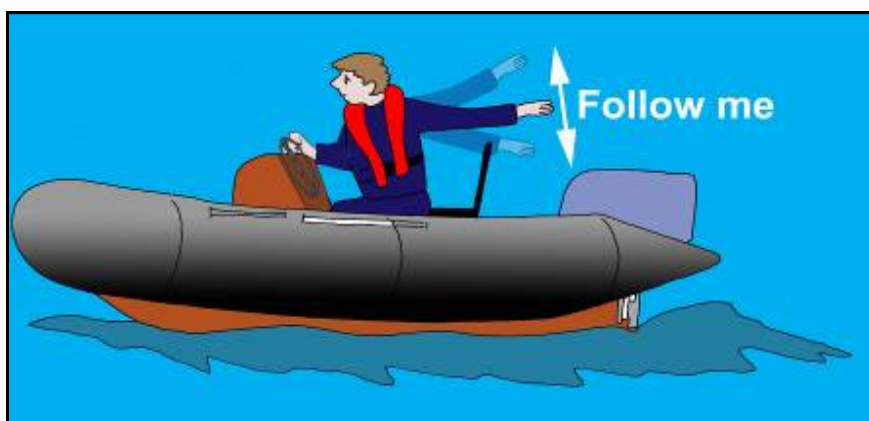
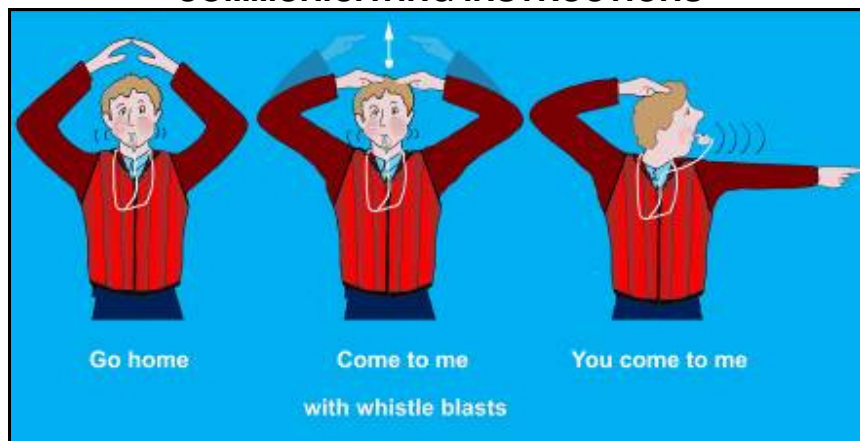


# STANDARD HAND SIGNALS

## STARTING



## COMMUNICATING INSTRUCTIONS

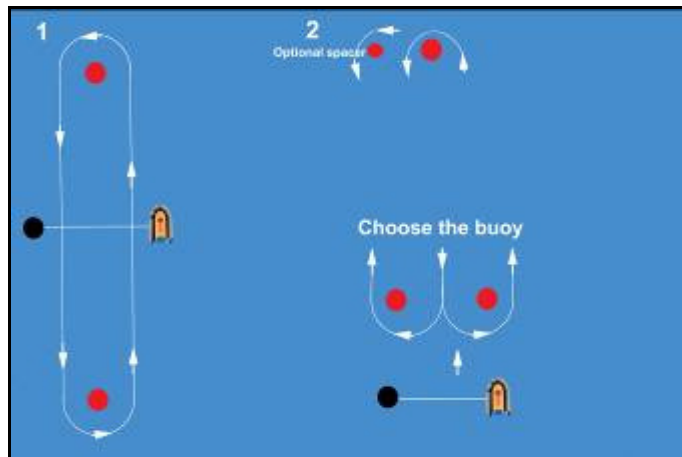


# SETTING COURSES

1. For fast course laying drop the pin end first and take a true wind reading from that mark.
2. Motor along your bearing for the appropriate distance given wind strength and class of boat. Then drop the Windward mark and return to the pin.
3. Take a wind reading at the Pin; add 90 degrees and motor along that bearing until have the correct length line. Move 2-3 boat lengths upwind or up tide and drop the anchor. Then correct the line adjusting the anchor line to the back bearing.
4. Lay leeward Marks with a back bearing of the Windward mark
5. Wing Marks should be an extension of the Start line bearing
6. Use over-length anchor line on Starting Marks to enable you to change line bias without having to re-lay.

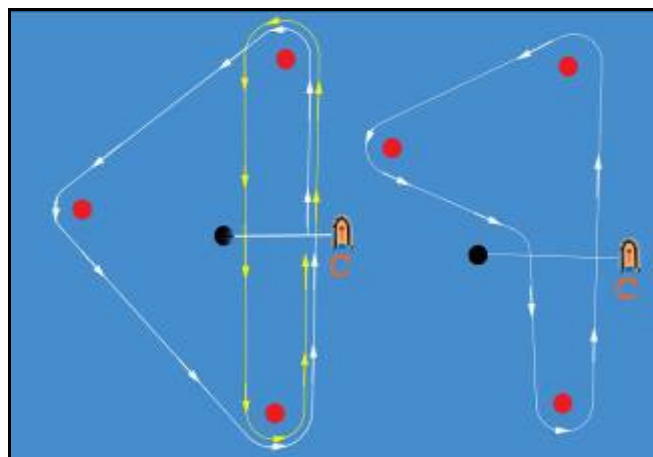
## WINDWARD LEEWARD VARIATIONS

1. This is fast to set up and requires minimal buoyage since all marks are left to port. The Start/Finish Line can also be used and a mid course gate (two marks that the fleet have to sail through on the upwind or downwind legs). This means the course can be easily shortened and gives options for mixed ability groups.



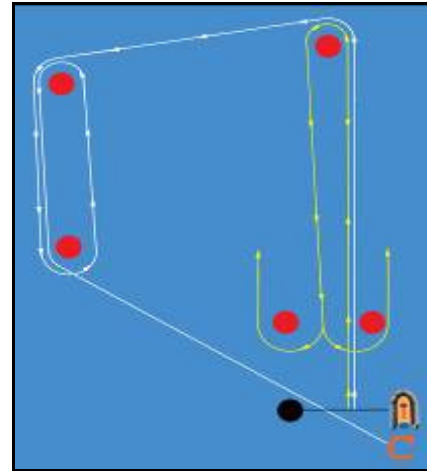
2. This version keeps start and finish lines separate to the gate. Sail the assigned number of laps, rounding either leeward gate before passing through the gate to the finish line on the final lap.
3. The final variation inserts a spacer mark to prevent boats hoisting and colliding with boats approaching the windward mark.

## TRIANGLE / SAUSAGE and P COURSE



## TRAPEZOID (OUTER and OUTER LOOP)

Employed by many Olympic Classes this course requires the top reach to be set tight so that flying a spinnaker is made difficult. The bottom reach should be a little freer to provide overtaking options. Using alternative inner and outer loops allows different classes to be raced on the same course area, saving a coach time and effort.



### TIME FILLERS EXERCISES

These can be used as very effective holding exercise to bring groups together when leaving the shore or for sailors to revert to in the event that you have to rescue a capsized boat or re-lay the course.

#### REACH 2 REACH

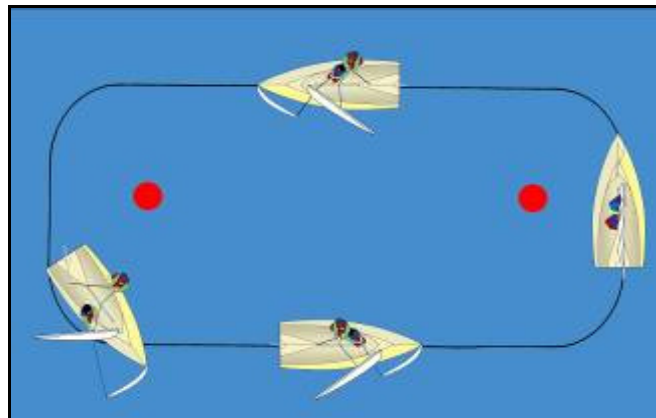
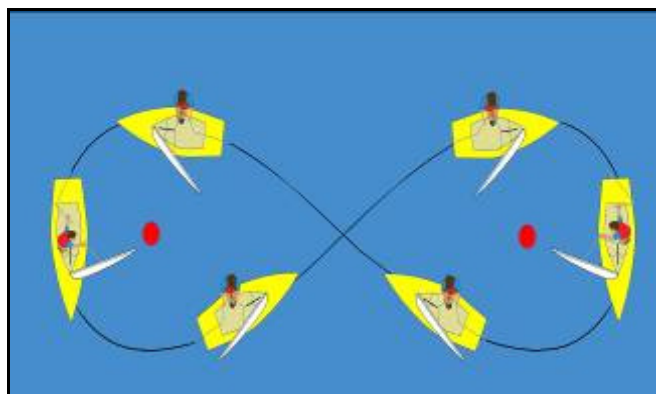


FIGURE 8





# PART 2

## BOAT HANDLING



**Boat handling is the corner stone of creating racing skills. It is the one aspect that can be done off the race course and often without the need of a coach. The aim is to make these skills automatic in training and racing so the sailor can focus on tactics and strategy.**

## FOLLOW MY LEADER (2+Boats)

START



**Gear:** Coach boat.

**Description:** The original boat handling exercise. The fleet lines up behind the coach boat responding to changes in speed and direction while staying as close as possible. No overtaking, no cutting corners and you must react to the boat directly in front rather than those further up the line.

**Aims:** The idea is to eliminate the elastic band effect through better boat handling and by responding quickly to changes. Improves acceleration, stopping and communication in the boat.

**Set up:** Start with the fleet in a line behind the rib on a beam reach 2-3 boat lengths apart. On the whistle start the exercise.

**Variations:** Mix the moves up as much as possible, adding reversing, stop-starts and different speeds.

Try changing the rules to add an element of competition. By allowed overtaking you can shift the focus onto speed, with boats eliminated if they have been passed. Alternatively put the focus on control by saying as soon as the boat behind becomes overlapped, they are eliminated.

### Coaching Points:

**Start:** Try looking at roles within the boat and communication regarding the boat in front. As sailors improve move the emphasis towards changing settings for speed or control and the five-essentials.



## TACKING ON THE WHISTLE (1+Boats) **START** / **INTERMEDIATE**



**Gear:** Coach boat and a Whistle!

**Description:** Begin with the fleet in a line behind the coach boat. On the first whistle harden up onto a close-hauled course to start the exercise. From then on each whistle is the signal to tack.

**Aims:**

- **To identify good tacking technique**
- **Allows the coach to dictate when boats tack, increasing pressure by taking away preparation time**
- **Ideal for filming as it allows the coach to film multiple tacks in a short amount of time.**

**Set up:** Start with the fleet in a line behind the rib on a beam reach behind the rib. Aim to get boats 2 lengths apart, changing speed to bunch or spread out the fleet.

**Variations:** Vary the timing between whistles to shift the emphasis from boat handling (frequent) to rhythm and technique (infrequent)

**Top Tips:** Film the exercise from behind and slightly to windward. This will give you an easier radius to follow as the focus boat is tacking. View at least 3 tacks before giving feedback to the sailor.

**Coaching Points:**

**Start:** 5 essentials, with so much going on the basics tend to be forgotten.

**Intermediate:** Look at the rhythm of the tack and highlight gains forward and to windward during the manoeuvre.



**Gear:** Coach boat and a Whistle!

**Description:** Like 'Tacking on the Whistle' with a bit more variety. On the first whistle harden up onto a close-hauled course to start the exercise. From then on whistle signals denote the following manoeuvres:

**1 Whistle = Tack or Gybe**

**2 Whistles = Bear or harden up**  
(Straight set / Straight drop)

**3 Whistles = Gybe Set / Gybe Drop or Start / Stop**

**Aims:**

- Keeps fleet together and enables the coach to combine different manoeuvres and make direct comparisons within the group.
- Ideal for use as a warm up, intense tacking / gybing practice or for fitness overload.

**Set up:** Start with the fleet in a line behind the rib on a beam reach 2-3 boat lengths apart.

**Variations:** Try changing the timing between whistles, fast to increase intensity or slow to focus on speed through manoeuvres. Also try a fourth whistle to denote a 360 penalty.

**Top Tips:** Bearing away and heading up tends to compress the group with tacks and gybes extending the gaps. For a 360 it may be an idea to agree on going for the gybe first to avoid collisions.

**Coaching Points:**

**INTERMEDIATE:** Set the boat trim and balance up before going for the turn. Time spent before the turn will improve the boats reaction to the rudder and quality of the turn itself.



## MAGIC ROUNDABOUT (3+Boats)

**START / INTERMEDIATE:**

**Gear: 1 Mark & Coach Boat**

### Description:

**Option 1** Boats must sail around the rib and spreader mark as fast as possible. When the coach blows the whistle the fleet reverses direction.

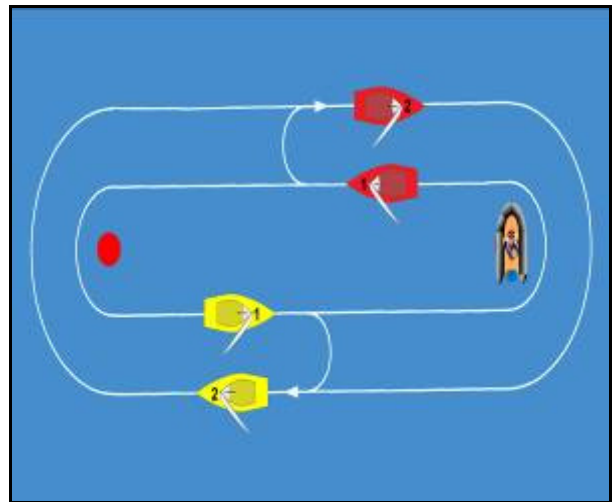
**Option 2** Removes spreader mark so fleet must maintain the shape of the circle. The whistle signals a change in direction turning in towards the coach boat thus making the circle smaller each time. As the game continues the circle becomes tighter and the whistles closer together.



### Aims:

- Improves Boat Handling
- Fun with an element of competition.

**Set-up:** Start by briefing the boats and then line them up behind the rib on starboard tack in 'follow my leader' formation. On the first whistle the coach boat will stop and the fleet will start to circle the boat clockwise. Make sure the circle is large enough for they're to be a minimum of 3 boat lengths between each boat. On the next whistle the boats will either change direction turning towards the coach boat thus making the circle slightly smaller. Boats will now be circling anti-clockwise and the exercise is repeated. Continue the exercise until the circle is too small for the ability of the group and then re-start.



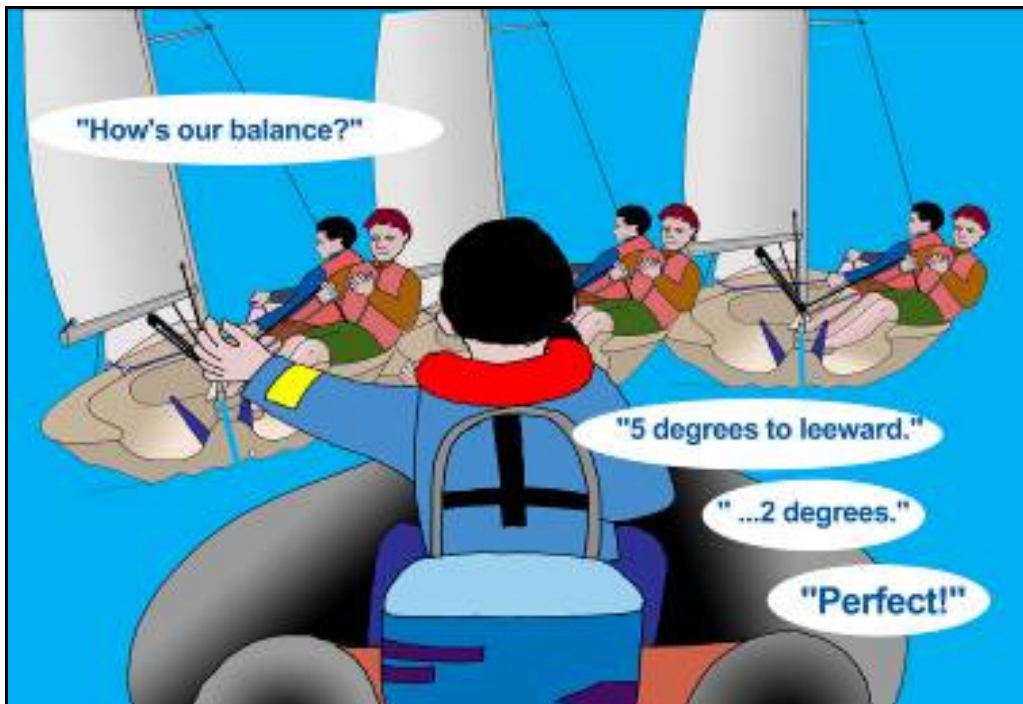
### Variations:

Try a version of this exercise where you can eliminate the boat in front by overtaking them. You can only eliminate a boat if you overtake around the outside of the circle therefore preventing people cutting corners.

### Coaching Points:

**Start:** Keep it simple. Focus on the 5 essentials and where overtaking took place.

**Intermediate:** Getting the boat up to speed quickly out of the tack is a great way to gain on the boat in front.



**Gear:** Coach Boat or Training Partner

**Description:** A self-grading exercise to highlight correct boat balance and trim. Start by sailing upwind with the perfectly upright and a coach or partner following behind. One boat sails to windward with a shadowing boat grading them out of ten on the accuracy and consistency of boat balance during a minute of sailing including gusts and lulls.

**Aims:** To understand the feeling of when a boat is upright, heeled to windward or to leeward and how this impacts speed and steerage.

**Set up:** Sail to windward with the shadow boat directly behind for one minute. If sailing with a training partner then swap roles and repeat.

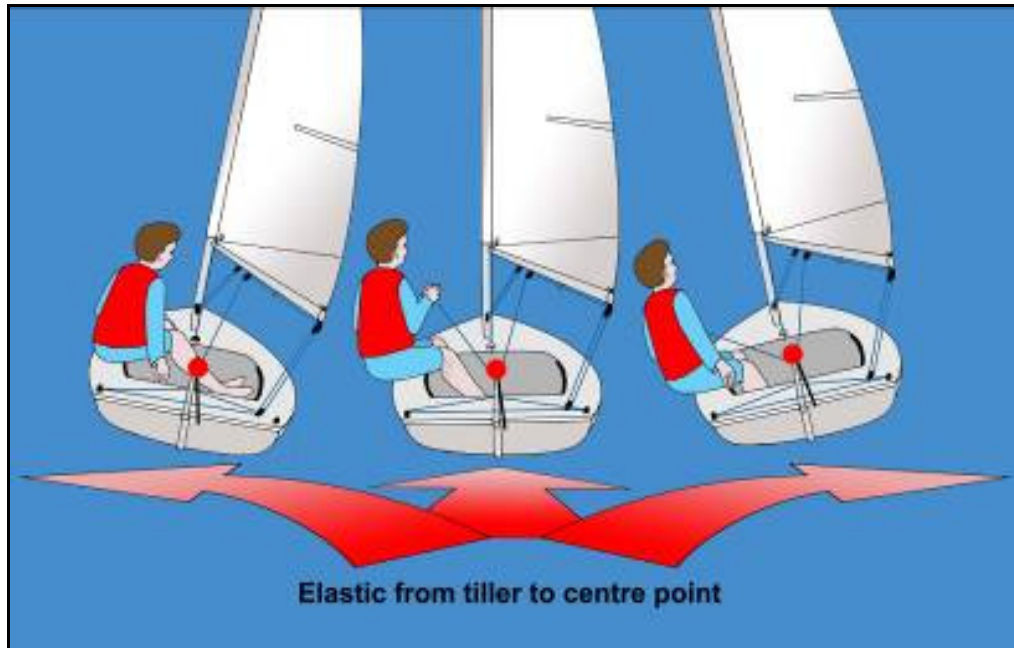
**Variations:** Target an angle or 5 degrees windward heel upwind and downwind and repeat the process downwind. Then discuss the relative feel and behaviour of the boat.

**Coaching Points:**

**Start:** Try to link the feel of the boat to rig theory and loop this back into setting up for gusts and lulls. Then revisit the exercise asking the sailors to be proactive rather than reactive to changes in pressure.

## TETHERED RUDDERS

START / INTERMEDIATE



**Gear:** Thick elastic for every boat in the group. Buoys as required.

**Description:** A variation on rudderless sailing using elastic to maintain a neutral helm. Tie the elastic from the tiller to a fixed point on the centre line and then try to sail a set course while becoming less reliant on the tiller for steerage.

**Aims:**

- To block off the rudder requiring the sailors to use sail trim and balance to steer the boat.
- To reduce the amount of rudder used by the helm.
- To develop a neutrally balanced boat.

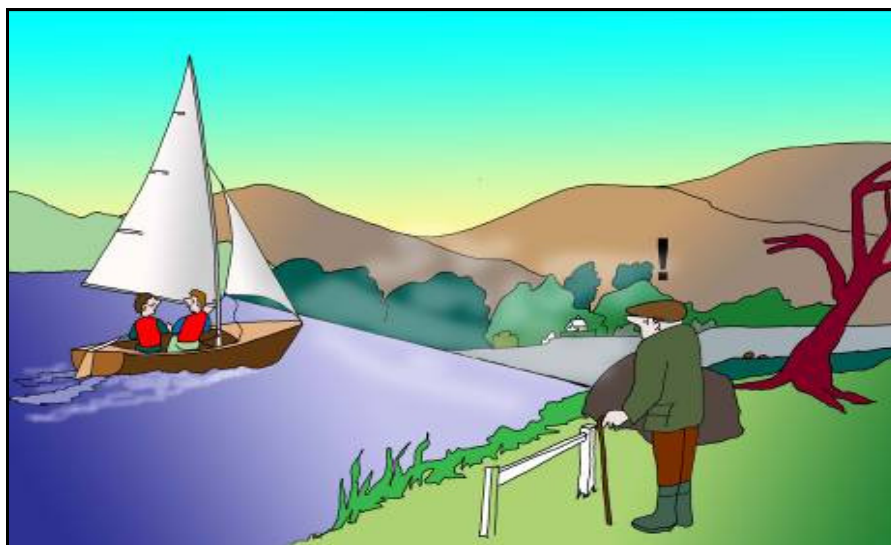
**Set up:** Start with straight line sailing, taking, gybing and slow speed manoeuvring without holding the tiller, then a simple course and final put into a race situation.

**Adaptation:** Try reducing the tension on the elastic and sailing as normal. This will allow sailors to appreciate the breaking effect of the rudder through the resistance on the elastic. Use in conjunction with whistle exercises to train out over-steering.

**Coaching Points:**

**Start:** During the briefing introduce the theory behind the balance point in the rig and how it impacts steerage. Highlight the effects of sail trim and boat balance while heading up, bearing away, tacking gybing and when sailing in gusts and lulls.

**Intermediate:** Try to emphasis the set-up for the turn is critical to making small rudder movements effective. Video the boats performing the exercise well and assess their heel and sail trim on the entry to each manoeuvre.



**“Come on. What can you hear?”**

**Gear:** 2-4 Marks

**Description:** The aim of this exercise is enhance feel by sailing unsighted. This requires one sailor at a time to close their eyes and feel the boat balance, boat speed and wind strength with their other senses. The other crewmember must then feedback the positions of other boats and obstructions.

**Aims:**

- **To enhance automatic sailing skills**
- **To train out visual dominance and heighten other senses**
- **To re-enforce the importance of communication.**

**Set-up:**

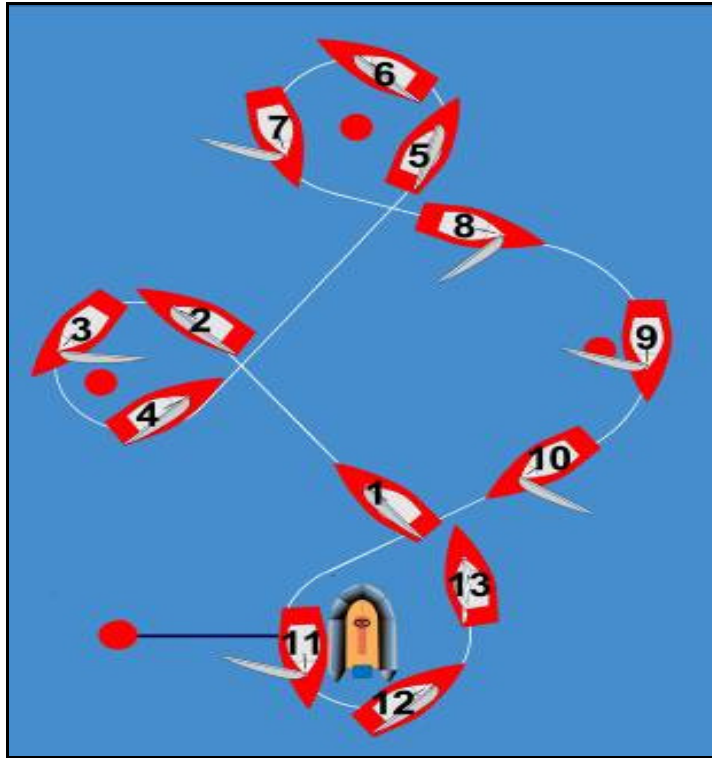
Using a course of your choice, brief the sailors on the rules and decide who will sail blind first (helm or crew). Then start the fleet individually at 10second intervals with sailors able to open their eyes at any point if they become uncomfortable. The aim is for sailors to increase the time they spend with their eyes closed.

**Top Tip:** Give the teams an eye’s open’ word for dangerous situations that may lead to collisions. Ensure the course is laid well away from others.  
For single hander’s use 10 seconds eyes closed 2 open cycles.

**Coaching Points:**

**Intermediate:** Helps train crews to provide better input on the racecourse improving timing and content.

**Advanced:** Your eyes are the least effective sense at judging boat speed. Your sense of balance is better with your eyes shut. The more you learn to feel the correct angle to the wind the less reliant you will become at using the tell tails.  
So what do we need our eyes for?



**Gear: 4 Marks and a Coach Boat**

**Description:** Similar to the Gut Buster but less destructive. After the gate is open the boats should sail on Starboard (early starters may require a double tack) to gybe around Mark 1 to port. Mark 2 is effectively a port approach requiring a tack gybe before heading to Mark 3. This is a simple gybe to starboard before rounding the rib to port again.

**Aims:**

- **To create unfamiliar mark rounding situations**
- **Includes as many different manoeuvres as possible.**

**Set up:** Lay 3 Marks in an inverted V and position Coach Boat to form a diamond course. Start the exercise with a Gate start, the pathfinder ducking the committee boat to open the gate. Use a hook finish at the committee boat to end the exercise.

**Variations:** For a simpler version of this course, set a smaller diamond and set individual boats off at 30second intervals from the rib.

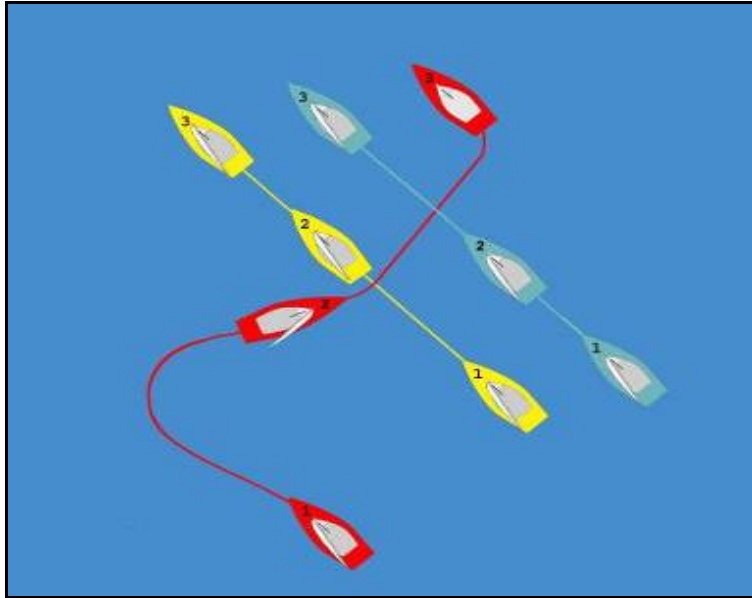
**Coaching Points:**

**Intermediate:** Try to get sailors to focus on routines for each manoeuvre. Pay particular attention to a tight exit on mark1 and the difficult port approach gybe set on mark 2. When sailing in a fleet, think ahead and prepare for possible attacking and defending opportunities while rounding marks.



## TACK AND DUCK (2+Boats)

INTERMEDIATE / ADVANCED



**Gear:** None.

**Description:** This simulates crossing opportunities and close contact ducking. Start with all boats on starboard tack in a tuning run formation with leeward boats slightly bow out. As soon as possible the bottom (leeward) boat must tack and then duck the boat on their hip. They must then tack back onto starboard to become the new holding boat. If using more than two boats the 'Ducker' may choose to cross boats but must always duck the top (furthest starboard) boat to ensure the exercise maintains its shape. Once a boat becomes the most leeward boat they must tack as soon as possible and the exercise keeps rolling

### Aims:

- To practice generating space to tack, reducing prep time before bearing away and judging crossing opportunities.

**Set Up:** line up on starboard tack in a tuning run pattern. Possibly use a rabbit start to line everyone up.

**Variations:** Vary the focus by placing more emphasis on crossing rather the ducking boats and visa versa. You can use it to simulate lanes where you are trying to get an opportunity to cross or where you are being held out i.e. Port Lay lines or directly after starting.

### Coaching Points:

**Intermediate:** Try to force 'Duckers' to be proactive in generating gaps to duck or cross the 'Holding' boat. This will reduce the lead in time, speed up the whole exercise and increase the difficulty.

**Advanced:** Pinching prior to the duck will help protect your lane if you have boats to leeward ducking the same starboard tacker.



**Gear: 4 Marks (fixed or unfixed) 2 Boats**

**Description:** A cross between Follow my Leader and Match Racing with one boat shadowing his or her partner while keeping the gap to a minimum. The lead boat must stay within a preset area but can sail any course they wish for 3 minutes. The boats then switch places a repeat the exercise.

**Aims:**

- **To improve Boat Handling Routines**
- **Reduce the time taken to react to other boats through better communication.**

**Set up:** Lay four or more buoys in close proximity either in a square or at random.

**Variations:** Introduce a rule that allows the chase boat to win the match by overtaking the lead boat thus scoring a point. The lead boat wins a match leading for the full 3 minutes with the first to 3points winning the tie.

**Coaching Points:**

**Intermediate:** Pinpoint the area where the biggest comparative gains or losses are made by using the relative distance between the two boats. Then compare techniques and discuss where improvements can be made.

**Advanced:** Focus on boats that fall out of set routines when pressure is applied. Use the video to analyse why this occurred.



### Gear: Coach Boat & 2 Marks

**Description:** After the start, boats must complete a minimum of 4 tacks before reaching the Rib at the midpoint. They must then perform a 360 around the rib to port (completing the tack) then perform another 4 tacks before the windward mark. After the top mark they will need to do a minimum of 3 gybes before dropping the kite and doing a 360 around the Rib again. After re-hoisting they will need to do 3 more gybes before rounding the leeward mark to starboard and completing one lap.

### Aims:

- **Fitness**
- **Boat handling and penalty practice.**
- **Compresses the fleet together, increases pressure and forces mistakes.**

**Set up:** Lay a short course with a single leeward mark. Position the Rib as the starboard end of the Start line and run a 3minute sequence. After the Gun, motor up to the mid-point of the course and hold position as the middle mark.

### Variations:

Option 1: Set boats off individually.

Option 2: Use a 30 second interval between starters with the aim being to overtake the boat in front.

Sailing boats individually will mean the exercise is process driven working towards performing the manoeuvres well. In a race situation

**Top Tips:** For lower ability groups try setting boats off individually at 30second intervals. Moving the rib further up the course for the first 360 will also give the fleet time to settle.

### Coaching Points:

**Intermediate:** A common fault is to rush the exercise and put the teamwork under even more pressure. Throwing routines out the window when boats meet is a symptom of panic decisions.

**Advanced:** Refocus the sailors on the five essentials as they become more able to cope with the pressure of the exercise.



**Gear:** Coach Boat, Red & Green Flags

**Description:** Boats set off at 30second intervals, in a pair or in groups of 3. They will then round left windward mark, rib, right windward in that order. All windward marks to be rounded to port, with the coach indicating the leeward rounding using red and green flags. Boats will continue to sail the course until they hear repeated whistles when rounding the rib.



**Aim:**

- Rehearses and refines every type of mark rounding in a pressure environment.
- Can also be used as an overtaking drill based on winning overlaps on the approach to a mark.
- Simulates a heavily biased leeward mark rounding involving a 270degree turn.

**Set up:** Lay 2 windward Marks 2-3 hundred meters apart. Position the rib midway between the two marks approximately 100 meters to leeward. The Rib will become the leeward mark but can remain mobile. A good tip when setting the Rib position, get a boat to sail on the Lay line to each mark. Then re-set near the lay lines.

**Variations:** This works really well as an elimination series with heats determining a final of three boats. To start, get the boats to circle the rib and release them when you deem it fair. Only the lead boat progress to the final although alternative formats can be used depending on group size.

**Top tips:** Make the sailors work. If they can still talk after this one then the course is too long!

**Coaching Points:**

**Intermediate:** Sailors need to stay flexible with downwind angle. When debriefing, discuss shifting from soak mode to fully arced up!

**Advanced:** Think ahead about gaining the overlap for the next mark rounding. Like chess, the move might be set-up some time before, in this case at the previous mark rounding.



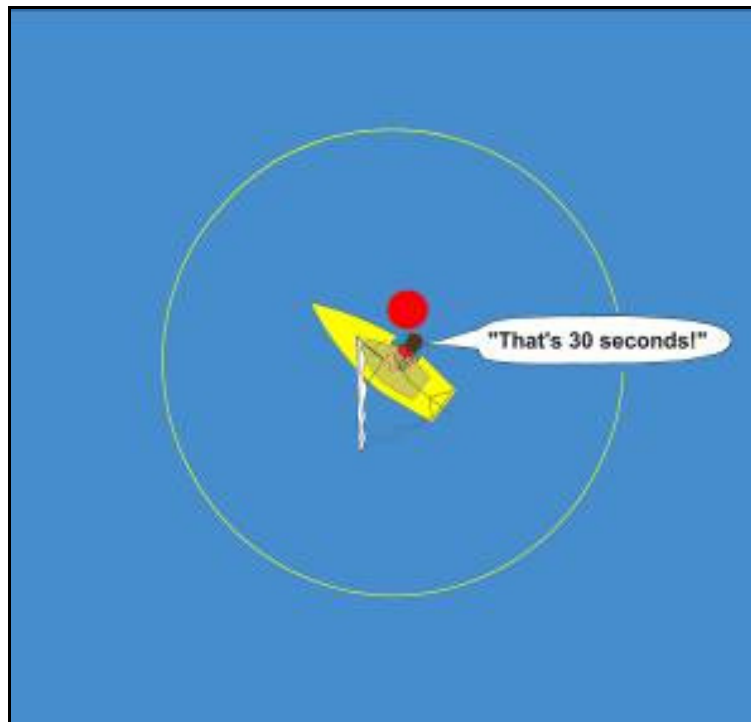
# SLOW SPEED CONTROL



**Slow speed training is a key element of good starting and also highlights the key skills required to control the boat without the rudder. Don't forget that trim, balance all work in opposite when going astern as well as rudder control. These exercises are excellent for developing a thorough understanding of the essentials of boat handling.**

## HOLDING STATION (1Boat)

START



### Gear: 1 Mark

**Description:** This is a simple boat handling exercise that requires a boat to sail up next to a mark and hold position on starboard tack for as long as possible. This requires the sailor/sailors to hold the boat stationary minimising slippage and fore and aft movement. The timer starts when the boat takes up a position next to the mark and finishes when the drift beyond a pre-determined distance.

### Aims:

- To introduce the concept of slippage
- Improves slow speed boat handling
- Simulates holding a position on a start line.

**Set-up:** None

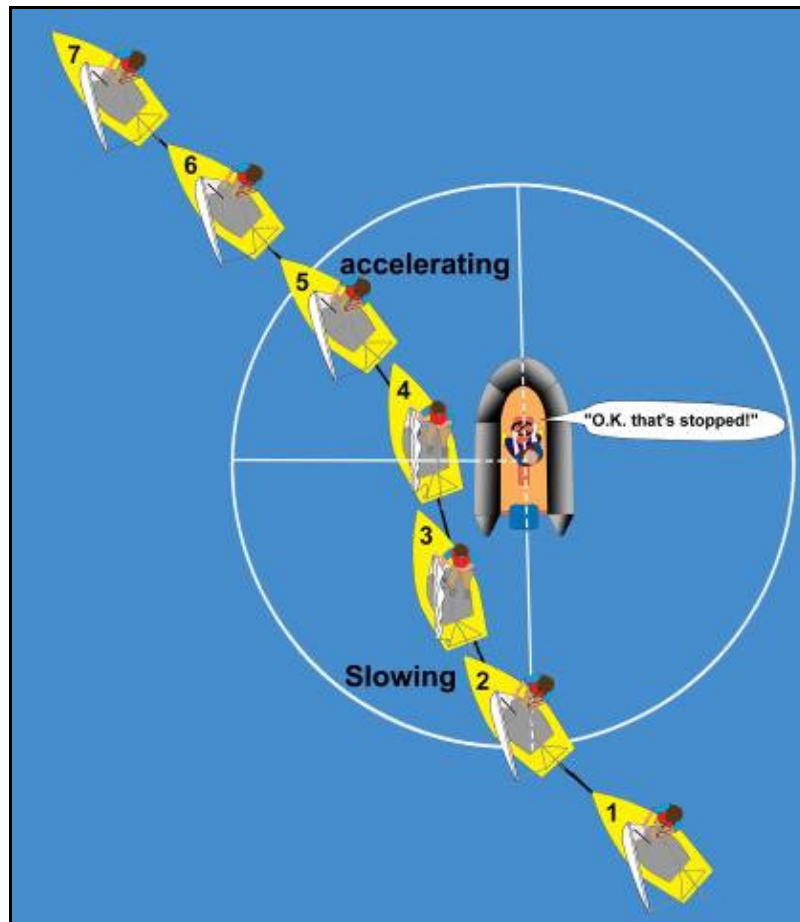
**Variation:** Use different approaches: from behind, reaching in from above and tacking in from underneath. Add acceleration into the exercise by getting boats to hold position until the whistle is blown. Then the boats must accelerate to max speed.

### Coaching Points:

**START:** Get the sailors to try and minimise slippage. With the different approaches highlight how the boat carries momentum and how this affects you approach up to the mark.

## THE DRIVE THROUGH (1+ Boats)

INTERMEDIATE



### Gear: Coach Boat

**Description:** The aim of the game is for the focus boat to sail into the 'Drive through', come to a dead stop next to the coach boat, and then accelerate out as fast as possible (within the rules). When one boat clears the circle the next boat can start. The advantage of this drill is that the coach can provide instant feedback while the boat is in the circle.

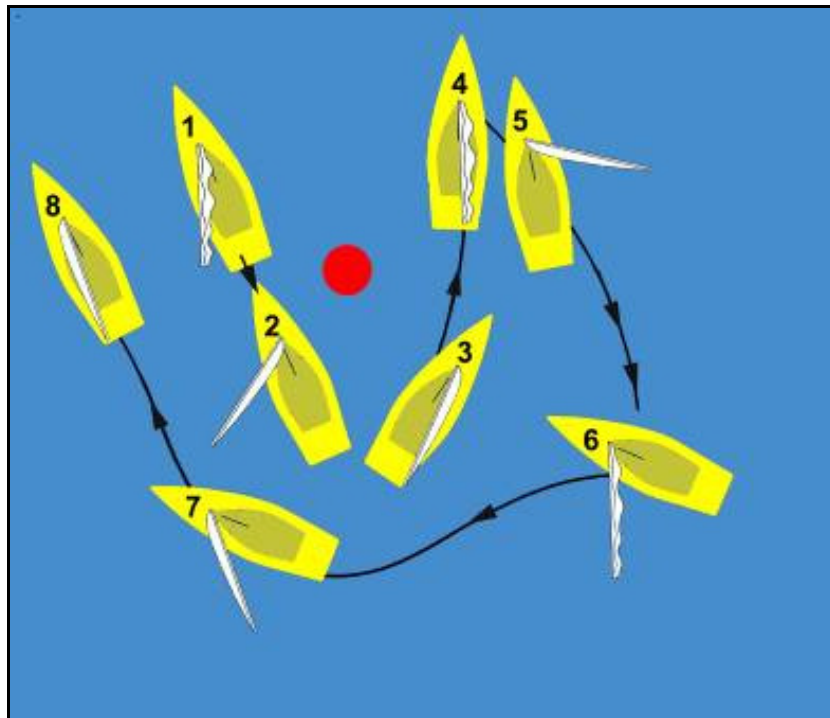
### Aims:

- Fun, Fast and Multi Skilled
- Teaches rapid changes in speed.
- Can be applied to starting situations.

**Set-up:** When running this drill with more than one boat get the fleet to hold position in a line outside a 3-6 boat length circle. When a boat exits the drive through the next boat can start. Once a boat exits the drive through they re-join the end of the queue for seconds.

### Coaching Points:

**Intermediate:** Here we're focused on cutting time and distance to full stop and time and distance to max speed. Video each boat individually and comment on the radius of the imaginary circle.



**Gear: 1 Mark**

**Description:** Start, holding position next to a mark on starboard tack. Initiate and control a reverse staying as close to the mark as possible before exiting on port. Sheet on and sail forward so you are next to the mark and stop. Hold position before doing the same process in reverse.

**Aims:**

- **Slow speed boat-handling**
- **Simulates moving in and out of position on the starting line.**
- **Excellent for communication in two man boats.**

**Set Up:** None.

**Variations:** Try performing the same exercise without initiating the reverse therefore retaining right of way. Shift the emphasis from staying close to the mark to speed from start position to end position.

**Coaching Focus:**

**INTERMEDIATE:** Look at using the sails to initiate and assist the reverse.

Backing will have different effect from on side to another.

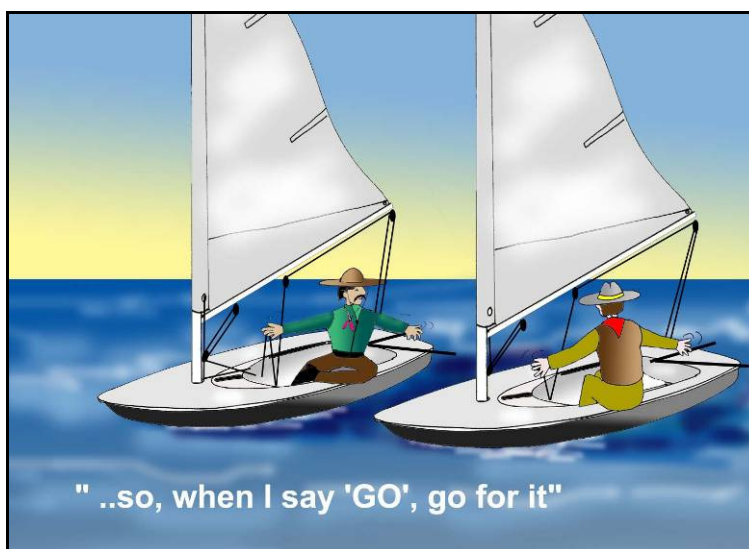
**ADVANCED:** Control is fundamental when reversing. Getting the bow at the right angle to the wind before backing the main will result in more consistent changes in direction. Boat Balance will also effect the direction a boat will want to reverse so highlight this in the debrief.



# ACCELERATION



**Slow speed skills are useless if you can't accelerate off the start line. This section deals how to achieve that speed**



**Description:** The name of the game is to have the best acceleration in the fleet and to test this all boats must be level before putting the pedal to the metal. There is a 1 minute rolling sequence for this exercise so the first gun is to line up, the seconds go and the third is stop. All boats should agree a time at which they start to accelerate, something like 6 seconds. At this point they should still be together as it's the bit after we're interested in. Once started the boats try to hold their lane until the next gun.

#### Aims:

- To practice the process of acceleration.
- To get used to holding lanes
- To get as many starts in as possible with minimum set up time.

**Set-Up:** Start by getting the group to line up and warn them before the first signal. Move the Coach boat to windward so the sailors gave a reference point and then sound the 1 minute. Keep the fleet in line by giving instructions and then video the start giving feedback after each cycle. Its essential to get the slower boats repositioned quickly so as not to disrupt the exercise.

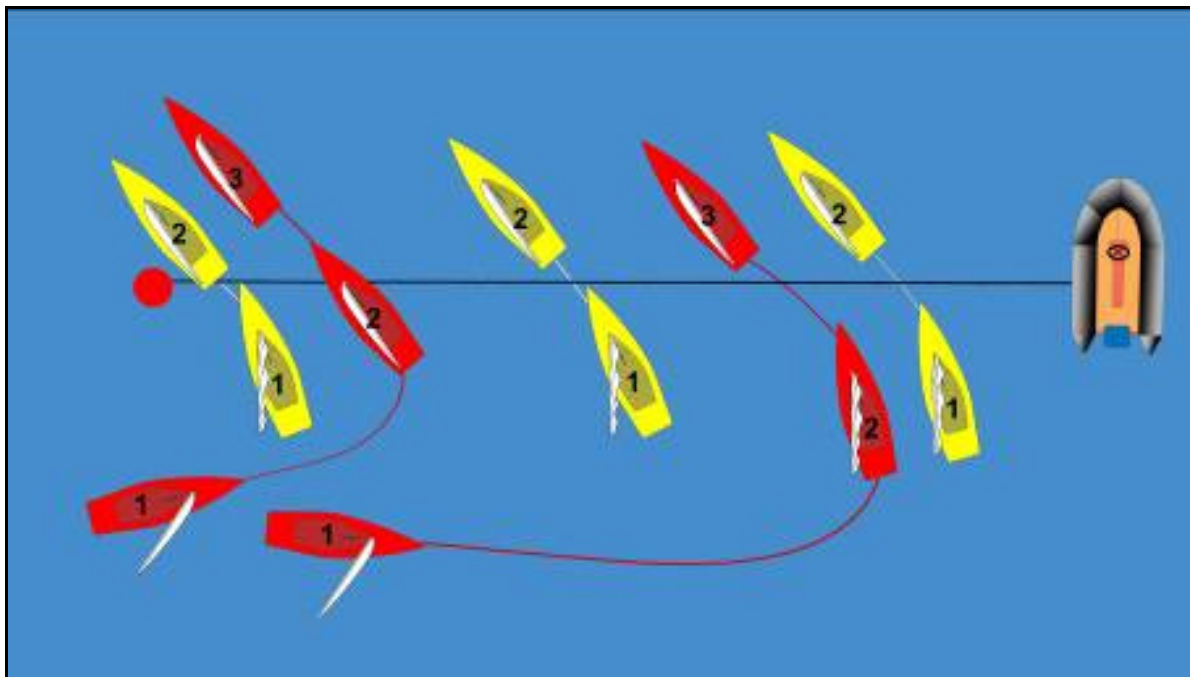
**Variations:** Start lower ability groups form a line behind the rib on. On the signal boats must harden-up onto a close-hauled course with those making ground forward being the best at accelerating. Try moving boats around after every start to remove any positional advantage.

#### Coaching Focus:

**Intermediate:** Compare individual techniques and discuss which are most effective in terms of time to max speed and height lost.

**Advanced:** Get boats to use a holding position closer to head to wind. Try changing the trigger time to 3 seconds to simulate being on transit, unable to go too early.





**Gear:** 2 Marks, Coach Boat and Video Camera.

**Description:** At 1 minute the focus boat enters the start area and holds position on the line. At the gun the boat accelerates to max speed at which point the crew raises a hand. The name of the game is to reach maximum speed as quickly as possible from a standing start.

**Aims:**

- To practice acceleration skills
- To create an awareness of the time needed to reach **full** speed
- To reduce time taken to reach max speed.

**Set-up:** Lay two marks 3 boat lengths apart and square to the wind. Set the coach boat up to leeward of the line and start a 3 minute rolling-clock. Give signals at 3, 1, and go. On the gun follow the focus boat until they reach full speed then return back to the line. The next boat enters the line on the following 1 minute signal.

**Variations:** Get the sailors to start with different amounts of flow and the foils to highlight the effect on acceleration. Try moving forward slightly, completely stationary and with slight sternway.

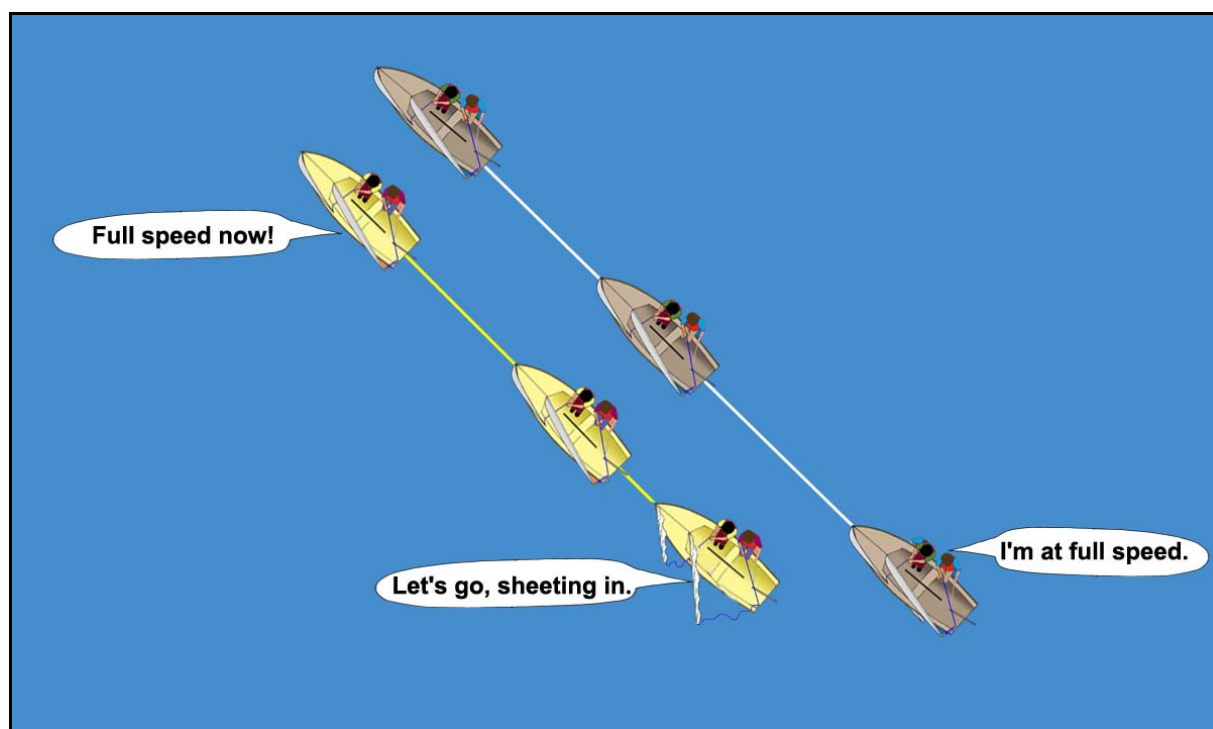
**Coaching Points:**

**Start:** Focus on consistency, roles in the boat and sail controls.

**Intermediate:** Compare relative techniques; try to reduce time to optimum speed.

## OUT OF THE BLOCKS (2+ Boats)

START / INTERMEDIATE



### Gear: 1 Mark, Coach Boat

**Description:** A paired starting exercise with one boat taking a timed run to the start line and the other starting from a stationary holding position 2 boat lengths behind the line. The boats will then continue to race until one has a clear advantage.

### Aims:

- To improve time and distance skills
- To develop acceleration skills of stationary boat.

**Set-up:** Lay a square line long enough for two boats. Run a rolling 3minute sequence. Select one boat to make a 30 second timed run into the start with the other holding position at two boat lengths. After each start get boats to switch positions.

**Variations:** This exercise can be run with more boats on the line taking a similar format to 'Hoverers and Hunters'.

### Coaching Points:

**START:** Focus on the skill of timed approaches. Get sailors to practice their run so that they can hit the line at full speed.

**INTERMEDIATE:** Compare relative techniques; try to reduce time to optimum speed.

# LINE STARTS



The next stage of skill development is applying them in a real scenario. This section looks at testing those starting skills and introducing the tactical considerations of one of the most important sections of the race.

## LINE STARTS (2+Boats)

START



**Gear:** 1 Mark, Coach Boat and Visual Signals (Battens, Flags or Hand Signals).

**Description:** A fundamental aspect of sailboat racing is the start. This basic exercise can be used at every level to test a variety of skills. There are several options for starting sequences. 5, 4, 1, Go! 3, 2, 1, Go! Or simply 2 minute rolling starts

### Aims:

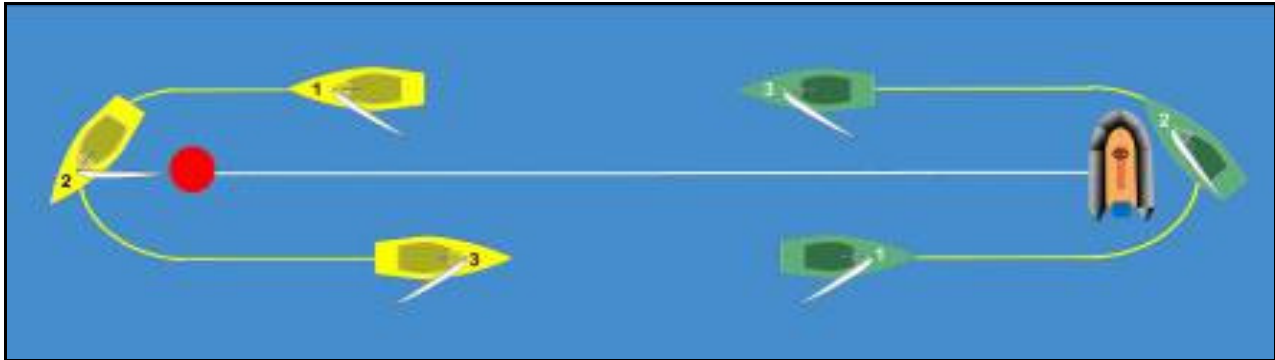
- An opportunity to practice all aspects of startling from taking transits, to slow-speed boat handling and accelerating.

**Set Up:** Lay a Start line of a length relative to the ability and size of group.

**Variations:** Depending on the type of start you are focusing on you may choose to lay an even line or one with a port or starboard end bias. The length of line will also depend on the focus of the drill. Shorter lines test slow-speed boat handling where as longer lines shift the focus onto positioning, approaches and acceleration.

### Coaching Points:

**START:** looking at identifying possible weak areas in the groups starting that can then be addresses using more specific exercises. Try giving the better starters in the group set positions or approaches to make the best of. This will handicap them while retaining a positive outcome from the exercise.

**Gear: Pin end and Coach Boat.**

**Description:** Musical chairs on Water. Sailors need to sail around the Start line leaving the ends to port. By keeping the sails set after tacking round the starboard end they will be able to tell if they are sailing towards or away from the favoured end. When the coach blows the whistle they need to sail to the favoured end as fast as possible. Fastest boat to the correct end wins.

**Aims:**

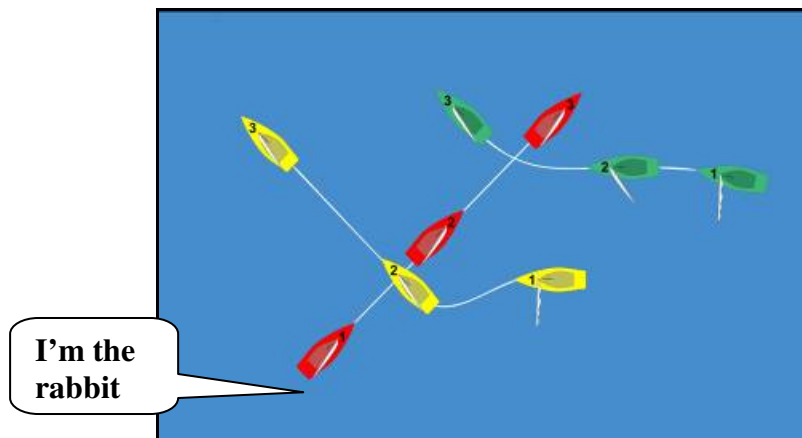
- **Good introduction to line bias**
- **Gets sailors to use the RYA technique for assessing bias.**
- **Adds an element of competition to the exercise.**

**Set-up:** Start with a 10degree bias to the starboard end and shift the bias to the pin for the second start. As the fleet gets better at selecting the correct end of the line, make the line squarer to the wind and reduce the time between whistles 'stopping the music'.

**Variation:** Try turning the drill into a competition with one boat eliminated each round until you get to a two boat final. Make the line less biased each time and add an additional exercise so the fleet cannot cheat by watching you relay the line.

**Coaching Points:**

**Start:** Get the sailors to comment on why some lines are easier to judge than others? Discuss different methods of checking bias and their relative merits.



**Gear:** Ideally a Start Mark although it's not essential.

**Description:** This is basically a gate start without the fuss. The Rabbit or 'Pathfinder' sets off at a preset time (either using repeated whistles when they start their run or after a timed sequence. This effectively opens the gate allowing the boats to start by ducking his or her stern. When all boats have crossed the line the 'Rabbit' can tack on top of the fleet closing the gate.

#### Aims:

- To take the emphasis away from the start by giving all boats a potentially clear lane.
- To keep the fleet together when starting exercises
- Help improve judging closing speeds and approach Lay lines.

#### Set Up:

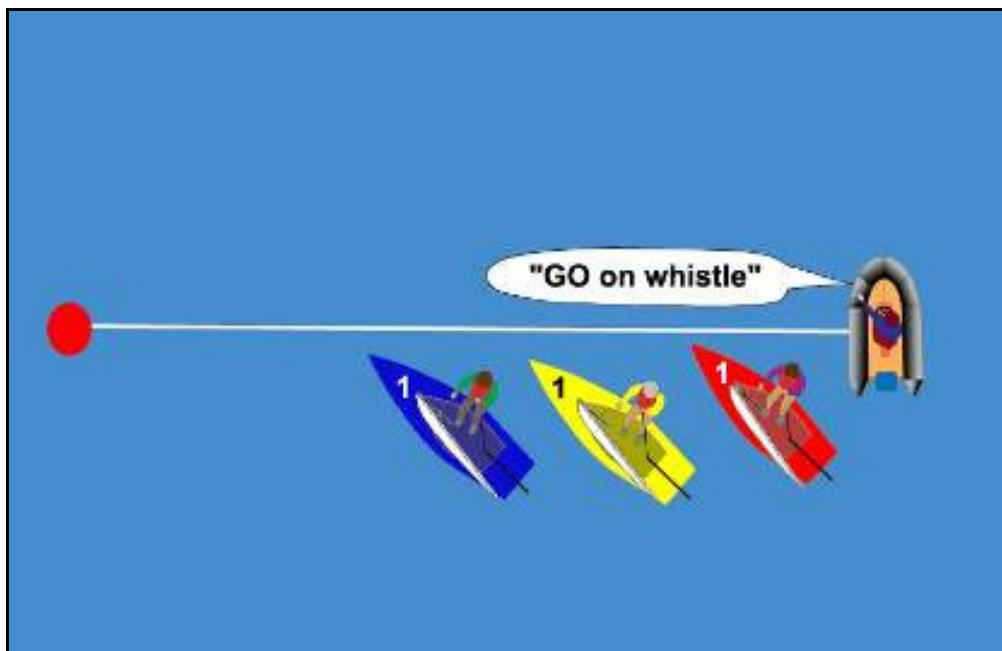
- Identify the Rabbit and get them Rabbit to sail on port
- All boats must duck the Rabbit on Starboard tack and then harden up onto a close-hauled course. The rabbit can tack back onto starboard when all boats have started, effectively 'closing the gate'.
- When one boat is clear ahead the fleet should stop and reposition for the next start.

**Variations:** The options here are what to do with the fleet after the start. You can use the exercise a means of starting a race or tuning run or simply recall the fleet when one boat has sailed over or crossed all the other boats.

**Top Tip:** When running this exercise for the first time use the rib as a guard boat to protect the rabbit from frisky starters.

#### Coaching Points:

**Start:** Time and distance. Judge the speed of the rabbit and decide when and where to accelerate from so you can cross behind on close-hauled course at max speed. Focus on boats that had a poor exit from the rabbit and decide if that was due to speed, poor judgement or being boxed by another boat prior to ducking the rabbit. **Intermediate:** Tactically it's about positioning and deciding whether you want to exit the gate early or late. Ask the sailors what the benefits would be and why?



#### Gear: 1 Mark and Coach Boat

**Description:** The name of the game is to be on the line with 30 seconds to go and be prepared for the gun to go at any time between 30 seconds before start time and 30 seconds after start time. Boats must hold position and then respond to the gun with the winner being the boat clear ahead when the start is recalled.

#### Aims:

- Gets the fleet up onto the line good and early.
- Improves boat control
- Helps improve acceleration from a standstill
- Responding to external start cues not your own.

**Set up:** Lay a square line first of an adequate length for the fleet to get a clear start or slightly shorter. Use a 3,1,sequence and fire the Go when you feel the time is right. Go early if the fleet is late in lining up or late if they look to be too close to the line. Use a round the ends rule and disqualify anyone who is over and does not go back.

**Variations:** Try the exercise with different line biases to reinforce the need to get in early or get the approach transit right.

#### Coaching Points:

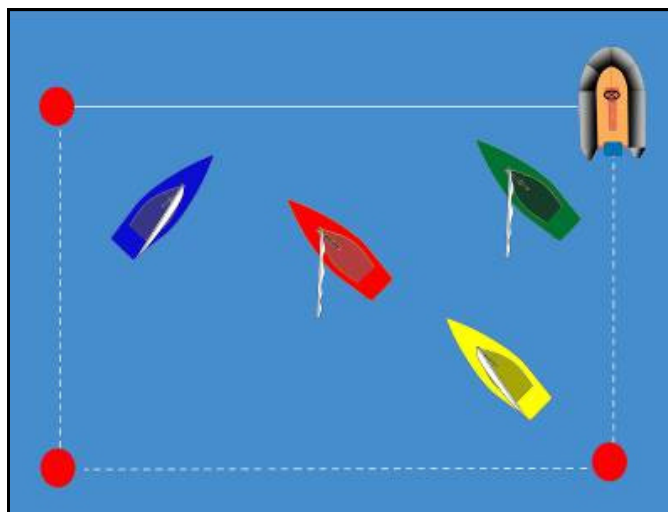
**Start:** Get them on the line early, push sailors to get a front row start even if they're boat handling isn't up to it.

**Intermediate:** Link the skill of responding to the whistle to going when the boat to windward accelerates. These external cues call for good awareness and reactions and having the boat 'ready to accelerate' and not just stationary.



## BOX STARTS (2+ Boats)

START / INTERMEDIATE



**Gear:** 3 Marks, Optional Windward Mark, and Start-Boat.

**Description:** The rules of the exercise are that all boats must be within the box formed by the marks and the committee boat from a pre-determined time. Any boats to sail outside the box during this period will be disqualified. To finish the exercise you can re-call the fleet after 1 minute, wait until one boat is clear ahead or use a windward mark and finish at the start line.

### Aims:

- Compresses boats into a smaller area simulating larger fleets.
- Puts an emphasis on slow-speed boat handling.
- Encourages boats to start from a stationary holding position, improving acceleration.

**Set Up:** Set the line square to the wind of a suitable length so that all boats can fit comfortably on the line. Lay 2 additional marks, downwind of the pin and the Committee Boat. This forms a box the size of which is dictated by the ability of group and the class of dinghy.

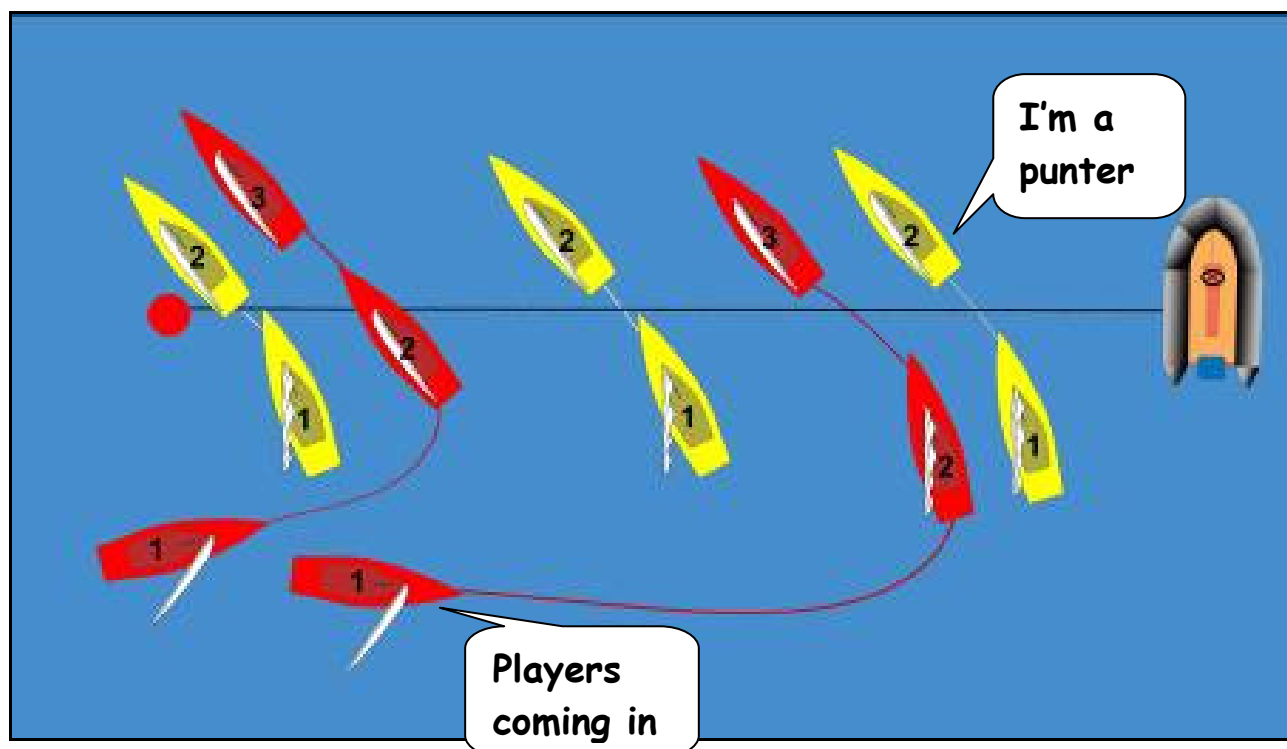
**Variations:** As the ability of the group improves bring the two box marks up towards the start line to increase the difficulty. Moving one box mark is also a good variation as this can simulate less room to manoeuvre at one end of the line. Varying the time that the box is 'closed' is another option. The more time in the box, the harder the exercise.

### Coaching Points:

**Start:** Get boats to sit out and watch if they find the boat control difficult.

**Intermediate:** Be assertive with penalties so the fleet adheres to the rules correctly!





**Gear:** Pin end and a Coach Boat.

**Description:** Split the fleet into port tack 'Players' and Starboard tack 'Punters'. The 'Punters' must be on the line with 2 minutes to go with the players released at 1 minute from the pin. Players can either start early, tacking into to gap to start on starboard, or time their run to port tack the start at some point along the line. The start can either be recalled or the fleet can race to windward mark before finishing at the start-finish line.

**Aims:**

- Practice different port attack approaches
- Teaches Starboard tack boats to defend their gaps.
- Boat Handling, Time and Distance and Acceleration.

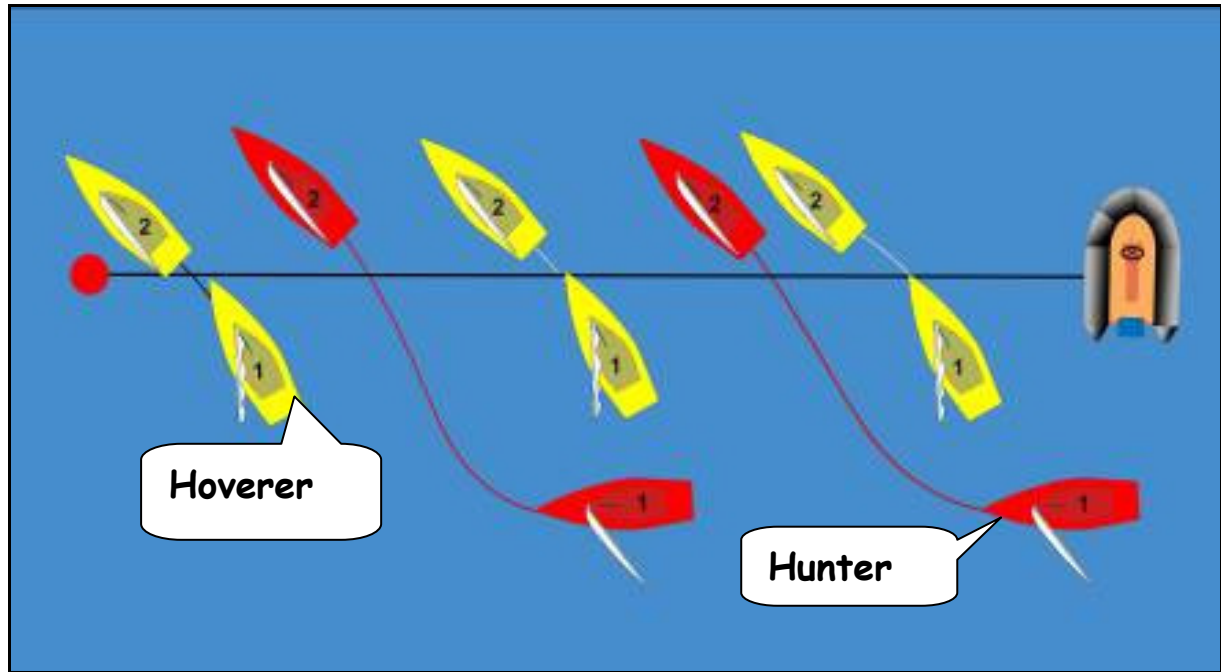
**Set-up:** Start with a square line with enough room for the fleet to get a clean start. Decide on who's who and then run two starts, one even and one biased before switching over roles.

**Variations:** Release the 'Punters' at 15 seconds from the pin to cut out the tacking option.

**Coaching Points:**

**Intermediate:** Encourage sailors to use different approaches in order to develop a variety of starting options and their strategic impact in the race.

## HOVERERS & HUNTERS (3+Boats) **INTERMEDIATE** / **ADVANCED**



**Gear:** 1 Mark and Coach Boat

**Description:** Split the fleet into 'Hoverers' and 'Hunters'. The Hoverers must get onto the line at 1 minute and then hold position until start time. The Hunters must enter the line in the final 30 seconds, ideally hitting the line at max speed. The Hoverers may block the Hunters from entering the line but they must do so within the rules. The exercise continues until one boat is clear ahead or tacks and crosses the fleet.

### **Aims:**

- **Simulates late approaches onto the line and helps sailors to recognise gaps on the line with potential and those that are high risk.**
- **Practice for attacking and defending strategies on the line.**

**Set-up:** Start with a square line with enough room for the fleet to get a clean start. Decide on who's who and then run two starts, one even and one biased before switching over roles.

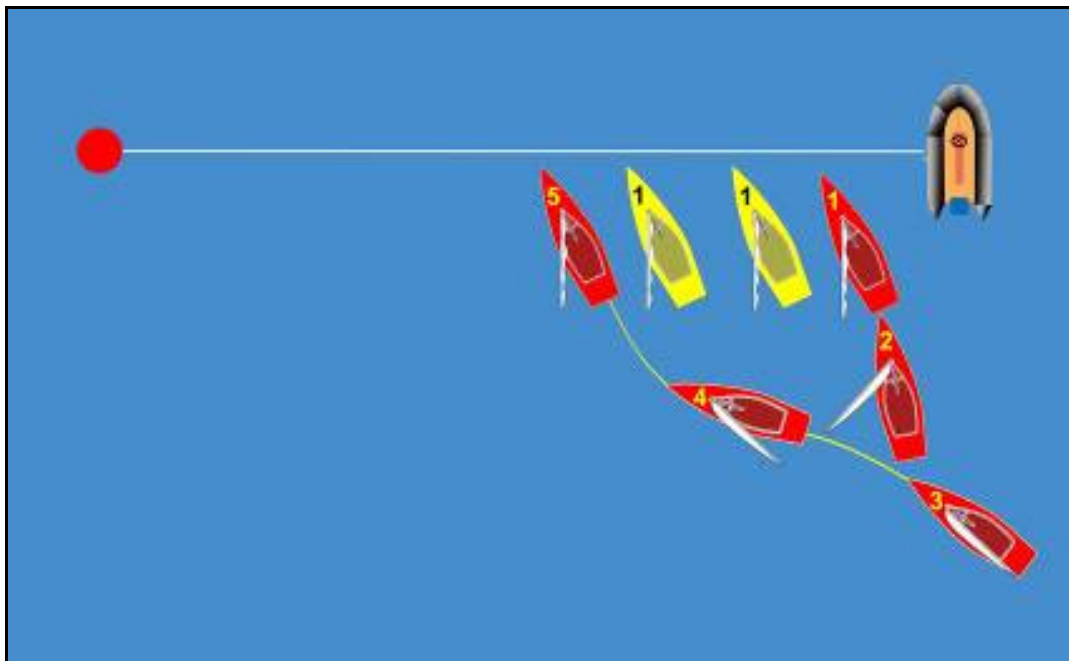
**Variations:** Change the rules so hoverers cannot drop their bow past close-hauled and the hunters cannot slow down after they pull the trigger. This shifts the emphasis onto acceleration for the Hoverers and time and distance for the Hunters

### **Coaching Points:**

**Intermediate:** Video the starts and assess safe and high-risk approaches and highlight alternatives.

**Advanced:** Look at defending and attacking options.

## REVERSE TRAVERSE (3+ BOATS) **START** / **INTERMEDIATE**



**Gear:** 1 Mark and Coach Boat

**Description:** Starting at the committee boat end, get all boats to hold position approximately 1 boat width apart. On the first whistle get the top boat to reverse out of line and sail behind the other boats before lining up again as the leeward boat. The next whistle can then be blown signalling the new top boat to exit the line and the process is repeated.

**Aims:**

- **Simulates repositioning on the Start line.**
- **Good boat-handling practice**

**Set up:** Lay a square line approximately 50 meters in length. Signal the fleet to line up at the starboard end and when happy with the positioning start the drill

**Variation:** The exercise can be repeated in the opposite direction by getting the top boat to double tack up the line with each boat doing the same on the subsequent whistles. Maybe mix the exercise up so one signal means move up and the other move down.

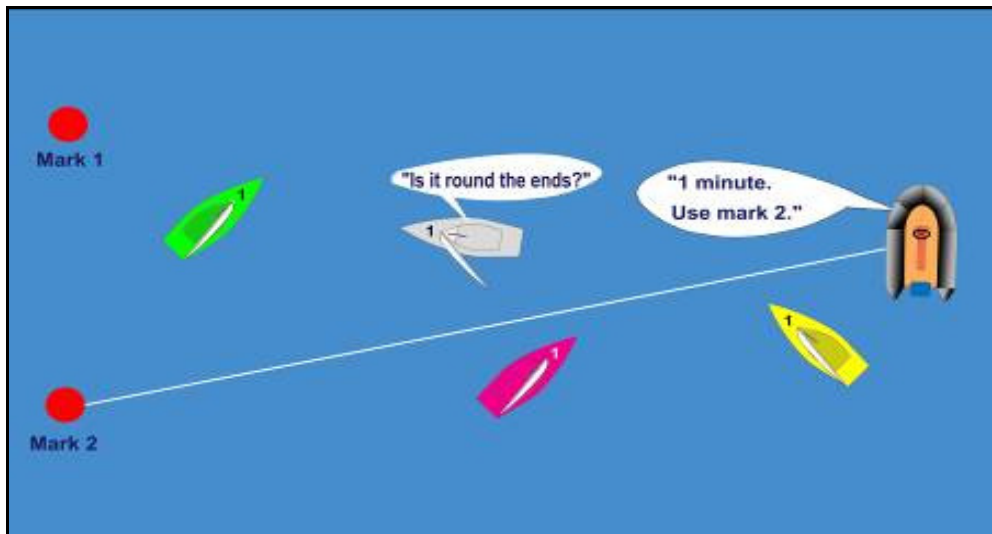
**Coaching Points:**

**Start:** Ensure boats avoid infringing by correctly keeping clear. Video teams boat-control when initiating the reverse.

**Intermediate:** Place and emphasis on the speed of manoeuvring, particularly highlight teamwork, sail trim and boat balance to improve control.

## MISTERY MARK (3+Boats)

INTERMEDIATE / ADVANCED



**Gear: 2-3 Marks & Coach Boat.**

**Description:** Lay a starting line with two marks at the port end. The idea is that Mark 1 should provide a starboard end biased line with Mark 2 favouring the port end. At the 1 minute, or with 30 seconds till start time, announce which Mark will be the pin end of the line. This will require the fleet to reposition to take account of the line bias. The race will then start under standard rules and can then be recalled or finished using a windward / leeward course finishing at the start line. If using the recall option, let the fleet go until one boat had either crossed the fleet or is clear ahead.

**Aims:**

- **This is a great exercise for encouraging flexibility in starting.**
- **Sailors have to make the best of given starting situation.**
- **Simulates starting in shifty conditions and can also simulate repositioning when losing a space on the line.**

**SET-UP:** When first running this exercise try to lay the two lines with a 10degree bias in either direction. This will give enough separation to clearly define each line. Make the line long enough so there is sufficient room for manoeuvring and starting for the entire fleet. If the line becomes overly biased to one mark, simply reposition the start boat.

**Variations:** Try changing the period boats have to reposition from 1 minute to 30 seconds. You may also say that the end of the line you choose prior to revealing the Pin is the end you must start from. This will reinforce the skills of starting from a non-favoured end.

**Tips:** Try to video attacking and defending scenarios that occur during the final 30 seconds

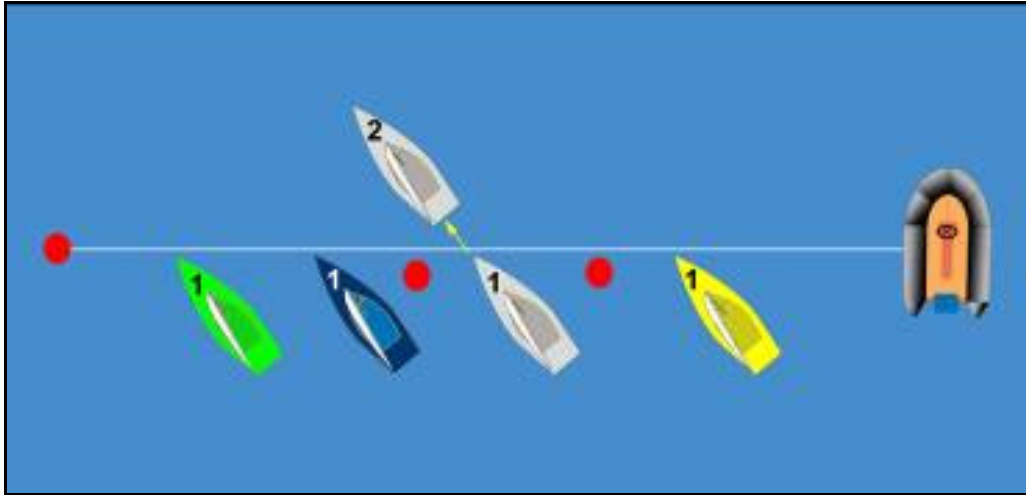
**Coaching Points:**

**Intermediate:** Decisive decision-making and spatial awareness are the skills required for reposition pre-start.

**Advanced:** What's the best solution re-positioning and risk not getting front row or changing gears off current position.

## PRIVATE GATE (3+ Boats)

START / INTERMEDIATE



**Gear:** 3 Marks, Optional Windward Mark and Start Boat

**Description:** The rules of this exercise are pretty simple. Two extra marks are laid on the Start line and one boat is nominated as the 'Gate Keeper'. Only he or she can start between these marks meaning that all other boats must start in the free areas either side of the gate. The start can then be recalled once there is a clear winner or after rounding a windward mark and returning to the start / finish line.

### Aims:

- **Focuses on one Boat**
- **Gives them the opportunity to have a clear start.**
- **Practices planning approaches to set positions on the line.**

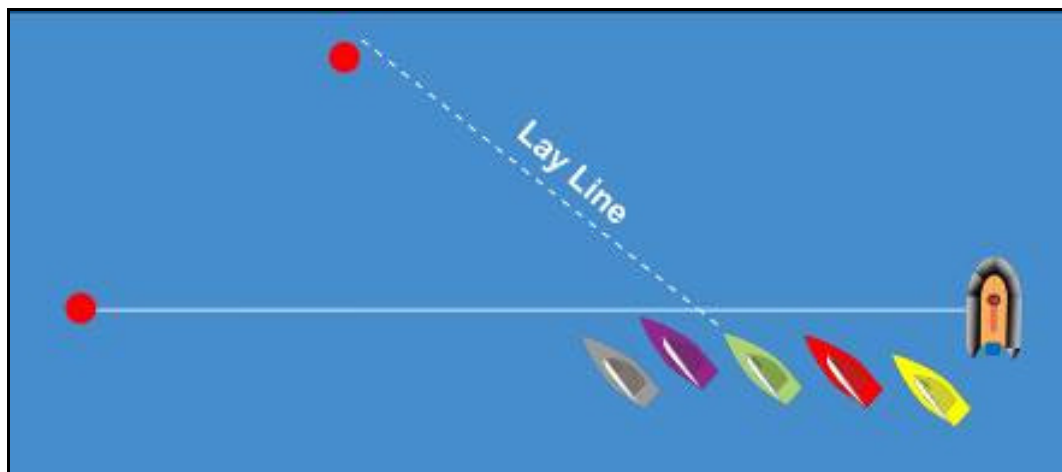
**Set-Up:** Lay a line long enough so there is sufficient room for the fleet to get a clear start. Now position two marks in the middle of the line 1 ½ boat length apart.. These can either be on the line or if you do not want them to act as a line sights lay them a boat length behind.

**Variations:** By shifting the position of the gate towards the favoured end you can ensure the 'Gate Keeper' gets an even better start. Alternatively increase the difficulty of the exercise by getting the 'free' boats to try and use the rules to block the 'Gate Keeper' from getting to their position on the line. This could be given a competitive element by awarding 1 point to the 'Gate Keeper' for starting in the gate, 2 for winning the start from the gate and 1 point to the fleet if he or she is blocked out. The highest scorer after a full rotation wins.

**Tips:** Adapt the gate to the skill level of the individual. Try and turn it into a personal handicap system making it easier for less able sailors.

### Coaching Points:

**Start:** Focus on approach transits.



### Gear: 1 Mark & Coach Boat

**Description:** Give each member of the group a number with number 1 at the pin end and the highest number closest to the committee boat. The fleet must start in sequence with any boat out of position at start time disqualified. The winner is the first boat to cross or sail over the fleet. Once the start has been won the boats can return to the line to re-start the sequence. Each boat must now move down the line one place with the bottom boat moving up to start next to the committee boat.

### Aims:

- To practise starting out of position.
- Changing gear to suit your starting position relative to the fleet or bias.
- Reinforces the importance of flexibility in starting.

**Set-Up:** Start by laying a square line, long enough for the fleet to get a clear start. Ensure you perform one complete cycle with all boats starting from all positions with an unbiased line.

**Variations:** This start is best used for practising biased line starts but the bias must remain the same for one complete cycle. Try pin or committee boat favours but the greater the biased the smaller the lanes become so be aware of the groups ability.

### Coaching Points:

**Starts:** There's more than one place to start. Get sailors to discuss how this might effect their starting in big fleets.

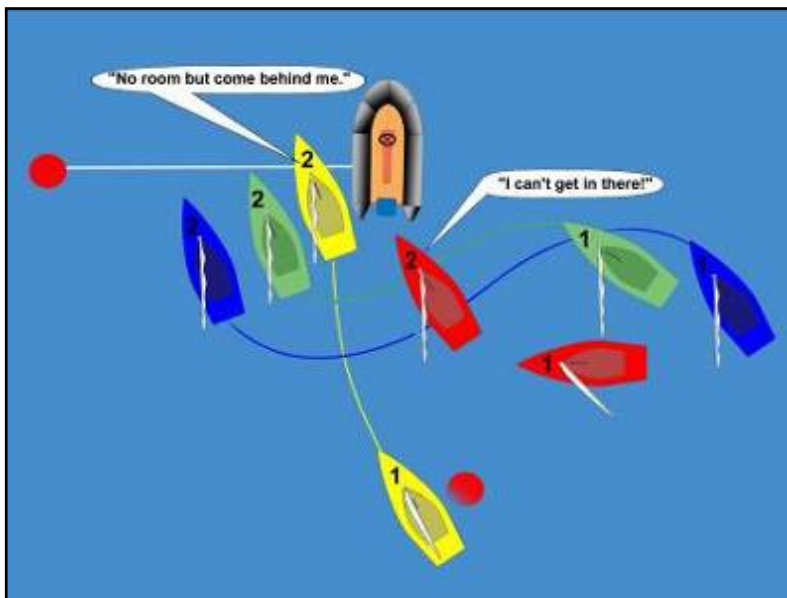
**Intermediate:** Re-enforce the need to change gear relative to your position on the fleet and the line bias. Going for height or speed at the right time will be the difference between winning and loosing the start.

**Advanced:** The greater the bias the smaller the lanes so lane management and generating or defending space pre-start is critical.

## BLOCK THE BARGER (3+ Boats) **INTERMEDIATE** / **ADVANCED**

**Gear: 3 Marks and Committee Boat.**

**Description:** For this drill one boat is elected the 'Lay-line legend'. At the 2minute signal, they must enter the start area from the approach marker and must try to win the committee boat. The remaining boats must remain to the right of the committee boat until the 'Legend' has entered the start area. At this point they must pass between the CB and the approach mark with the aim being to get the best start possible.



**Aims:**

- To reinforces the importance of approach transits.
- Highlights options for boats high of the approach transit.
- Attacking and defending strategies
- Rule observance

**Set up:** Lay a Start line long enough for the entire fleet and lay an approach mark on the committee boats starboard lay-line 25-30 meters down. Get a boat to sail on close-hauled up to the committee boat to assist in laying this mark. Either lay a windward mark 100meters to windward or recall the start. Ideally each boat must have a chance to play the 'legend' so recalls may be a better option for larger groups. The sequence is 3, 2, 1, Go. Repeat as soon as possible selecting a new 'legend' either by rotation or as the last boat in each race.

**Variations:** Moving the approach mark will tend to spread out or compress the 'Bargers' making the exercise easier or more difficult. Also try varying the time the 'Bargers' are allowed to enter the start area.

**Coaching Points:**

**Intermediate:** Highlight how getting the starboard transit right will improve your defending options. Also reinforce the options for boats high of the approach line.

**Advanced:** All about predicting the actions of others. Seeing scenarios before they occur and pre-empting them.



## SEQUENTIAL STARTS (3+ Boats)

**START/INTERMEDIATE/  
ADVANCED**



### **Gear: 1 Mark and a Start Boat**

**Description:** Give each member of the group a number with number 1 at the committee boat end and the highest number closest to the pin. The fleet must start in sequence with any boat out of position at start time disqualified. The winner is the first boat to cross or sail over the fleet. Once the start has been won the boats can return to the line to re-start the sequence. Each boat must now move down the line one place with the bottom boat moving up to start next to the committee boat.

### **Aims:**

- **To practise starting out of position.**
- **Changing gear to suit your starting position relative to the fleet or bias.**
- **Reinforces the importance of flexibility in starting.**

**Set-Up:** Start by laying a square line, long enough for the fleet to get a clear start. Ensure you perform one complete cycle with all boats starting from all positions with an unbiased line.

**Variations:** This start is best used for practising biased line starts but the bias must remain the same for one complete cycle. Try pin or committee boat favours but the greater the biased the smaller the lanes become so be aware of the groups ability.

### **Coaching Points:**

**Starts:** There's more than one place to start. Get sailors to discuss how this might effect their starting in big fleets.

**Intermediate:** Re-enforce the need to change gear relative to your position on the fleet and the line bias. Going for height or speed at the right time will be the difference between winning and losing the start.

**Advanced:** The greater the bias the smaller the lanes so lane management and generating or defending space pre-start is critical.

# SAILING TO WINDWARD



**The better the group understands the rules and set-up of the exercises covered in this section the more effective they will become. The best way to achieve this is to use 'Walk Through' simulations on shore and only progress onto the water once all members understand what is expected of them.**



**Gear:** 2 Marks and a Coach Boat.

**Description:** The rules are simple. Start, race to the windward mark, round it to port and return to the finish.

**Aims:**

- **Introduced Course Bias to strategy.**
- **Requires sailors to change modes of sailing to suit individual lanes**
- **Establishes the favoured end may not be the best place to start.**

**Set-up:** Start with a square line, with the windward mark 200 meters to windward and 20 degrees to the left of the true wind direction. Run a 3, 1, Go, start sequence and then finish the race at the Start-finish line before re-setting and going back into the sequence.

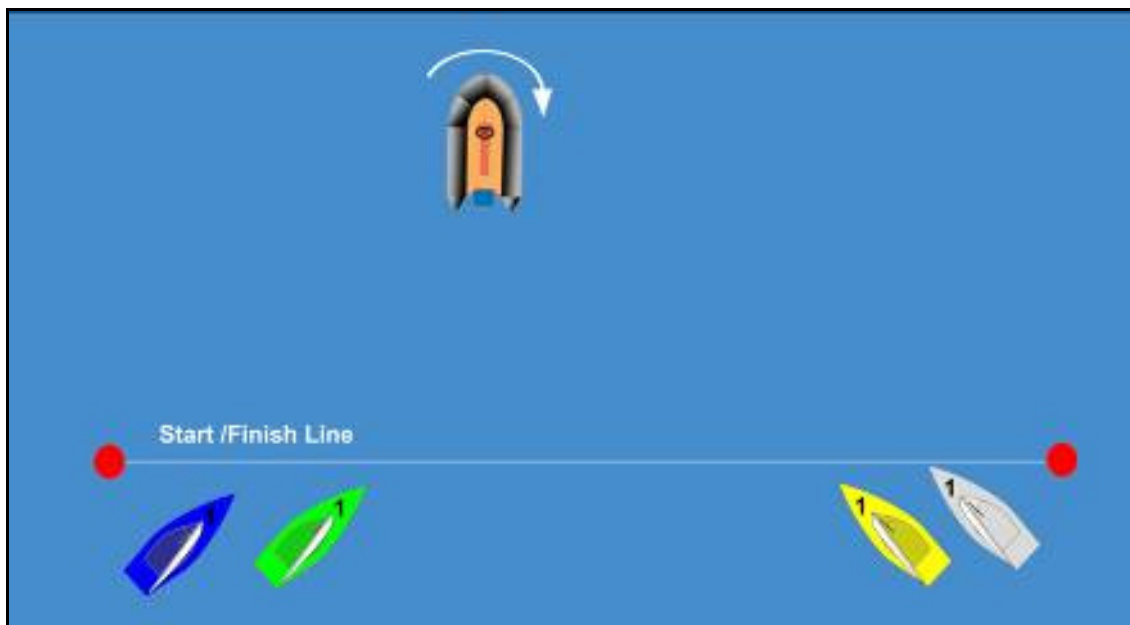
**Variations:** Try setting the course with the course biased to port and the line to starboard and visa versa.

**Coaching Points:**

**Start:** Reinforce how the sailors that reached the windward mark first may not have started at the favoured end of the line. Ask question as to why this is the case.

**Intermediate:** Be aware of tacking options before you get too close to lay lines.

Show a port bias course becomes congested on port lay lines and that a starboard bias tends to cause the fleet over-stands the starboard lay as boat search for clear lanes.



**Gear: 2 Marks and Committee Boat.**

**Description:** Boats must line up between the two start marks on either the port lay for the coach boat or the starboard lay. At a preset start time boats sail towards the coach boat looking to round to port and return to the start-finish line. Boats must observe the racing rules and aim to be first home. Boats then rotate to the opposite lay line and repeat the exercise.

**Aims:**

- **Judging Lay lines**
- **Pro-active decision making when boats meet.**
- **Rules**
- **Simulates Championship windward marks rounding.**

**Set up:** Lay 2 marks approximately 100 meters apart. Allocate a lay line to each member of the group and start a rolling 3minute timer. Motor 50meters to windward in the middle of the course and hold position. Film the boats as they approach and comment on situations as they occur.

**Variations:** Moving the rib to port or starboard will shift the advantage to one lay line changing the scenario. By moving further to windward you can make all the boats tack and create new situations and outcomes.

**Coaching Points:**

**Start:** Look around, communicate in the boat and think ahead.

**Intermediate:** Look at changing your mode of sailing when crossing or ducking boats.

## CROSS THE CENTRE LINE (1+Boats) **START** / **INTERMEDIATE**

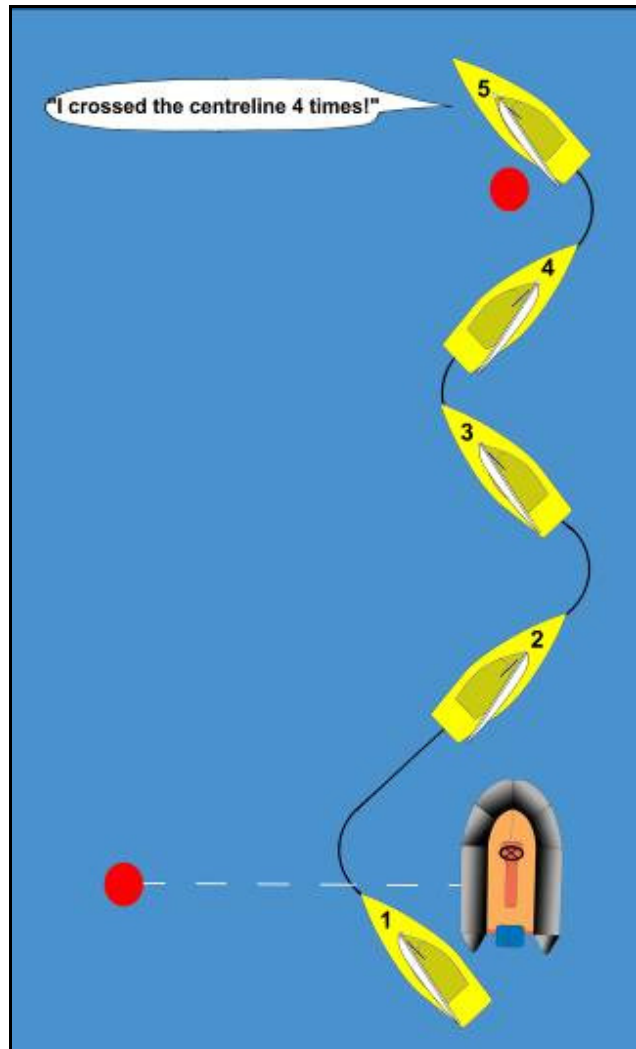
### Gear: 2 Marks and a Coach Boat

**Description:** The aim of the exercise is to get over to the centreline of the course as soon as possible after starting and then sail up the middle of the course crossing the centreline as many times as possible before the windward mark. The boat that crosses the centreline most is deemed the winner.

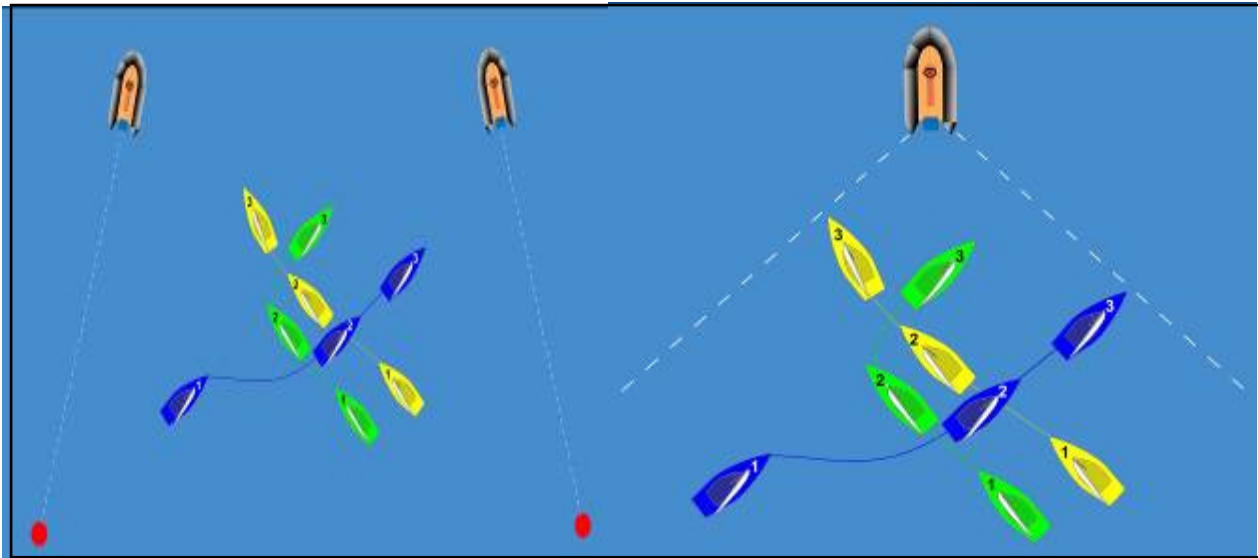
### Aims:

- Reinforces the benefits of sailing on the middle of the course
- Improves awareness of course position relative to the centreline
- Stops sailors hit Lay lines too early

**Set-up:** Lay a square Start line with a windward mark positioned with 5-10 degrees starboard bias. Send boats off the line at 10second intervals getting each boat to remember the number of times they crossed the centre-line. Once you have completed a complete cycle, relay the windward mark with a port bias and repeat.



**Variations:** Try running the exercise as a race with a line start. Assign all boats a minimum number of times they have to cross the CL upwind and downwind. The winner is the first boat to cross the start finish line.



**Gear: 2 Coach Boats**

**Description:**

This exercise uses the Coach boat to dictate an area the fleet can sail within. The imaginary lines extending behind the coach-boat may not be crossed with the idea being that the exercise increases in difficulty the further you progress up the course.

**Aims:**

- **Simulates larger fleets**
- **Forces boats into close crossing situations**
- **Introduces rules when boats meet.**
- **Has an element of momentum as the exercise gets harder the further the sailor's progress.**

**Set up:** Start with a follow my leader on starboard tack reach behind the left hand coach boat. On the first whistle the fleet hardens up and sails on a close-hauled course to windward. The two coach boats then motor parallel to each other for several minutes. When the fleet has settled get the left hand coach to take a slightly converging course and increase the difficulty.

**Variations:**

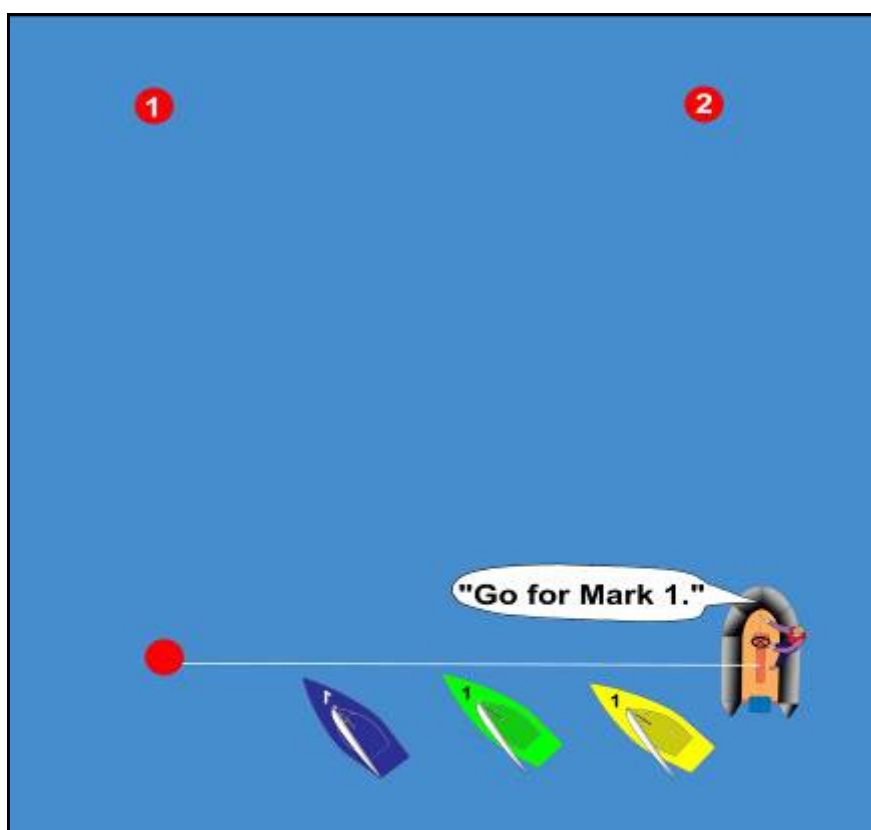
**Option 1** uses one rib with imaginary banks extending at 45degrees out from each back quarter.

**Options 2** requires two ribs with the line of the bank extending our from the centreline of each rib

**Coaching Points:**

**Start:** Get sailors to ask for room to tack when reaching a riverbank.

**Intermediate:** Get sailors to think ahead and try to overtake using the rules to their advantage.



**Gear:** 3 Marks, Green & Red Flags and Coach Boat.

**Description:** This exercise starts off as a normal start. Then, at 1 minute the coach will signal to round the left or right windward mark. The first sailor to round the correct windward mark and cross the start/finish line is deemed the winner.

**Aims:**

- To simulate a wind shift during the starting sequence.
- To encourage fast reposition when responding to a change on the course

**Set up:** Lay at Start line long enough for the fleet to start and add a third. Motor upwind 100-200 meters and drop two windward Marks 100 meters apart and square to the wind. Return to the Starboard end of the line and start the sequence. At 1 minute hold up either the red or green flag. Video the fleet repositioning and provide feedback after each race and during the de brief.

**Variations:** Change the distance between windward marks and the length of course to shift the focus. Shorter courses with more separation are more about the start; longer courses are about winning lanes and modes of sailing.

**Coaching Points:**

**Intermediate:** Emphasise the time and opportunities boats have to re-position. Sometimes staying put and switching modes at start time can be more effective.

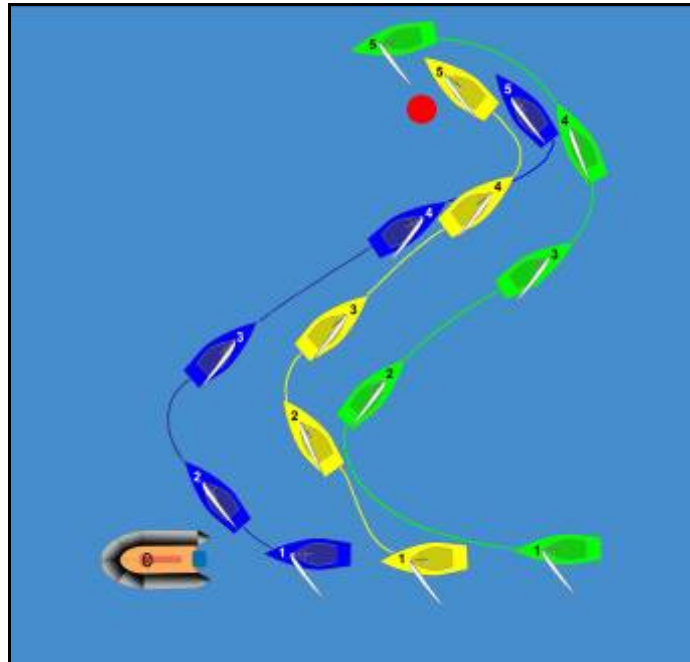
**Advanced:** Encourage boats to bank their lanes out of the line to secure and advantage or to open a tacking opportunity.



# MARK ROUNDINGS



Another key area to win and lose places is the mark rounding. These are a great set of exercises for raising tactical awareness and developing an understanding for the rules. The key to these exercises are using the Dinghy Boat Shuffle to demonstrate the realities of the rules and tactics in a slow time, three dimensional, learning environment.

**Gear: 1 Mark and Coach Boat**

**Description:** Start following the coach boat on a beam reach. On the whistle harden up onto a close-hauled course and race to the windward mark. Leaving the windward mark to port bear away and sail to the finish behind the rib.

**Aims:**

- To keep the fleet together for the windward mark rounding.
- Right of way rules at congested mark rounding.
- Teaches sailors 'safe' and 'high risk' approaches the windward mark.

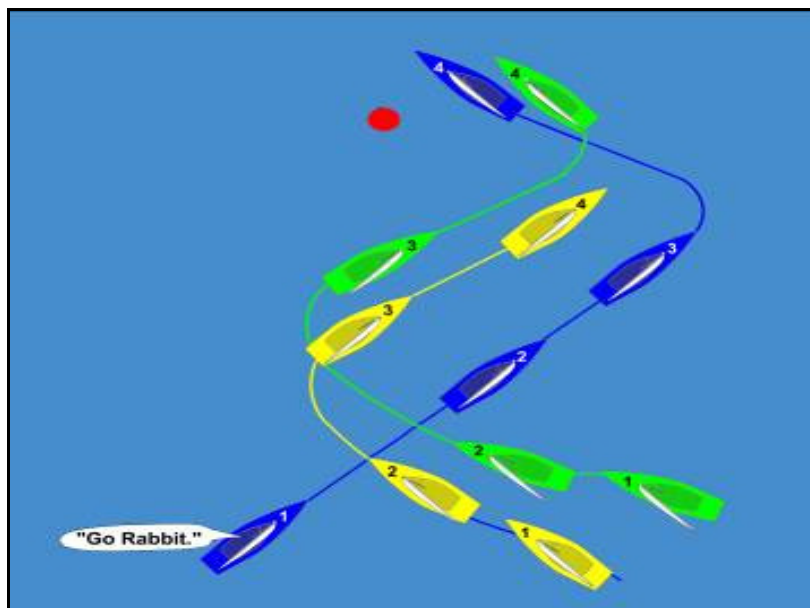
**Set up:** Use a 'follow my leader' exercise to get the group in a line directly behind the coach boat about 100 meters downwind of the windward mark. Release the fleet with a whistle and the hold position to act as the finish line.

**Variations:** Try setting the fleet off on both port and starboard tack. By sending the front of the queue to the back you can keep revolving the boats if you want to make the exercise easier or harder for certain boats. The same exercise can be used for downwind mark rounding requiring a similar set up and a leeward mark.

**Coaching points:**

**Start:** The earlier you get on a lay line the less options you have. Approaching the mark on port carries a higher risk unless you are clear ahead. Pay attention to boats coming downwind on opposite tacks.

## RABBIT APPROACH (3+Boats) INTERMEDIATE / ADVANCED



### Gear: 1 Mark

**Description:** This uses a rabbit start relatively close to the windward mark. The Rabbit will set off when the fleet is ready and may only tack back when the entire fleet has started. The aim of the game is to sail the fastest route to the windward mark while taking into account the other boats.

### Aims:

- Teaches Approach Tactics
- Keeps the fleet close together
- Creates penalty situations.

**Set up:** For the first start, choose the rabbit at random then ensure the rabbit is the last boat from the previous race on all follow-on races. Get the rabbit to set off around 100-150 meters away from the windward mark depending on the conditions and class of dinghy. Set the rabbit off directly downwind of the windward mark and finish the race when all boats have rounded the top mark and borne away. If you have a coach boat, use this to indicate the start position of the rabbit.

**Variations:** Change the distance between the start and the top mark to spread the fleet out or bring them closer together. Also try adding the rule that the rabbit must tack after the start to make sure they do not have too great an advantage.

### Coaching Points:

**Intermediate:** Don't wait for situations to get worse, if blocked out then make room to tack.

**Advanced:** Try to control the boats around you. Get the sailors to think about the threats and opportunities and how they can position themselves to take advantage of the situation.



# LAY LINES



**Lay lines are a significant factor when developing tactical awareness in sailors. These exercises help create real situations that might occur during racing**

## LAY LINE CROSSOVER (1+Boats)

START

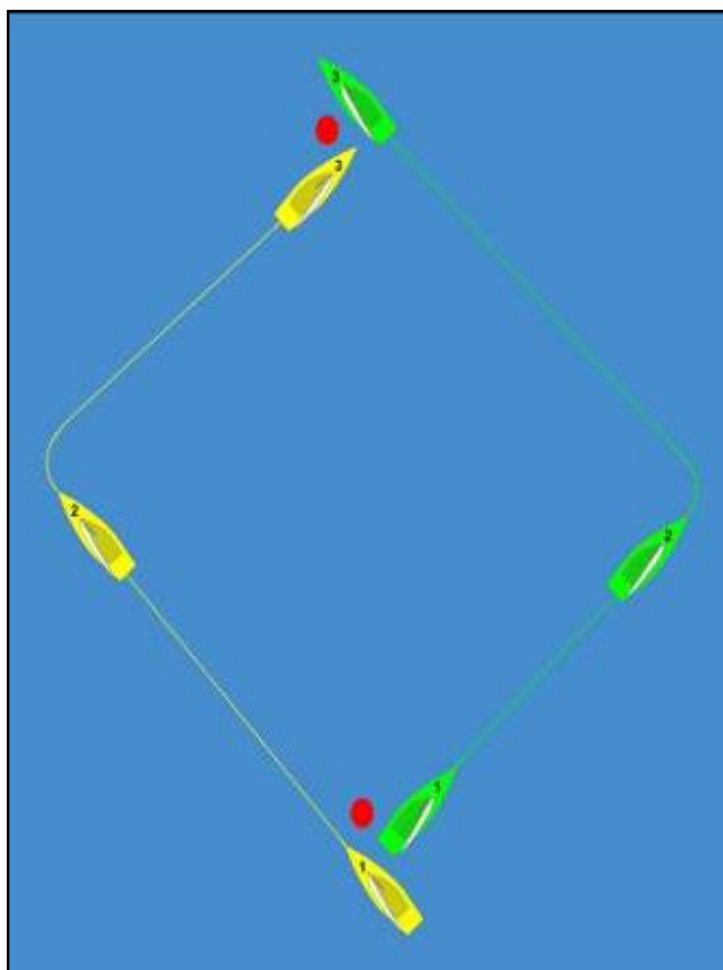
**Gear: 2 Marks and a Coach Boat.**

**Description:** Boats must duck the leeward mark on either port or starboard tack and one tack the beat. When they reach the mark they re-set and continue to the next mark on the opposite Lay Line. Boats judge their success by relative gains on their partner at each crossover.

**Aim:**

- Lay line practice
- Exercise keeps rolling allowing maximum repetitions
- Introduces the importance of clear lanes

**Set up:** Lay 2 Marks 50 meters apart. Return to the leeward mark and start the fleet off in pairs at 15second intervals until all the boats have started. Pick up the leeward mark and re-lay as a new windward mark. Repeat.



**Variations:** Moving the marks further apart makes it harder to judge the lay line. Setting the fleet off together using a Rabbit start will get sailors to become more aware of clear lanes.

**Coaching Points:**

**Start:** Try to encourage sailor to look over their back shoulder when judging Lay lines. Also, when a boat is ahead on the same Lay line get the sailors to judge if there are high, low or bang on and adjust their approach accordingly.

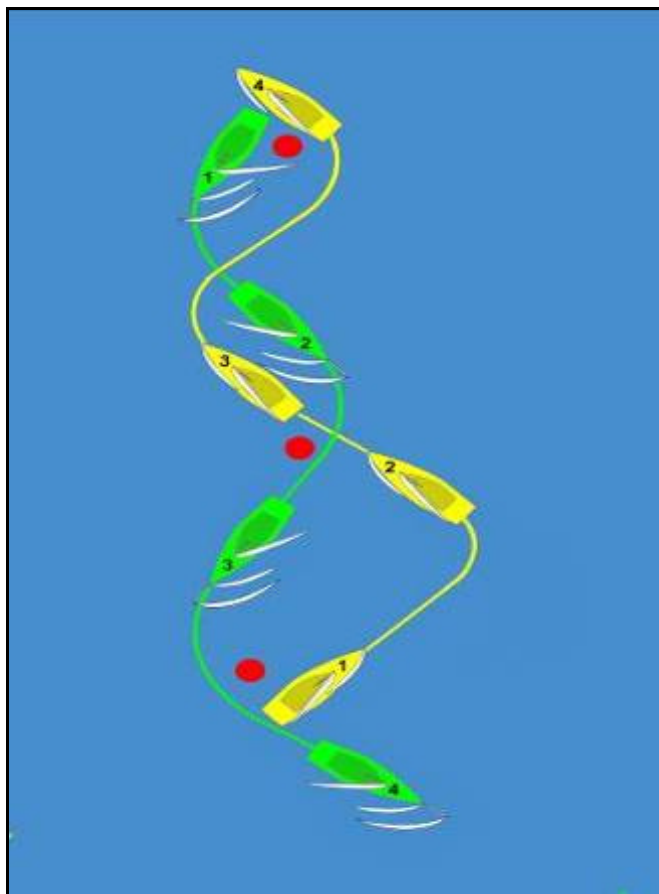
**Gear: 3 Marks**

**Description:** A really good alternative exercise for upwind and downwind Lay lines. Leaving all windward marks to port, go starboard lay, port lay and then starboard again. Round the top mark and sail downwind to alternative lay lines. Boats must aim to be within two boat lengths of the Lay line when approaching on port.

**Aims:**

- **Upwind and Downwind Lay line practice.**
- **Simulates both port and starboard approaches**
- **Can be shortened to include an element of Boat Handling.**

**Set-up:** Start by laying 3 marks in line with the wind approximately 50 meters apart. Return to the leeward mark at set boats of at 30 second intervals.



**Variations:** Try running a pursuit race over 2 laps, setting boats off at 15 second intervals. The less able sailors should be set off first with the speed merchants starting later.

**Coaching Points:**

**Intermediate:** The more consistent a sailor is in how they judge their Lay line the more accurate they become. Whenever you judge a Lay line incorrectly, remember the error and make a correction the next time. Downwind try using a point on the boom as a sight for judging the lay.



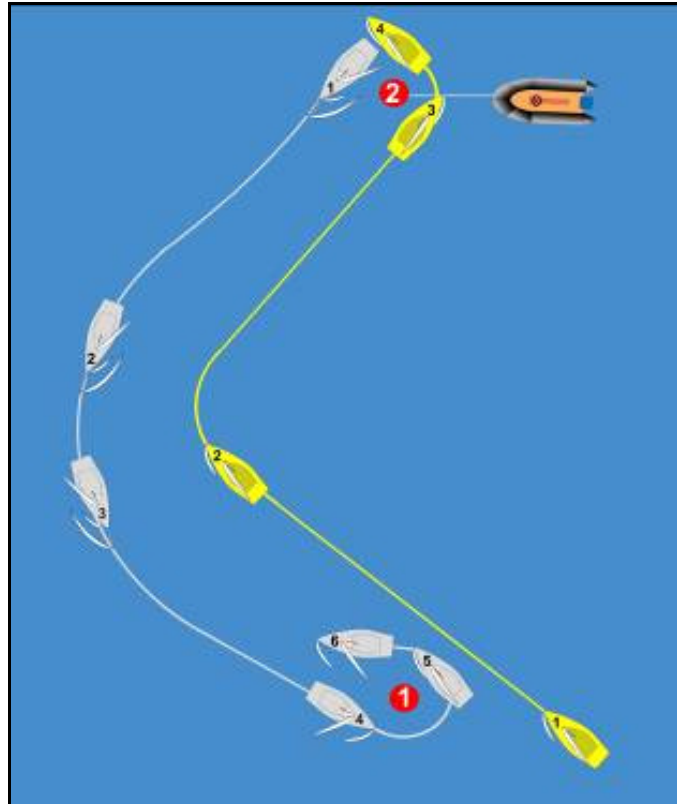
## DOWNWIND HOPSCOTCH (2+Boats)

ADVANCED

**Gear: 2 Marks and a Coach Boat.**

**Description:** A complicated exercise but a real beauty. It begins with a rabbit start at Mark 1 with the rabbit having to tack as soon as all the boats have started.

The boats then race to the windward mark, bear away and gybe on the Port lay line. Meanwhile the coach picks up Mark 2 and re-sets downwind of Mark 1. The fleet will round mark 1 to Port and wait for the last boat. The last boat will then act as a downwind rabbit to restart the fleet by passing the mark to port. All boats then race downwind to the new leeward mark looking for an early gybe early so as to approach the new mark on starboard lay and gybe drop. The race continues leaving the original mark one to port, straight setting, sailing to the port lay and finishing with a straight drop to port. The last boat to finish becomes the rabbit and the race is re-sailed



**Aims:**

- **Lay line practice.**
- **Overtaking.**
- **Pressure boat handling.**
- **Keeps the fleet together.**

**Set-up:** Lay a windward leeward course approximately 200 meters apart depending on the conditions, class of dinghy and the ability of the group. Return to the leeward mark, pick a rabbit and start a 3minute sequence. Get the Rabbit to duck Mark 1 to start the race and then motor upwind to Mark2. When the last boat rounds the windward mark, pick it up and motor directly downwind 100 meters below Mark1. Mark 2 is now the new leeward mark. Wait to finish the group and re-start with the last boat from race 1 becoming the rabbit.

**Variations:** Get the sailors to always gybe set at windward marks, and gybe drop and leeward marks, passing them to port. Alternatively try alternate roundings on the downwind legs.

**Coaching Points:**

**Advanced:** Its not just about lay lines so get sailors to think about generating the opportunity to gybe when overlapped or thinking about clear air after the gybe.

# DOWNWIND SAILING



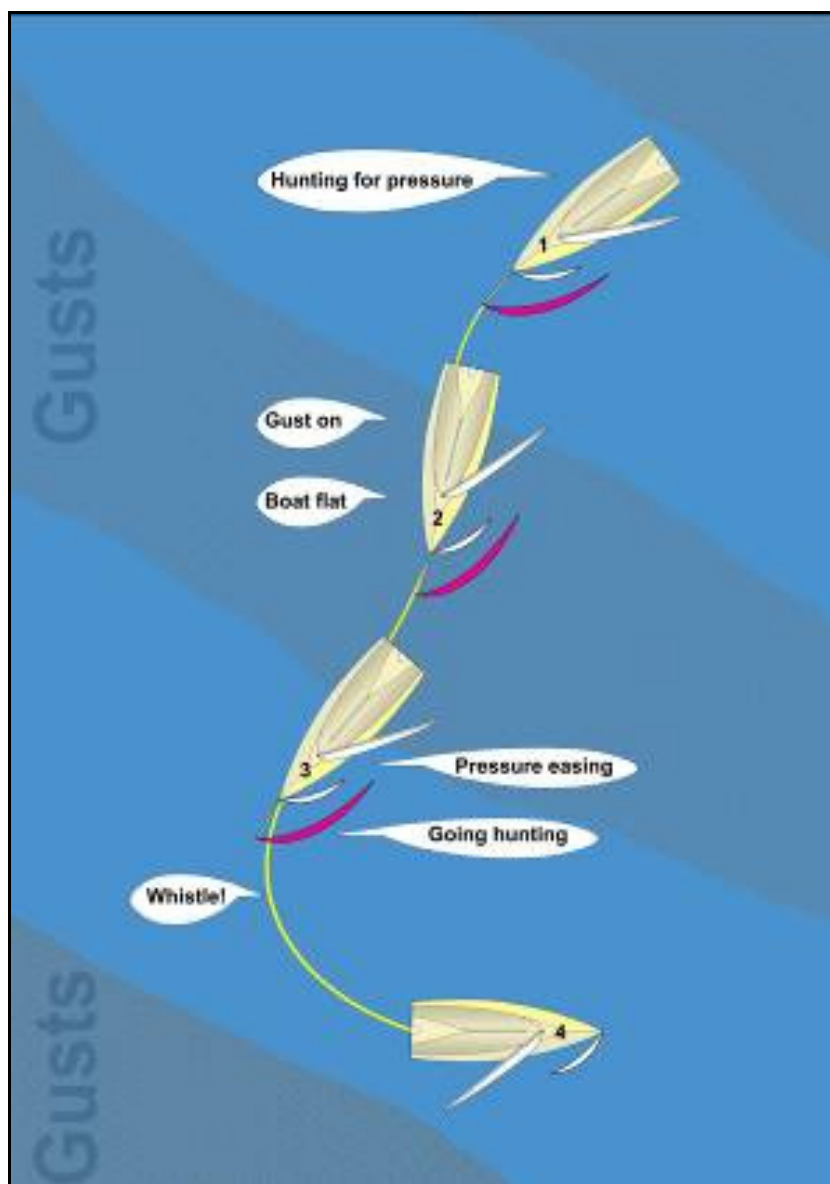
**Much of race training focuses on upwind speed and tactics and yet the biggest speed differences are down wind. This section helps the coach and sailors harness those skills for maximising down wind speed..**

**Gear:** Optional Coach Boat

**Description:** Get the sailors (helm and crew) to fix their positions in the boat so leverage remains the same. A pressure increases they can only steer to maintain boat balance, trimming for maximum speed. As pressure eases they must steer the correct amount to maintain a flat boat. Single whistles mean 'gybe' repeated whistles mean 'stop and line up behind the rib again.'

**Aims:** This exercise links steering to boat trim downwind and introduce apparent wind angle changes. It also encourages sailors to be more aware of pressure over the course.

**Set up:** Start with the fleet reaching in a line, on starboard, about 3-4 boat lengths apart. On the whistle bear away (hoist) and sail downwind.



**Variations:** The same theory can be used for single-handed classes where heel dictates rudder balance. Therefore accurate steering results in less rudder use.

**Coaching points:**

**Start:** Get the crews to feedback pressure info to the helm so he can be more accurate in his steering. Introduce increased righting moment to build speed before bearing off increase apparent angle change.

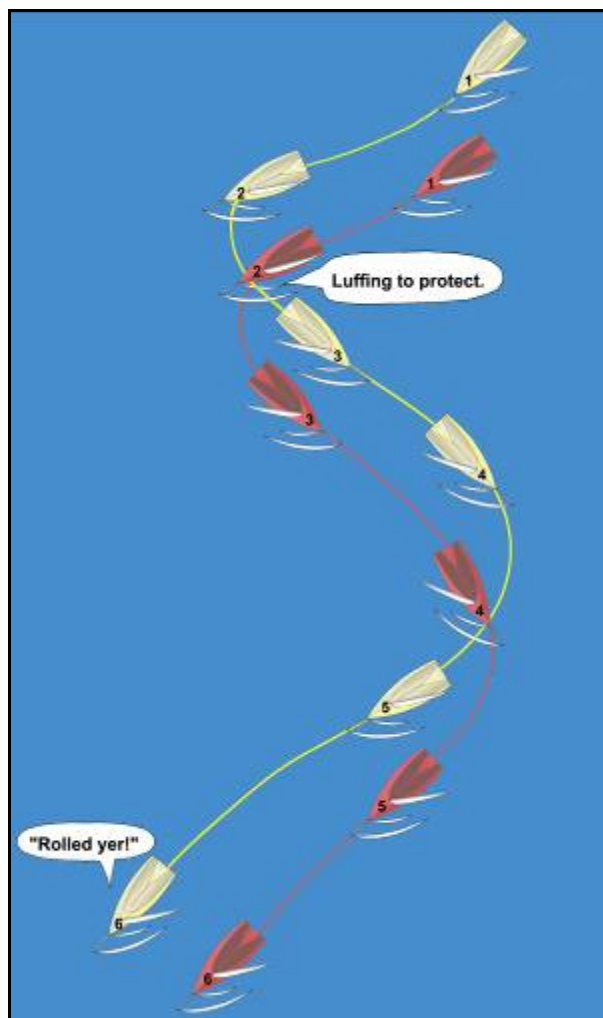
**Gear:** None.

**Description:** A paired exercise that's basically a downwind match race. The 2 boats start overlapped with the windward boat always trying to roll his or her partner. The leeward boat is always trying to protect his wind and move forward or gain depth whenever possible. Whenever the leeward boat gets rolled he or she will look to gybe off and get an opportunity to regain an advantage. The other boat then gybes and their aim is to pull off a slam-dunk when they next meet. When a boat passes clear ahead on the opposite gybe the exercise is re-started.

**Aims:**

- **Attacking and Defending Options Downwind**
- **Boat Handling**

**Set-up:** Start on a beam reach nose to tail and bear away onto a downwind course on the count of 3. Boats should try not to become too separated or to luff too hard as this would be unrealistic in a championship situation. When one boat crosses clear ahead on an opposite tack, re-set swapping around the lead boat at the start.



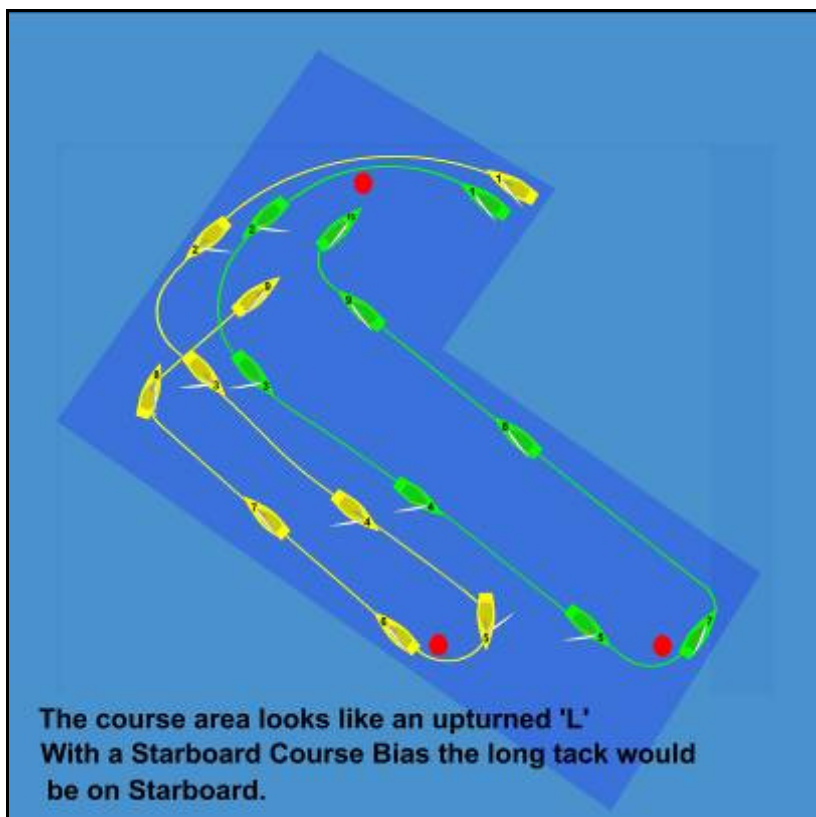
**Coaching Points:**

**Advanced:** It's all about timing when you sail high for speed and low for depth.



**Gear: 3 Marks.**

**Description:** This is a biased course exercise with a downwind focus. Boats round the windward mark nose to tail on the starboard lay line. They then have three overtaking opportunities: the bear away, the gybe or the leeward mark rounding. Depending on where you are you may be attacking or defending but the aim of the game is still to be first to the windward mark defending the left or right depending on the course bias. If you choose the leeward mark on the non-favoured side you must tack as a soon as possible to keep the drill realistic. Once boats reach the windward mark they wait for the last boat to restart the next lap as the leader.

**Aims:**

- **To reinforce the importance of key overtaking areas.**
- **To rotate the fleet to mix up abilities at the front.**
- **To provide overtaking practice on a one sided course**

**Set up:** Lay a leeward gate and then drop a windward mark 100-200meters upwind depending on ability and class of dinghy. This mark will need a 15 to 20degree bias to the port or starboard depending on the side you want the course to be biased. Now get the fleet to fine up on starboard tack just above the lay with about 10 seconds of sailing remaining before the mark.

**Variations:** Use alternate sides and amounts of course bias to vary the drill. Also try Port approaches which are best started with a rabbit start.

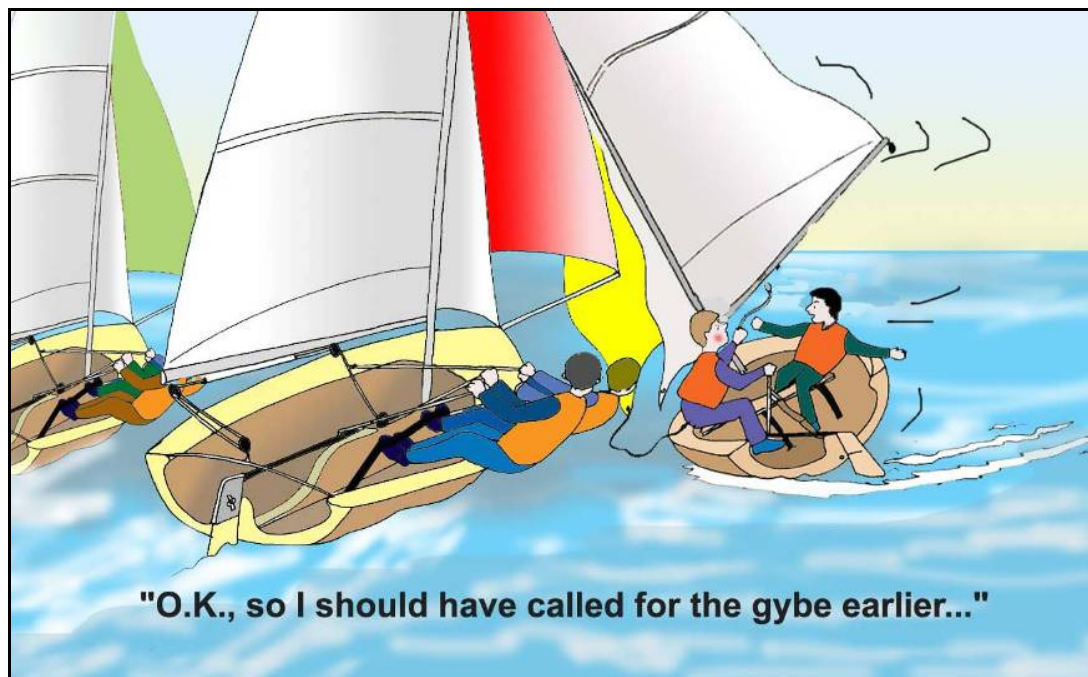
**Coaching Points:**

**Advanced.** Again place an emphasis on knowing when to go for speed and when to go for depth. Accurate Lay lines and pressure awareness are key overtaking weapons.

# TACTICAL EXERCISES



**Most exercises can be used with a tactical focus not just those specifically designed for the purpose. Once again, if scenarios are being introduced for the first time you should use a 'Dinghy Park Shuffle (page 67) to fully explain the rules of the situation.**



**Gear:** 2-4 Marks and a Coach Boat:

**Description:** Only the crew is allowed to talk during this exercise. That means all decisions have to come from the crews and the information can only be shared one way. The boats must race around a course of your choice and must adhere to all the racing rules.

**Aims:**

- To improve the tactical awareness of the crews
- To build the self worth of crews
- To highlight the importance of communication and shared responsibility.

**Set-up:** Lay a windward leeward, triangle or trapezoid and use a 3,1, Go, sequence.

**Variations:** After running this exercise a couple of times, swap the calls over to the helm and repeat.

**Coaching Points:**

**Start:** After swapping around the roles debrief on how this impacted the decision making as a fleet. Then get the sailors to talk through the differences within their individual boats and what they can learn from the exercise.

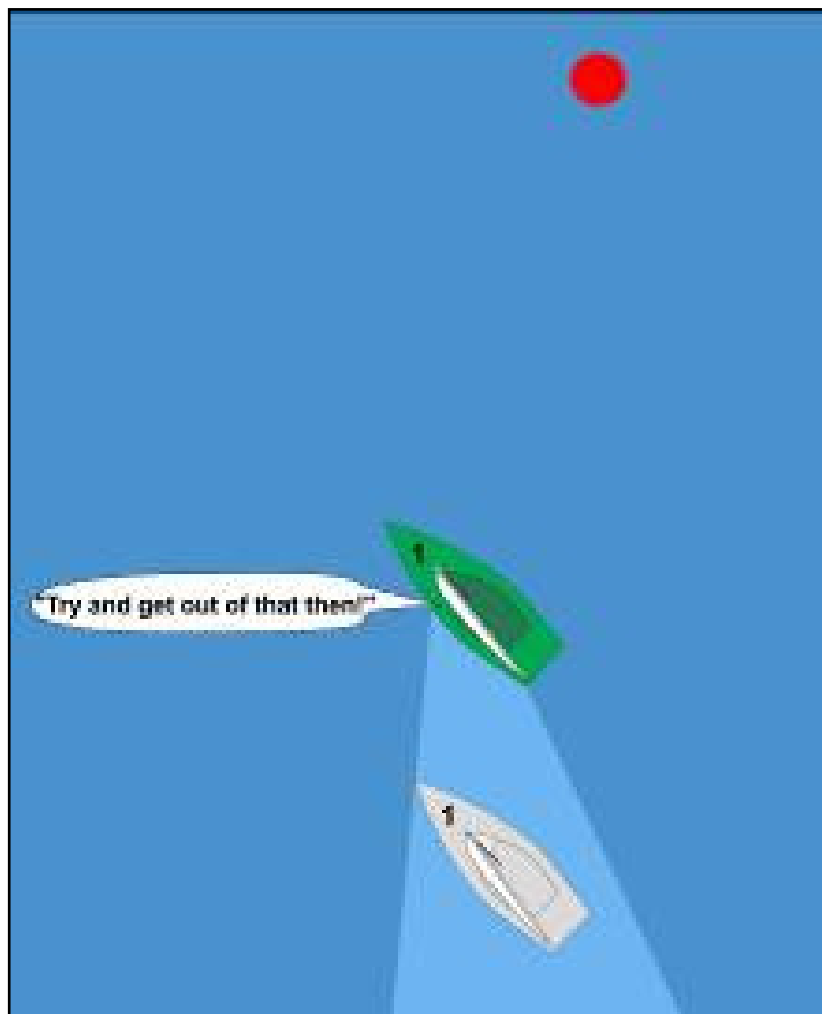


**Gear: 2 to 3Marks**

**Description:** A simple introduction to covering. One boat will be designated the piggy and must try and escape the other boats cover. The 'Cover' boat must keep themselves between the piggy and the next mark or slow the piggy by using a tight cover. Once a lap of the course has been completed the positions are reversed. If at any point the piggy breaks cover they then become the covering boat.

**Aims:**

- Introduces tight and loose covers
- Reinforces 'dirty air' theory



**Set-up:** Lay a course of your choice with set number of laps. Start a 3,1, Go sequence.

**Coaching Points:**

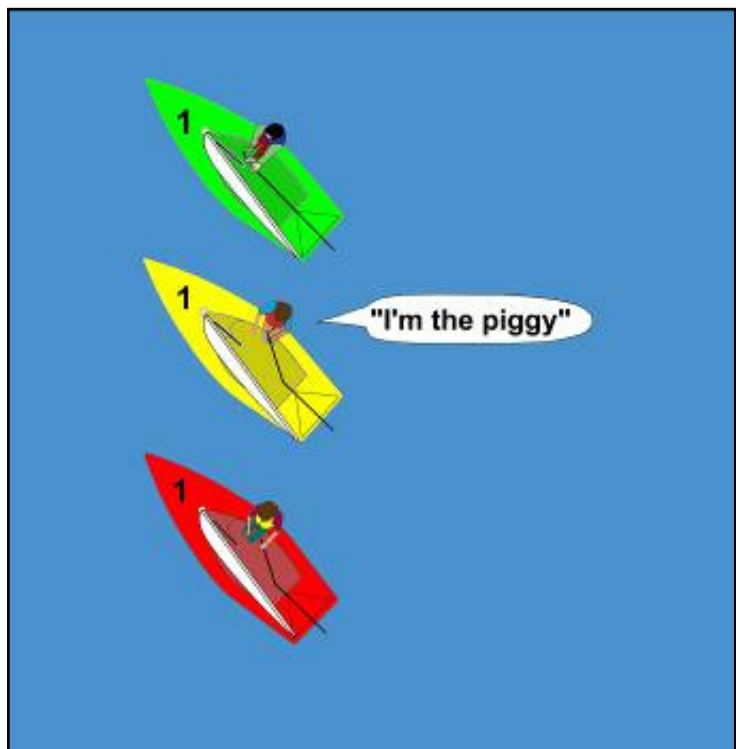
**Start:** At the briefing introduce the fundamentals of a 'tight' cover and the lee bow effect. Get the sailors to put the theory into practice and comment on their effectiveness.

**Gear:** 2 to 3Marks

**Description:** The rules for the game are simple. The lead boat has to try and send the middle boat to the back of the fleet. He or she can do so by giving the 'piggy and penalty', blocking out the piggy on a bad shift or over a Lay line or simply by giving them dirty air. As soon as the last placed boat changes the fleet re-assigns roles to match the new order. The winner is the boat that finishes as the 'piggy', with the last placed boat being the loser.

**Aims:**

- Teaches boats covering techniques.
- Match race practice
- Rules practice

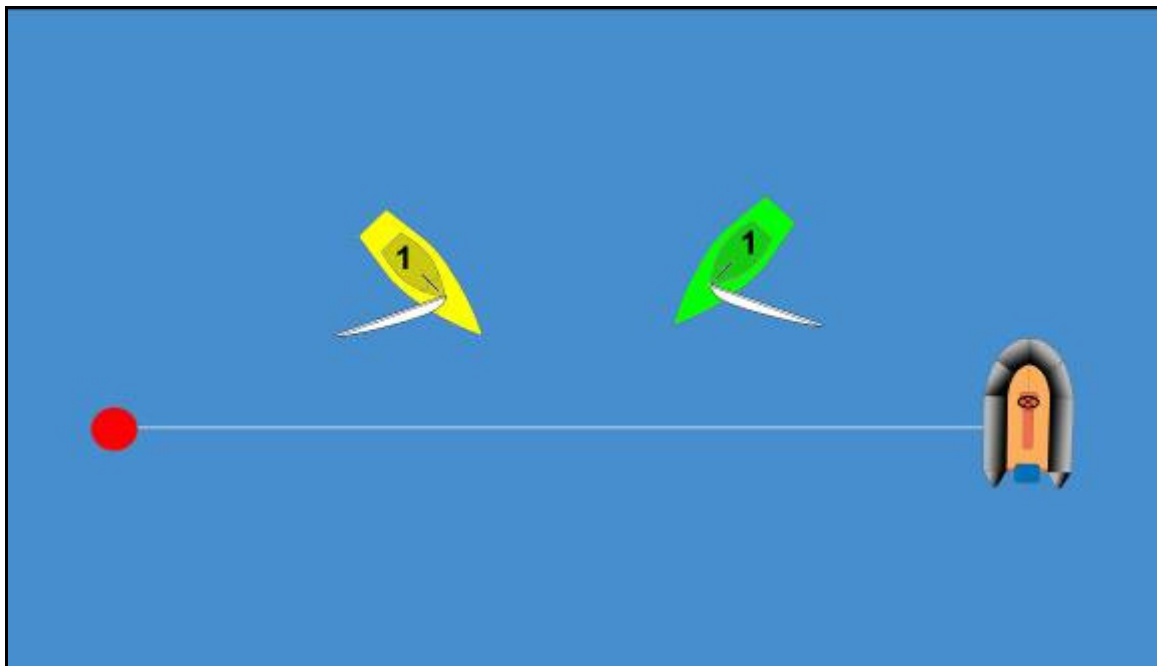


**Set-up:** Lay a course of your choice with set number of laps. Start a 3,1, Go sequence. As soon as the boats are underway the game starts with the coach acting as Umpire and Video Boat.

**Coaching Points:**

**Start:** At the briefing introduce the fundamentals of a 'tight' cover and the lee bow effect. Get the sailors to put the theory into practice and comment on their effectiveness.

**Intermediate:** In the briefing generate ideas on how to 'break out' of a cover. If the fleet is not fluid then use the coach boat to create an opening or re-start.



**Gear: 3 Marks and Coach Boat.**

**Description:** Start by electing port and starboard ends and then use a 3,2,1,Go, sequence. On the 2minute gun the boats will sail downwind through the line and start the match. From this point they will aim to use the racing rules and their boat handling skills to out start the other boat and then beat them around 2 laps of a windward leeward course. They will then repeat the match changing their starting ends.

**Aims:**

- **Improves Racing Rules**
- **Boat Handling and using tight covers**

**Set-up:** Start by laying a windward-leeward course approximately 200-400meters in length. Lay a Start line below the leeward mark and start the sequence. Once the race has started, the coach takes on the role of the Umpire and will give tack or gybe penalties to those boats that infringe. Repeat the match for a best of 3 or 5 regatta. If running multiple starts, the matches must umpire themselves and if a penalty cannot be decided upon then both boats will be deemed to have infringed.

**Variations:** Try leaving all marks to starboard to change the approach situations.

**Coaching Points:**

**Intermediate:** In the debrief talk through protecting the favoured side of the course and the difference between a loose and tight cover. Highlight any rule situations that occurred which need to be explained.

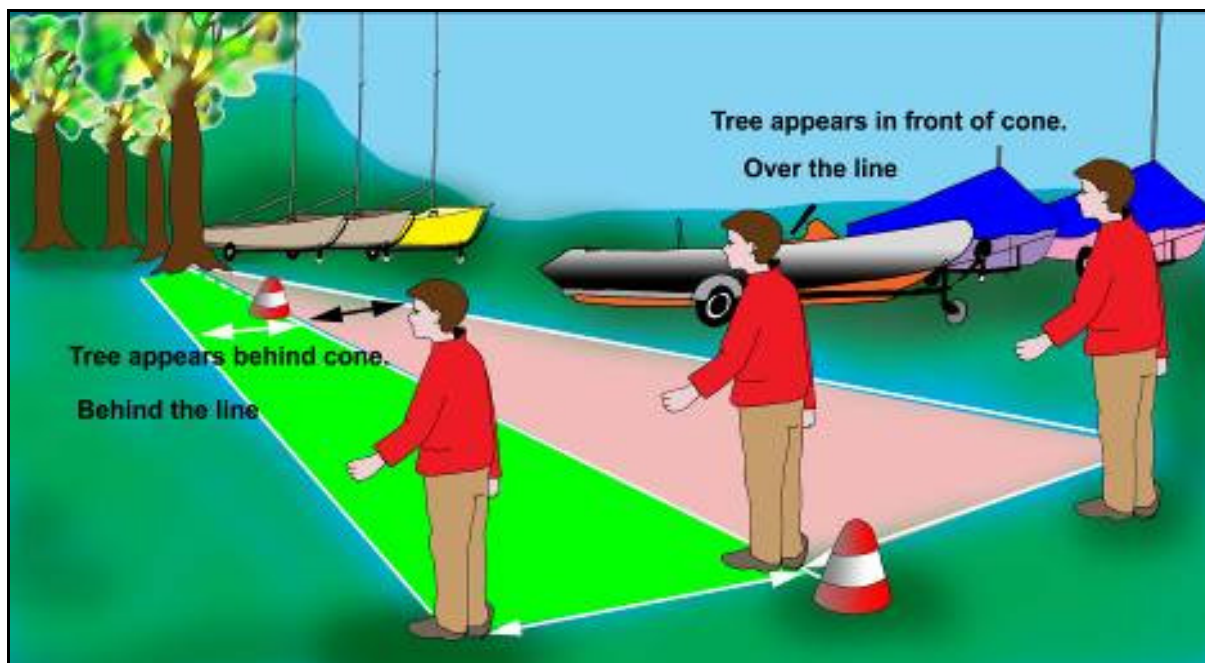
# DINGHY PARK SHUFFLE

This is a great method to coach the rules, tactics and general race course skills in a very 3 dimensional way. It should always be used as a shore based rehearsal prior to coaching rules tactics or any on the water exercises that requires judgements of time and distance.

The basic principle is simple. Tie your dinghies to their trolleys and push them around the car park or dinghy park to simulate scenarios around the race course.

The idea was developed for coaching team racing but we quickly found that it was excellent for coaching rules and tactics for beginners and experts alike.

## Coaching Transits



### Exercise a) (without boats)

- Create a start line with old tyres or cones.
- Get each sailor to stand on one end and find an object in the distance as their transit marker.
- When they have finished get them all to stand 'downwind' of the line, walk towards the line and stop when they think they are on the line, assessing how good their transit actually is.
- Get all for the sailors to then step 2 paces forward and to tell you what has happened to their transit. It should now be forward of the start line buoy or 'committee boat.' **The rule is: If the transit is forward of the buoy then they are over the line.**
- Get all of the sailors to then take 2 paces behind the line and repeat the process. **The rule is: If the transit is behind the buoy then they are behind the line.**

### **Exercise b) (with boats)**

This time the sailors need to tie their boats to their trolleys and push them from the transoms 'up wind' towards the start line, stopping when they think their bows are on the line. Ideally they should approach on a close hauled course. Once they have positioned their boat they should then join the coach at the 'committee boat' to examine how close their boat is to the start line.

Repeat the process until they are confident about being on the line each time.

## **Coaching Tactics & Rules**

### **Example Rule: Coaching Mark Roundings (Rule 18)**

#### **Exercise a): 2 boat lengths!**

- Using a mainsheet or length of line, measure 2.5 boat lengths.
- Place a buoy (tyre or cone) in the centre of the dinghy park and arrange the sailors in a circle, facing in, approx 10 boat lengths away from the 'buoy'.
- Get all of the sailors to walk towards the 'buoy' and stop where they think they would be when their boat enters the 2 boat lengths zone. Because they are sitting halfway down the boat the actual distance is 2.5 boat lengths.
- By tying the rope to the 'buoy' you can scribe a 2.5 boat length circle and judge how good your sailors are at judging distances.

This exercise can be repeated with line measuring 3.5 boat lengths which would be distance where you start asking for room prior to rounding the mark if you were overlapped.

#### **Exercise b): Rule 18**

Set up a top mark and get 2 sailors to push their boats from the transom. Boat 1 should stop when they think the bows have just entered the 2 boat length zone. The second should place theirs to leeward of the first but with a slight overlap. This requires good judgement of distance and may require some 'tweaking' to get it right.

The coach can then start to ask the sailors the difference in responsibilities of each boat when rounding the mark either with an overlap or without an overlap. In each case the coach needs to refer to the definitions of **keeping clear, giving room and proper course**. The key rules that need to be read will be Rule 18 (mark roundings) and rule 14 (avoid collisions).

The Coaching Tips for this exercise is to focus on what each boat must do and try to link this to tactics. Another technique is to compare this rule with going around a roundabout, giving the other boat time and opportunity to get around safely and fairly.



# Part 3

## MIXED ABILITY EXERCISES



**Learning is an individual as the sailor themselves and the coach needs to be able to create a learning environment that pushes everyone to learn. This section enables the coach to control who leads the race. This develops confidence, keeps the group together, pushes the better sailors and allows the less experienced ones to see how the top sailors do it.**



**Gear: 3 Marks and a Coach Boat.**

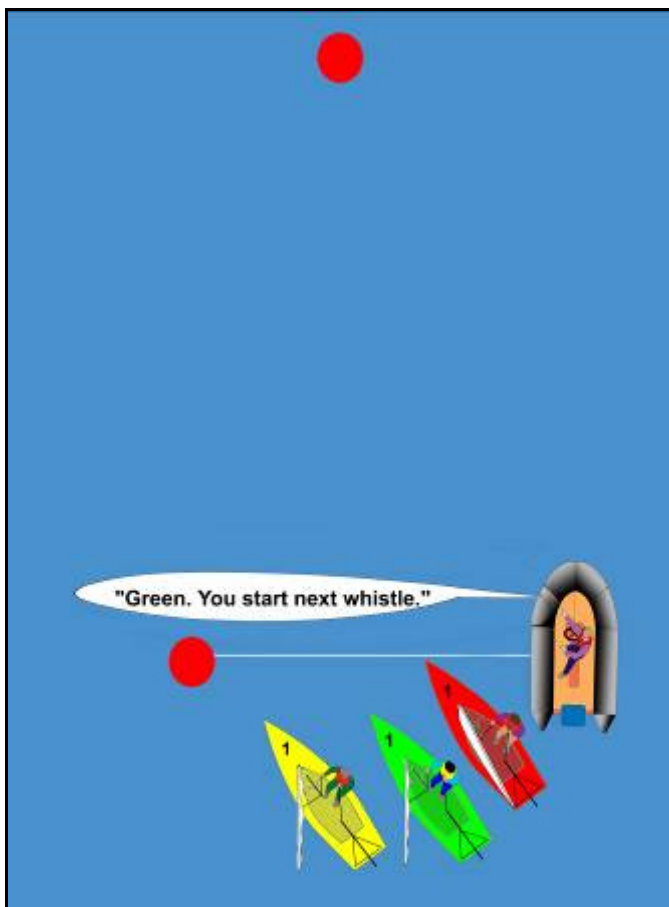
**Description:** Boats initially start together on the same sequence then after each lap the leading boats are held back to re-group the fleet. The race continues for a pre-determined number of laps.

**Aims:**

- Gives the less able sailors a chance to compete around the whole course
- Keeps the fleet together to encourage boat on boat situations to develop
- Makes the race more challenging for more proficient sailors.

**Set-up:** Set a windward leeward course approximately 200-300 meters in length with the start-finish line doubling as a mid course gate.

Start the race as normal and get boat to pass through the mid-course gate both upwind and downwind. If a gap has developed hold the leaders back at the gate to re-form the fleet.



**Variations:** Sending the leader to the back of the fleet each time they pass the gate is another fun way of running mixed ability racing.

**Coaching Points:**

**Start:** When sailing next to a sailor of a higher ability use that time to compare your sail set-up, boat balance, trim and technique. They're obviously doing something better so what is it?

**Advanced:** Sailing through the fleet will require you to depend more on your compass as the fleet may not be in sync with the shifts.

## SPLIT STARTS (4+Boats)

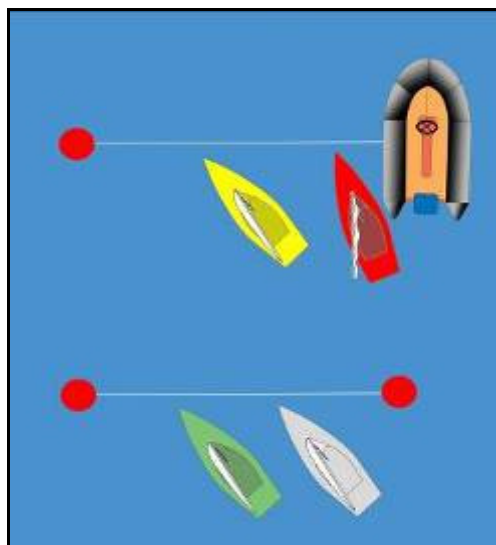
START

**Gear: 4 Marks and Committee Boat.**

**Description:** A simple way of starting a mixed ability group. The less able sailors start to windward of the advanced group so that they approach the windward mark at the roughly the same time. The advanced sailors will have to fight through the dirty air to get to the front of the fleet while others get clear air and the opportunity to lead the race.

**Aims:**

- To put sailors in unfamiliar situations
- To get productive racing out of a group with mixed ability



**Variations:** Pair the sailors up so that you're matched with another boat on the other line. The winning team will have the best-combined score.

**Coaching Points:**

**Start / Advanced:** Pair the sailors to coach each other. This way the Start sailors get instruction from people who really know what they're doing and the advanced sailors have to think about what makes them fast and re-enforces their understanding.

## HANDICAP PURSUIT (4+Boats) START / INTERMEDIATE / ADVANCED

**Gear: 2-4 Marks and Coach Boat.**

**Description:** Using a course or your choice give all sailors a ranking in order of ability with 1 being the lowest in ability. Using a rolling clock start sailors at 10 or 30 second intervals depending on the length of course. Sailors will then sail a pre-determined number of laps with the finishing order being the final positions of the race.

**Aims:**

- Finds equilibrium in the fleet with all sailors having to work equally hard to compete.
- Should finish with all boats together.

**Variation:** With smaller fleets the finishing order of each race when reversed will be the starting order of the next race. When you have had the same number of start's as there are boats then the finishing order of that race will be deemed the final results for the day with prizes awarded accordingly. If this system is to be used then keep it secret so boat cannot attempt to sandbag for the final.



# BOREDOM BEATERS



## Fun as a FUNdamental

Fun is the one aspect of sailing we can easily forget when rushing around the race course and yet it is the factor that keeps people in the sport, especially when young. The added benefits of games within this section are that it also teaches skills without the sailor noticing.

## ONE RULE RACING (2+Boat)

START

**Gear:** 2-4 Marks and a Coach Boat.

**Description:** Using a standard race format, but this time the only rule that exists is no collisions (Both boats are disqualified if this does occur). Excessive roll tacking, gybing and pumping is allowed. Best used in light wind days.

**Aims:**

- To introduce and refine speed enhancing techniques.
- Fun and physical

**Set-up:** Standard course and sequence.

**Coaching Points:**

**Start:** Video the boats that are better at enhancing speed and get them to commentate on what they are doing.

## REVERSE THE RACE

START

An adaptation on standard racing is to simply reverse the race whenever the coach blows the whistle. This means that the racing always remain close and the faster boats have to win back the places while the slower boats get to see what they are doing.

## GRAND PRIX STARTS (2+Boats)

START

**Description:** This race starts with all boats on shore (they could even require rigging). Sailors line up and when the gun goes they race to their vessel, rig and launch before racing around a course and finish by returning the boat to its original state on shore.

**Aims:**

- A fun alternative to conventional racing.

**Variation:** This could use a relay format with each team handing over to another and so on.



## REVERSING RACE (3+Boats)

START



Actually, Sunbeam, **we're** on starboard!"

### Gear: 2 Marks and Coach Boat

**Description:** Starting between the Coach Boat and a Mark, Sailors must reverse downwind to the finishing mark. The first boat to complete the course wins.

### Aims:

- To improve reversing boat control
- To challenge all abilities with an unfamiliar skill.
- Fun and out of the ordinary

**Set-up:** Lay a windward and leeward mark about 100 meters apart. Line all boats up in stationary position to windward of a line between the top mark and the leeward mark. Using a 10 second count down start the boats and then follow them downwind to finish at the bottom mark.

**Variations:** It's possible to run this exercise as a windward-leeward team relay.

### Coaching points:

**Start:** The direction you point the rudder is the way the boat will steer.

**Intermediate:** When initiating the reverse, get the bow just through head to wind before pushing the boom out. This will stop the boat spinning back to the position you started in.

**Advanced:** In high performance boats the helm will control the boom and the crew will just focus on keeping the boat absolutely flat!

**Gear:** Bottles on string for each Boat, 4 Marks (optional) and a Coach Boat

**Descriptions:** The aim of the game is to hit a plastic bottle attached to the end of a string trailing from the opponent's boats while defending your own. Sailors will be given a time limit and a sailing area in which to compete. Points are awarded for hitting an opponent's bottle and subtracted when your own is hit.

**Aims:**

- **Fun competition**
- **Boat Handling**
- **Spatial Awareness**

**Set up:** Brief the teams on the battlefield (sailing area) and send the teams to all corners prior to the start. Four buoys or other geographical features may mark the 'battlefield'. A time limit can also be set.



**“ Did you actually put a message in the bottle?”**



## NEW BALLS PLEASE (1+Boats)

START

**Gear:** 8 Coloured Tennis Balls, 4 marks and a Coach Boat

**Description:** A fun boat control exercise involving collecting as many balls as possible within a set time. All boats must be outside the box designated by the 4 Marks. On the start signal the boats enter the box and start collecting. The next signal signifies the end of the game. The boat that collects the most balls is the winner.



**Aim:**

- **Controlling speed**
- **Boat handling**
- **Fun Competition**

**Set-up:** Lay four marks to form a square with each side about 50meters in length. Get the boats outside the box and throw in the coloured ball (Colour can designate value). Give the boats a 1minute gun and start the fleet calling back any boats inside the box at the gun. After 2 minute signal the end of the game and count the balls and their value to determine the winner.

## CAPTAIN SPLASH (2+Boats)

START

**Description:** The aim of the game is to capsize on the whistle and perform a series of set tasks and the right the boat in the shortest time possible. The tasks may be a selection of the following: Pull the centre-board down, un-cleat mainsheet, kicker or jib sheet, drop spinnaker, swim the bow through the wind, turtle and right the other way etc. The boat must then be righted and sailing at speed before the exercise ends.

**Aims:**

- **To emphasis the importance of certain actions in making capsize recovery faster and less strenuous.**
- **To take some of the fear factor away from capsizes.**

**Set-up:** Get the fleet within a set area then blow the whistle. Blow a second whistle to end the drill when the first boat is recovered and sailing at full speed.

**Safety 1st:** Ensure the conditions and ability of the group are appropriate for the drill and include it at the end of a session to avoid hypothermia. Make sure you have sufficient safety cover and keep a check on all the capsized boats and their crews.



# SELF TRAINING EXERCISES



## **Coaching the sailor to be their own coach**

**The coach should always be trying to get the sailor(s) to train by themselves and the majority of the exercises in this booklet can be modified to be run by a single sailor or in a group. This section looks at some more exercises specifically aimed at helping the sailor to develop racing skills.**

**Self training is essential for making boat handling smooth and controlled.**



**Gear:** 1 Boat, trolley tie down lines, secure tie down points, an inflatable mark and a Video Camera

**Description:** The most effective way to teach new boat handling techniques or refine routines in the boat. Simply identify the technique you wish to work on and perform it on land as you would on the water. Using the video camera, record some footage of the sailors performing the skill and comment on the footage. If possible, look at some best practice footage of the same manoeuvre and identify the similarities and difference. Work on refining the technique, introducing the improvement identified.

**Aims:**

- **To improve speed, consistency, poise or balance in the boat.**
- **To identify asymmetry**
- **A provide a variable free environment to teach a new technique**

**Set up:** Start by placing the boat on a well fitting trolley and raising the bow so the boat is level. Place the inflatable under the transom to support the back of the boat and then tie the bow and the shroud point down to secure fixing points on the ground. For trapeze boats it is also a good idea to support the mast. This is straightforward on twin wire boats as you can simply use the other set of wires.

**Coaching Points:**

**The best way to teach complex skills is to break them down into smaller components. By teaching each part in detail you simplify the learning process. Repeat the part until it is consistent then add it back into the complete technique. Whole Part Whole.**

## THE STANDARD HOUR (1Boat) **START** / **INTERMEDIATE** / **ADVANCED**



**Description:** An agreed routine that boats will practice each time they go sailing on their own. It cuts out time wasting and ensures what needs to be worked on gets done before any other distractions creep in. In its simplest form it may look like this:

- 20 tacks
- 20 gybes
- 5 minutes on each tack with perfect trim while checking compass readings
- 5 straight sets, 5 straight drops (port rounding)
- 5 gybe sets, 5 gybe drops
- 2 penalty turns
- 3 practice starts on starboard
- 1 Port approach start
- Reverse, double tack and holding position.
- Gut Buster.

**Aims:** To keep sailing focused and to ensure the foundations of good boat handling are kept fully oiled!

**Set up:** Agree the time you're going to meet and the time you hit the water. Have the list of exercises memorised and don't stop until all the boxes are ticked.

**Variation:** If during a regatta a weakness is identified. Discuss how that technique can be practised and include it in the standard hour replacing another exercise that is either ineffective or no longer in focus.

**Coaching Points:** **Debrief after every session. Analyse and identify refinements, then development!**