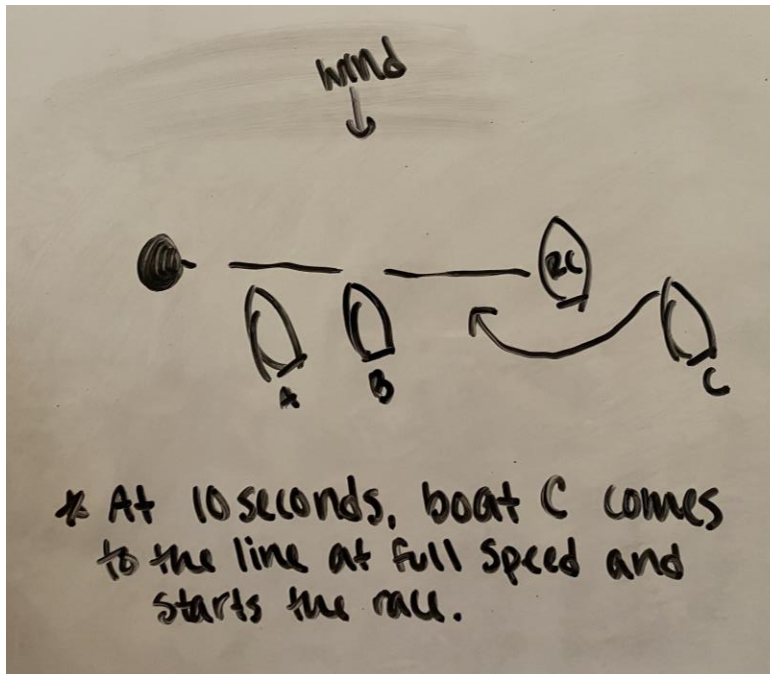


STARTING 101:

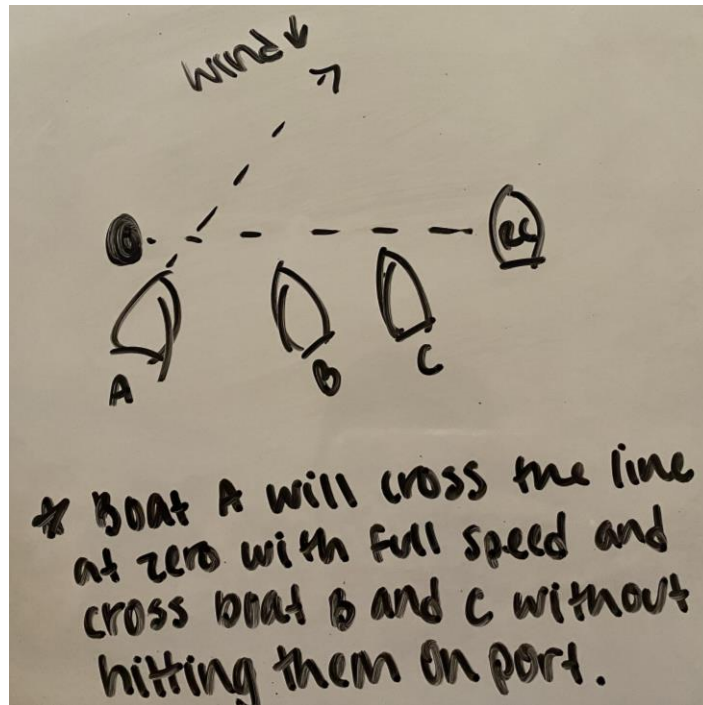
Starting is one of the hardest skills to master in sailing and they can be very intimidating! The line is ALWAYS crowded, and people are constantly yelling at each other. There are many ways to start a race, but it is hard to tell when to use which method.

What am I supposed to be looking for, before the start, that will help me decide which type of start I will use? Ask yourself these questions:

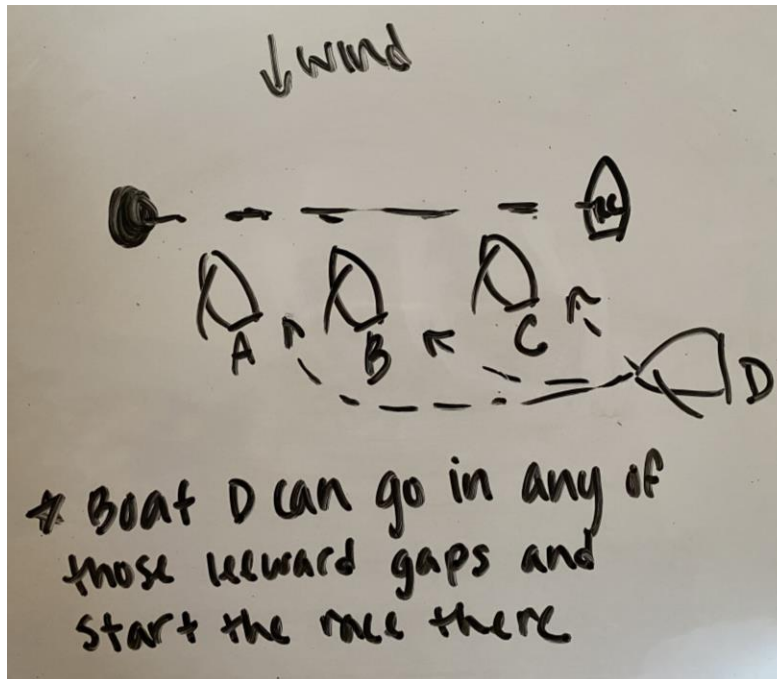
- **Which side of the course has more wind?** Well, look up the course and look to see which side looks windier. You may see white caps (waves crashing in the distance that create little white bubbles), wrinkles in the water showing wind, or the water will look darker on one side.
 - **Where is the wind coming from?** Even though race committee tries to set a perfectly “square” course (meaning no side of the course is favored), this isn't always possible. **Remember: WIND IS CONSTANTLY CHANGING DIRECTIONS.** Therefore, we need to constantly be looking for those changes and thinking of how to get to the windward mark the fastest, without sailing too much distance. **Remember: you don't want to have to sail farther than you need to! If you notice this small change and no one else does, you'll be ahead of everyone.** Sail smarter, not harder.
 - **How much time do I have left in the sequence????** You may have lost track of time because you weren't paying attention to the start sequence (GET A WATCH!!) you may have wanted to start by the pin, but don't have enough time to get there. You have to work with whatcha got and try to get the best start you can with the time remaining.
1. The “Shark start” is a very common starting method. You have seen this done by your peers and probably have even done it yourself, and you didn't even know it! This is when you hang out by the coach boat until the end of the sequence and at the last minute, swoop into a hole, going full speed and cross the line at zero. This is a very easy way to start because there will pretty much always be a hole leeward to the race committee (**Remember: the wind, current, waves, etc. pushes boats away from the line, causing a gap to open up**)



2. The second type of start is riskier than the shark start. This method is called port tacking the fleet. This is when you start by the pin on port. All the boats on the start line will almost always be starting on starboard. **Remember: Starboard boat has rights so that's the safest tack to be on at the start line!!** This is an extremely difficult starting strategy that takes a ton of practice. So many things could go wrong- you have no rights because you are on port and all the other boats in the fleet are on starboard. If this is such a risky maneuver, then why do it? Well, in order to successfully port tack the fleet, you must cross the line before everyone else does and with more speed. This doesn't mean you can go before zero, but you must go EXACTLY at zero, AND you need to accelerate! (Green fleet you should know exactly what I mean 😊). If you go to this website <https://www.czajka.at/html/en/prestart.html>, scroll down to the "Starting on Port Tack" header and watch the animation showing a perfect port tack start.



3. The last type of start is what I like to call a safe start. It's kind of like a shark start because you slide into an open spot on the line at the end of the sequence. This is much safer than port tacking the fleet because it isn't necessarily planned out and the timing doesn't have to be perfect. This might be a good option if you lost track of time and couldn't set up a perfect start. Or maybe there are too many people by the side you want to start on, so you just opt for a clean spot on the line, rather than fighting for ONE spot with TONS of boats. This is probably the most common type of start and you have DEFINITELY done it before.



I hope you are enjoying your time off and can't wait to see you guys back at VYBA when this is all over!! I know you're probably *dying* to go sailing, but unfortunately, we can't yet. In the meantime, here are some pretty cool sailing videos you guys can watch!

Watch a start up close: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5snHMqvN9ek>

Highlights from Optiworlds 2011: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnvD_T3v6sM

Method for sailing downwind: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHykZXMuPO8>

See you guys soon,

Olivia