

(Some content borrowed from Wikipedia)

Format

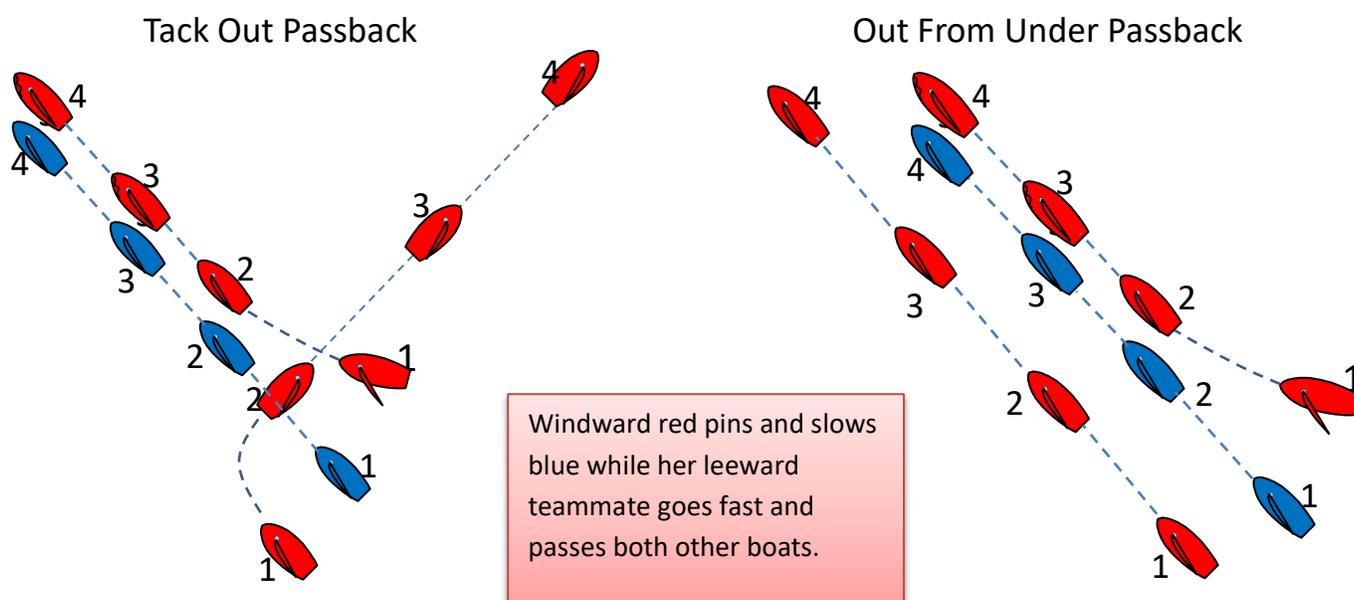
In high school team racing, three boats from one team race three boats from another team. A low point scoring system is used. The boat finishing first scores 1 point, second scores 2 points, and so on. The points scored by the boats on each team are added together and the team scoring the fewest points (ten or less) wins the race.

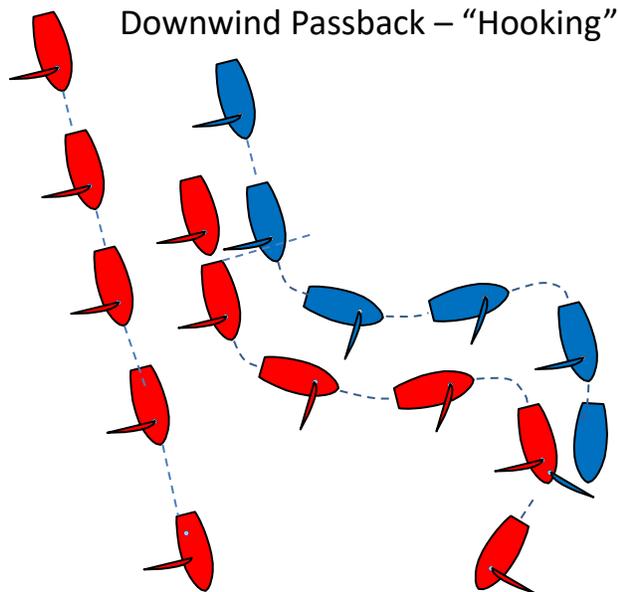
Two-on-two and four-on-four are alternative formats, but neither is used in high school sailing meets. Four-on-four is used in Opti racing and two-on-two is an excellent practice format to develop boat-on-boat skills.

Moves

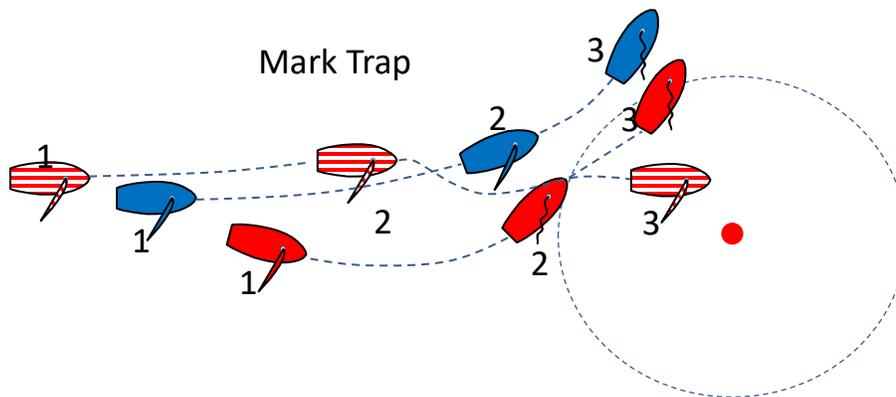
Team racing is very tactical. Simply sailing around the course as quickly as possible is usually not enough to win as a team. Success typically requires blocking and slowing opponents in order to advance teammates.

There are two main “moves” in team racing: the “**pass back**” and the “**mark trap**.” The goal of the pass back involving three boats sailing upwind, is for the leading boat to slow the next (opposing team's) boat in order for the third boat (the leading boat's teammate) to either tack away from the intermediate covering boat, or sail ahead faster than the covering boat.





The mark trap is more complicated. It involves one boat (red, below) stopping at a mark in a position where it can use the Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS) to hinder opposing boats rounding the mark, thereby allowing teammate(s) (striped, below) to catch up and then sail ahead.



Another tactic is for one boat to gybe onto a (right of way) starboard tack when close to a downwind mark, forcing boats just behind to do the same making them sail a considerable extra distance, and thus allow teammates to catch up.

Combinations

Team racers must think in terms of **combinations**, the three positions of their team's boats in the sequence of all boats. A team with a 1,2,6 has the first two boats leading the race and another boat in last place. The opponent has a 3,4,5. Team racers must know which combinations are winning (i.e. 10 points or less) and which are losing combinations and be able to recognize their current combination. The winning combinations are:

- 1-2-anything
- 2-3-4
- 1-3-anything
- 2-3-5
- 1-4-5

The first two are considered **stable winning combinations**. The next two are unstable winning combinations, and the last can be more or less stable depending on the gaps between boats. A winning combination is stable when an opponent would have to slow two of your teammates simultaneously in order to advance one of their boats. The trailing team's only chance is to sail faster than the leading team – just as passing might happen in fleet racing.

Plays

For every combination there is a **play** that each team should be trying to execute. The standard plays are:

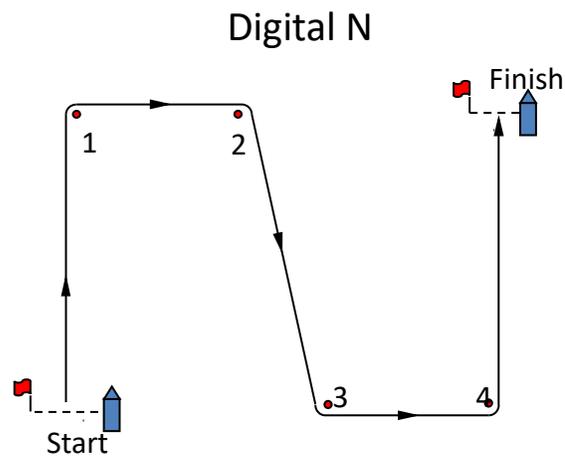
- Play 1 – Achieve or defend a 1-2-anything combination
- Play 2 – Achieve or defend a 2-3-4
- Play 4 – Achieve or defend a 1-4-5
- Chase – Catch and pass an opponent by out sailing them as in fleet racing
- Pairs – When a combination can't readily be determined (e.g. immediately after a start,) each boat just tries to win his pair. (Boats on opposing teams routinely pair up in team racing.) The team winning two pairs is in a winning combination.

Frequently, team members yell out the play to each other to communicate which play they should be executing. Strategies are not secret or mysterious. Both teams should understand opponent's proper play and should be executing a counter play of their own. The team that executes their play the best usually wins.

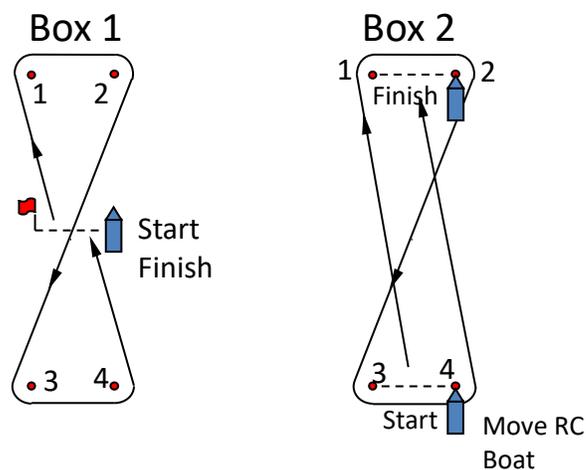
Race Courses

Team race courses should be short, 8 – 12 minutes. The length and configuration of team race courses should put a premium on racing tactics so that the outcome is not decided by boat speed alone.

The preferred course is a “digital N.” In addition to optimizing opportunities for the team behind, making the race more competitive and exciting, this course allows multiple races on the same course at the same time.



An alternative that is somewhat easier to set up is a box course. This course provides for the same mark rounding dynamics as a digital N, but the straight downwind leg is far less dynamic. It is also not conducive to running multiple races simultaneously as the fleets will not be separated.



The least desirable course is the basic port triangle with the start – finish in the middle. There are very few passing opportunities on the reaches or at mark roundings. A starboard triangle is slightly better. The triangle course saves only one mark move or a move of the committee boat while vastly diminishing the quality and excitement of the racing.

Protests and Umpiring

Team racing is close tactical racing where the rules are used both defensively and offensively. Most of the “moves” are made possible by “rights” given to one boat over another in the [Racing Rules of Sailing](#). If one boat feels that another has breached the [Racing Rules of Sailing](#) in any situation, she may hail "protest." In most of our high school meets, the sailors must settle their dispute by an offender taking a one turn (360°) penalty or following through with a formal protest. It is always a challenge to combine an excellent understanding of the rules with the ability of sailors to objectively assess and report the accurate positions of the boats, and temper that with a spirit of good sportsmanship. Settling meets in the protest room is not uncommon, but it is usually unsatisfying.

A better situation is the use of on-the-water umpiring. Just as when umpires are unavailable, if one boat feels that another has breached the [Racing Rules of Sailing](#) in any situation, she may hail "protest." If the protested boat does not exonerate herself with a one-turn penalty the protesting boat may hail "umpire." An on-the-water umpire will then make a decision, almost instantly, and impose a two-turn penalty on any boat judged to have broken a rule in the incident.

Umpires are typically used in championship events.

Multi-team Events

Each team race is head-to-head between two teams, and a meet is typically best of five. However, it is frequently desirable to have an event attended by more than two teams. Each team gets to race several teams while saving time and the hassles of travel, set up, and break down. Quad meets (four teams) are popular. At least twelve boats are required for efficient racing for a quad meet. Two races are typically on the course at the same time. (Venues with more than twelve boats can host events with six or more teams.) Meets between the teams are shortened to the best of three.

In championship events or tournaments, a round robin format in which each team races every other team is usually used. Multiple round robins are done when time permits. The Mass Bay League A Division Championship uses a bracketed format with seeding like the format used in tennis tournaments or college basketball.