

Marconi Sprint 15 Traveller Event **A guide for new comers!**

The following is intended to be a general guide for people who may not have competed in any / many Traveller Events before. It is only a guide and cannot be exhaustive – but hopefully it will help you enjoy the event by giving you an idea of what to expect!

Documents you need to read:

Notice of Race (NOR) – this is posted in advance on the Sprint 15 Association website. The NOR “announces” the traveller event and sets out the main format of the event and other useful information.

Sailing Instructions (SIs) – usually distributed when you register at the event on the day. The Sailing Instructions set out any specific instructions regarding the running of the event – eg, starts, courses, finishes, scoring etc. All events will run in accordance with the RYA Rules of Racing – the SIs will specify if there any variations to those rules for this event.

Make sure you have read the SIs before you go to the briefing – in case you have any questions.

Registration, Briefing and Signing On/Off:

Registration:

You will need to register on Saturday in Race Reception. It is a good idea to register as early as you can to give yourself plenty of time – it will be open from 9.30am.

You will need to complete an Entry Form confirming your details and that you (a) are a member of the Sprint 15 Association and (b) that you have adequate third party insurance. If you have pre-registered online – an entry form will be prepared for you and you just need to sign it.

You will also need to pay an entry fee - £30 - and be given a copy of the Sailing Instructions. Read these prior to the Briefing. You will also be able to pre-book your evening meal – (2 courses for £7 for adults).

Briefing:

This is scheduled for 11am Saturday - an hour before the first race. Have your boat set up and ready to go before the briefing so you are not rushed – particularly as you may need to launch some time before the first race to get to the sailing area. You may also want to get changed before the briefing too.

The briefing will usually confirm the key points in the SIs – eg. sailing area, course, signing on/off processes and any other specific points of information. Note – the race management committee will assume that you have read the SIs so they won't cover everything but if you are not sure about something – you can either ask the question at the briefing or check with your fellow competitors.

Signing On/Off:

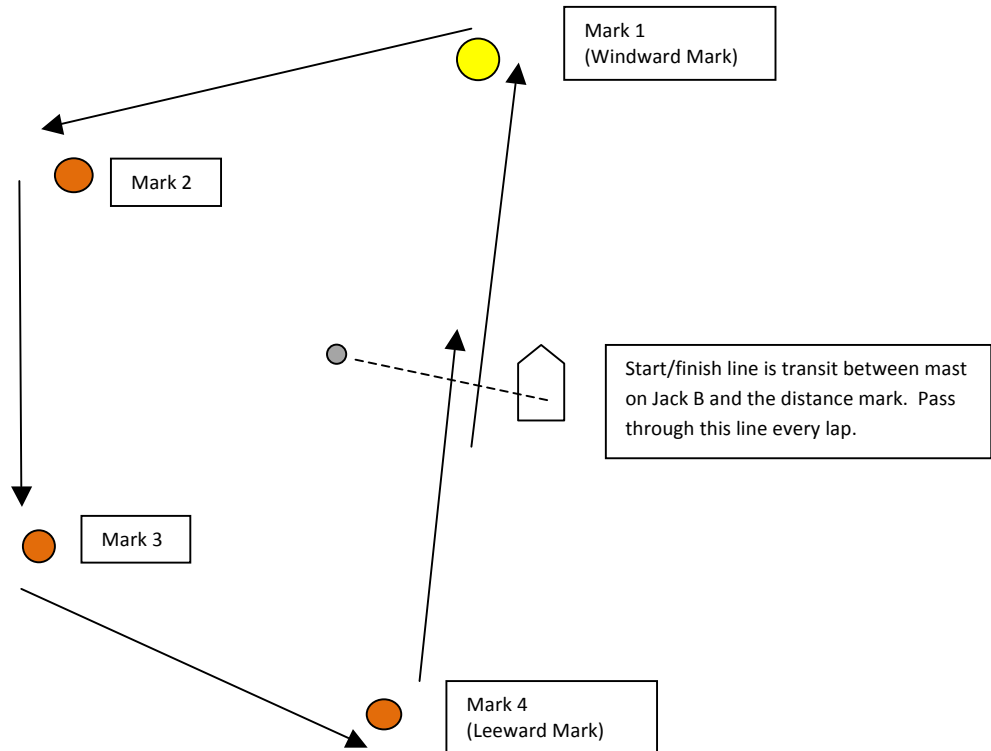
You will need to sign on and off in the normal manner. As there will be more than one race back to back – you will need to sign off separately for all races when you get back ashore to declare whether you have finished or retired. The sign on/off sheets will be in Race Reception.

Rigging and Preparation:

- Rig tension - If it is windy – it is generally worth having your rig tighter than normal. Otherwise have it at your normal rig tension.
- Batten tension – general rule of thumb: strong winds and light winds – loose batten tension so the sail can set flat. Medium wind range – apply a bit of batten tension to achieve a curved sail area.
- Trampoline – make sure you tighten it!
- Check you have everything on board – downhaul, righting line, rudders, tillerbar/extension, paddle, sail, mainsheet, hatch covers. It can be easy to forget something when you are not following your normal club racing routine! And don't forget your watch and setting it to the right start sequence.
- Back to back races – there will be back to back races which means you can be on the water for some time and hanging around between races is when you are likely to get cold. So dress accordingly and consider taking some water and snacks out with you too.

Race area / course:

- The racing will take place from a committee boat start – which this year will be Jack B.
- The race area will likely be in the bay towards Maylandsea but will be confirmed on the day.
- The course will normally be a trapezoid course round four marks – leaving all four marks to port as set out below. You will also need to sail through the start/finish line on every lap so the Race Officer can shorten the course at the appropriate time. Each race will be around 50 – 60 minutes long.
- The start sequence will be 5,4,1 go with pennant numeral 4 as the class flag (per club racing).



Long Distance Race:

The only exception to the above will be the long distance race which (weather permitting) will be a figure of eight race around Osea and Northey Islands.

The current plan is for this race to take place on Saturday afternoon as HW is at 2:30pm.

Again, this will be a committee boat start and finish.

Normally, this will involve the following course:

Osea to starboard,
Northey to port,
Osea to starboard,
turning mark to starboard (a mark at the end of Osea spit in the general vicinity of No.1)
and through the Committee boat line to finish.

If the winds are too light – it may be shortened to a race just round Osea Island instead.

A few words on rules

It is important – particularly when racing in a larger fleet – that you have an understanding of the main rules that are likely to apply when you are in close proximity to other boats.

The Sprint 15 fleet are all about good sailing and racing and do not bandy rules around unnecessarily. But – as with any racing or sailing – it is incumbent on each of us to understand our obligations and, most importantly, ensure that we and our boats all get home in one piece. Plus – having a grasp of the main rules will mean you are much more confident when approaching another boat(s) – and know whether you can call for right of way or whether you need to avoid them.

Having said the above, it is perfectly reasonable, particularly if you are new to racing in a larger fleet, to choose to “play it safe” and steer clear of getting mixed in with other boats where possible. If that feels better for you – then adopt it as your strategy until you feel a bit more comfortable getting in amongst things. Even sailors at the front of the fleet will sometimes opt to sail clear of a muddle of boats getting in each other’s way and even if it is a longer route, this can often be quicker in the end!

It is not possible to cover every racing rule here – but I have attached an appendix with some of the key ones to be aware of and offered some advice in relation to different situations. I have used “layman” terms rather than “rule-speak” for convenience plus there are also more complex situations where multiple rules apply which I have not covered here – for the avoidance of doubt, the Rule book over-rides anything I have written here.

Reading the rules can feel a bit overwhelming – so if you are not sure – just ask!

And finally – the golden rule:

Sailing and racing should be enjoyable! Competing in a Traveller event produces highs and lows no matter what your level of experience – but it will always provide valuable experience and learning which ultimately will help you sail better and gain more enjoyment.

The Sprint 15 fleet are competitive – but they are also very encouraging of people who are new to the fleet or to events – so never be afraid to ask for advice or help. The dinner and an evening in the bar can also provide great opportunities to chat about the racing and continue your learning off the water!

I hope you will join us this weekend and that you enjoy the event!

(Fingers crossed for the weather now)

Jenny
Catbert Too – 2025
March 2019

Appendix – Overview of some of the main Rules of Racing (see disclaimer at the end.....)

The Basics: The following core rules apply regardless -

Sportsmanship – comply with recognised principles of sportsmanship and fair play, accept the rules and be bound by them, make sure your conduct and behaviour is appropriate.

Safety – a competitor shall give all possible help to anyone in danger. Wear a proper flotation device (lifejacket/buoyancy aid).

Avoiding contact – ultimately, all boats have a responsibility to avoid contact if reasonably possible. If you are right of way boat and the give way boat is not keeping clear, it is better for you to take evasive action if at all possible and then call out their infringement. If you are right of way boat, you still need to give the other boat reasonable opportunity to keep clear.

Port / Starboard:

- When two boats meet on opposite tacks – the boat on starboard tack has right of way. Remember it applies on a reach and run as well as a beat.
- Port boats must keep clear – either by ducking behind, which can include slowing down first, or by tacking onto starboard. But you must not tack so close to the starboard boat that you impede them (known as “tacking in their water”).

On the same tack, overlapped:

- The windward boat shall keep clear of the leeward boat.

On the same tack, not overlapped:

- The boat clear astern shall keep clear of the boat ahead.
- If a boat clear astern becomes overlapped within two hull lengths of another boat, she shall not sail above her proper course whilst they remain overlapped on the same tack. ie you cannot sail inside another boat and then luff them off in the wrong direction.

Particular considerations at the start:

- All normal rules apply when sailing around before the start – keep your eyes peeled as people will be sailing around in all directions including sitting hove-to.
- Starboard start – it is generally better to start on a starboard tack and the start line will usually have a bias that encourages this. Trying to pick your way on port tack through the whole fleet on starboard is not recommended. Once you have started – you will need to tack at some point to get to the windward mark. Check carefully over your shoulder so you don't end up tacking onto port in front of boats above you who are still on starboard.
- If you are overlapped to windward of another boat on the start line, (eg. they are sitting to your left if you are on starboard) they can point up and you must follow suit to keep clear. Competitors who have this right of way will generally call “Up” rather loudly! Equally, if you have someone to windward of you, they must keep clear of you and you can make that call also. Ideally, you are aiming to find a place on the line where you have a bit of space below you. You won't get luffed up and you can also power up and get going at the gun, rather than pinching too close to the wind or stalling out. On busy start lines, this can be tricky.
- Following on from the above – if you are at the committee boat end of the line and you are overlapped to windward of a boat or boats below you, you have to give way, regardless of where the committee boat is. Equally, you must not hit the committee boat. As such, it is perfectly legitimate for another boat(s) to squeeze you out and force you the wrong side of the committee boat and mess up your start. So take care not to put yourself in that position in the run up to the start gun.
- **Over the line** - If the normal prep flag is used (the Blue Peter) and you are over the line at the start, you need to re-cross the line whilst staying clear of all other boats when doing so. If one or more boats are over the line, the race officer will indicate this by giving a second sound signal and dipping the class flag until all offending boats have re-crossed the line correctly.
- **General Recall** - If lots of boats are over the line or there is a problem with the start – the Race Officer may decide to do a General Recall. If so, there will be two additional sound signals and the General Recall flag will be displayed. The start sequence will begin again from scratch – one minute after the General Recall flag is lowered.

- If there is more than one General Recall – the Race Officer may choose to fly the Black Flag instead of the Blue Peter. In this case – any boat that is over the line **within the final minute of the start sequence** will be disqualified. So don't be over the line – simples!

At the marks of the course:

Overlap at three boat lengths:

If you have an overlap inside another boat at the point the first boat enters “the zone” – then the other boat must keep clear and give you room to round the mark, regardless of whether the overlap is maintained or not after that point. “The zone” is defined as three boat lengths from the mark – so requires some judgement. If you have an overlap at that point, you may call for mark room – “water at the mark”.

Equally, if you are clear astern at the three boat lengths – you have to keep clear even if you establish an overlap after that point – usually the other boat will call “no water” if they believe this to be the case. Taking avoiding action if you are on the inside but don't have water is very difficult so plan ahead and avoid getting in this situation – otherwise you will find yourself pushed the wrong side of the mark.

Remember that this rule applies when multiple boats approach a mark – eg. a boat on the outside of three boats who have an overlap at the point the zone is entered, will need to give enough room for all three boats to pass round the mark.

Important exception to note!

The above does not apply when approaching the windward mark on opposite tacks. In this instance, normal port/starboard rule applies regardless of the mark. If you come into the zone on port and then tack inside a starboard boat that is fetching the mark, you cannot cause that boat to sail above close hauled to avoid you. So unless they happen to have left loads of room between them and the mark (unlikely) – they are entitled to sail close hauled round the mark without giving you any room.

So it is usually best to come into the windward mark on starboard – unless you are really sure that you have plenty of room to approach on port and round the mark without infringing anyone on starboard.

Getting a mark wrong – If you go the wrong side of a mark, you need to “unwind” and retrace your steps back to the right side of the mark and then round it to the correct side. Again, be careful not to infringe other boats in the process. Given the trapezoid course leaves all marks to port, this should not be a problem.

Hitting a mark – penalty turn:

If you hit or touch a mark with any part of you or your boat when rounding it – you must complete a 360 penalty turn, well clear of any other boats (see below).

If you infringe a rule – you need to complete a penalty turn of 360 degrees as soon as is reasonably practical. Sail well clear of other competitors to complete the 360 – usually a gybe followed by a tack.

Disclaimer -

I have sometimes used “layman” terms rather than “rule-speak” for convenience plus there are also more complex situations where multiple rules apply which I have not covered here
Comments/suggestions about how to approach marks / the starts etc are Jenny's viewpoint only and do not form part of the Racing Rules.
For the avoidance of doubt, the Racing Rules of Sailing and the event Sailing Instructions over-ride anything I have written here!