

Idiots Guide to Match Racing for the Commodores' Challenge

Not everyone is familiar with match racing so the following is offered as an introduction to help you unravel what is going on out there! For complete rules you need to look at Appendix C of the Racing Rules of Sailing 2021-2024.

The **objective** is to beat the other boat on the water over a best of 5 series (first to 3 wins). Boats are identical Elan 333s and crewed by 10 youth (under 18 years on 27th December 2019). Crews change boats after race 1 and 3.

The course is **windward/leeward, usually 2 laps with starboard mark roundings** started from the committee boat by Race Officers Jim Macgregor and Nick Stone.

Penalties are ruled on the water by an umpire boat (Lucy Macgregor) with the help of a wing boat (Kate Macgregor) to indicate to the umpires if boats are overlapped.

A boat protests by waving Flag Y (diagonal red & yellow stripes). One boat is designated the yellow boat and the other boat is blue. The umpires wave the yellow or blue flag to indicate a penalty against that boat, or a green and white flag for "no penalty".




A boat cannot take the penalty before the start and the guilty boat does not have to take the penalty straight away, unless:

- its flag is accompanied by a red flag (indicates the umpires judge the infringing boat to have got an unfair advantage from the infringement);
- or it is already carrying a penalty and so must take at least one as soon as possible.

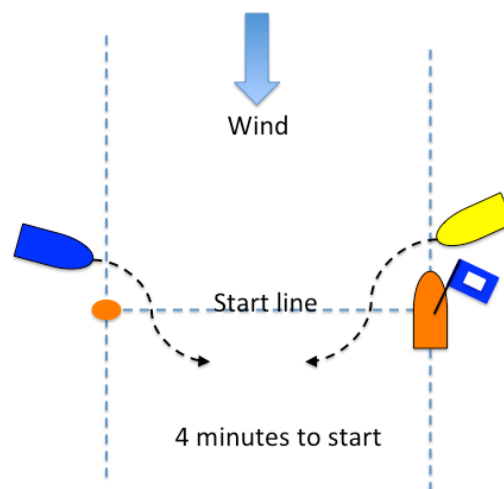
A boat on a windward leg **takes a penalty** by making a single gybe; and on a downwind leg by a single tack.

Other rules are essentially the same as for normal fleet racing with 3 main differences:

- 1) The zone at a mark is 2 boat lengths – 20m for these boats – rather than the normal 3 boat lengths.
- 2) Rule 17 in the RRS is deleted which means a boat establishing an overlap to leeward can sail above its proper course (i.e. can luff the windward boat.
- 3) And the big one, the prestart.....

Time to start (mins)	Flag on committee boat	Sound	Means
7	F displayed 	One	Attention signal
6	F removed	None	
5	Numeral pennant 1 displayed 	One	Warning signal
4	P displayed 	One	Preparatory signal
2	Yellow or blue displayed if either boat has not crossed from the course side correctly	One	End of pre-start entry time
1	P removed	One long	
0	Numeral pennant 1 removed	One	Starting signal

At the preparatory signal (4 mins) boats must be outside a line perpendicular to the start line.



To start correctly they must cross the start line from course side in the 2 minutes following the preparatory. If either fails to do so before the 2 minute signal then it receives a penalty (signaled by the respective coloured flag raised on the committee boat at 2 minutes).

Now the fun starts: Yellow, coming in from starboard has the initial right of way advantage and will try to keep Blue (from port end) out to the left as it is difficult to get back to the start line from here (coffin corner). Using the usual rules of racing, boats attack each other to try and get an advantage at the start and get penalties on the other boat. A boat does not need to start at the gun, it just wants to start ahead of the other boat.

Once the starting signal goes they are racing up to the windward mark as in a normal race – 1, 2 or 3 laps finishing downwind with spinnakers back at the committee boat. Each race is won by the first boat to cross the finish/start line with all penalties taken.