



# BEER CAN RACECOURSE TACTICS: HOW TO MAKE THE COMPLEX LESS COMPLICATED

Tips and coaching on how to think about tactics while having a good time on a Beer Can race.



## SEMINAR CONTENT

1. Strategy versus Tactics defined
2. Starting line tactics
3. Upwind tactics
4. Downwind tactics
5. Tactics at the marks
6. Tactics at the finish line
7. Resources
8. Q & A

# TODAY'S MODERATORS:

## Ray Douglas

- Background:
  - 39 years of racing and blue-water cruising experience
  - Pacific Coast (California, Mexico), Florida Gulf, Lake Michigan
  - Lido 14, Laser, Laser 28, SC-33, SC-40, SC-50, SC-70, J24, J35, Express 37, Beneteau First 42, Tartan Ten, J109
  - Southern California PHRF Champion
  - NOOD Champion (+10 podiums)
  - Verve Cup (3 podiums)
  - Chicago YC Race To Mackinac (2 podiums)



# TODAY'S MODERATORS:

## Bill Strzelewicz

- Background
  - 42 years racing and blue water sailing.
  - New England, East coast, Cape Cod, Nantucket Sound, Block Island, Chesapeake Bay, Bermuda, and Lake Michigan
  - Collegiate dingy sailing team, and Offshore sailing team with Mass Maritime Academy
  - Newport to Bermuda race 2 times and the Marion Bermuda Race 2 times, before GPS made it easy!
  - Several Chicago Mac races, Queens Cup, Death's Door Challenge the Hook
  - Various podiums all done as a team.



# STRATEGY VERSUS TACTICS DEFINED

## Race Strategy

- The “Big Picture” plan
- Based on projected data:
  - Wind forecasts (strength and direction)
  - Steady
  - Persistent
  - Persistent shift right or left
  - Oscillating
  - Oscillating Persistent
- Competitors Standings

“The race plan is to get to the right side of the racecourse immediately, and then protect the right.”

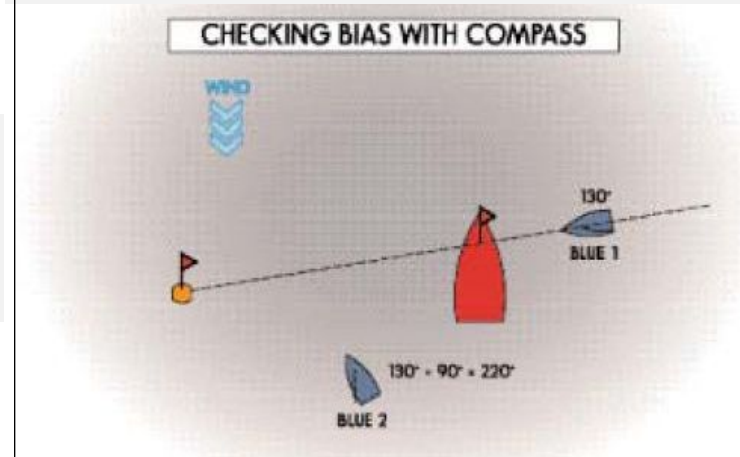
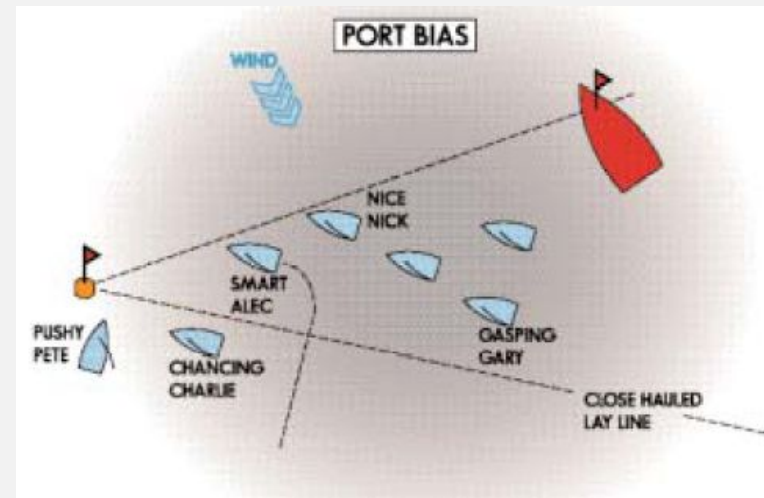
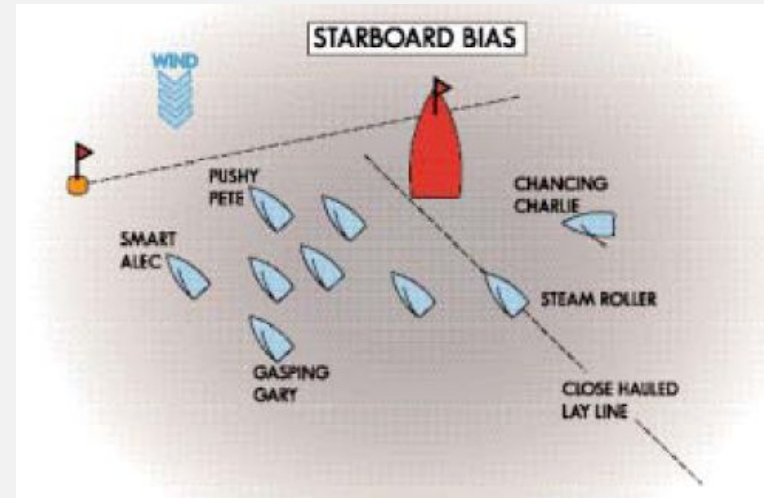
## Race Tactics

- Boat-on-boat actions you take to execute the strategy plan
- Based on approaching competing boats:
  - Should we tack/gybe?
  - Should we dip?
  - Leebow?
  - Tight cover?
  - Loose cover?
  - Higher and slower? (upwind)
  - Lower and faster? (upwind)
  - Higher and faster? (downwind)
  - Lower and slower? (downwind)

“We can’t cross this starboard tack boat, so prepare to dip. We want to continue to the right side of the course.”

# STARTING LINE TACTICS

- Have a consistent process that you always use
  1. Time the line
  2. Check for a favored end
  3. Decide which end to start on based on strategy and line bias
  4. Top-third, middle-third, bottom-third
  5. Position your boat, circling in the area that you want to start
  6. Clear air with a hole to leeward
  7. Should be trimming on for full speed no later than 30 seconds to go.

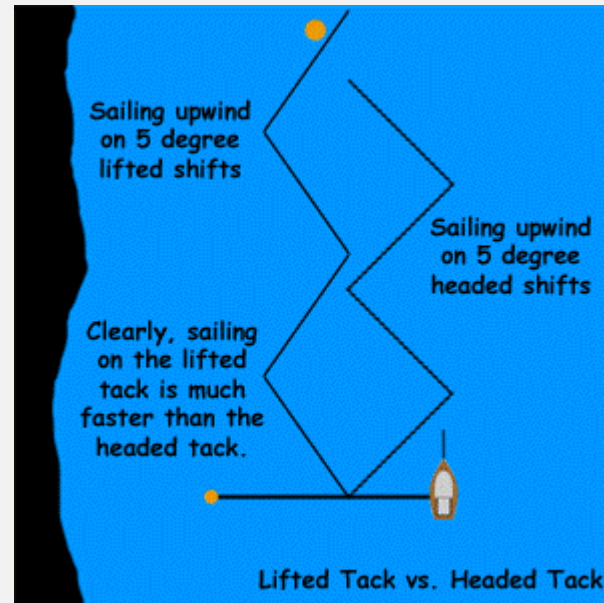




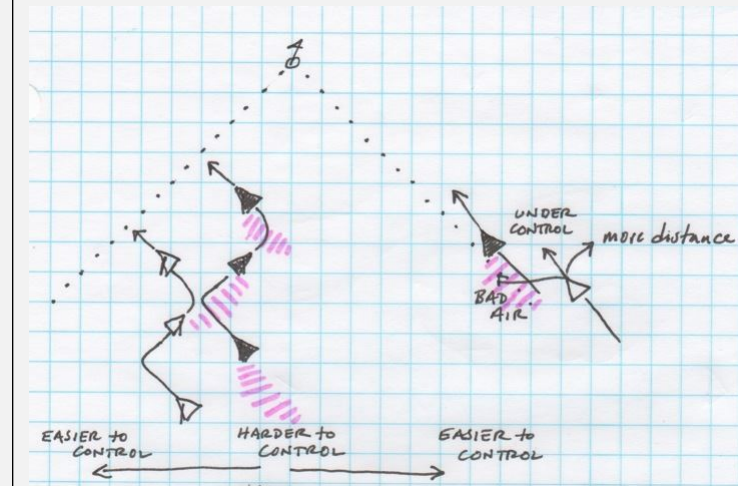
# UPWIND TACTICS

- Four key things to execute upwind
  1. Make sure you are going the right way (strategy plan)
  2. Once you are on your chosen side of the course, get on the “Long Tack” as soon as possible
    1. Try to always sail on the “lifted tack”
  3. Control approaching competitors while executing your strategy plan
  4. Stay off lay lines until you are within 5-10 boat lengths from the mark

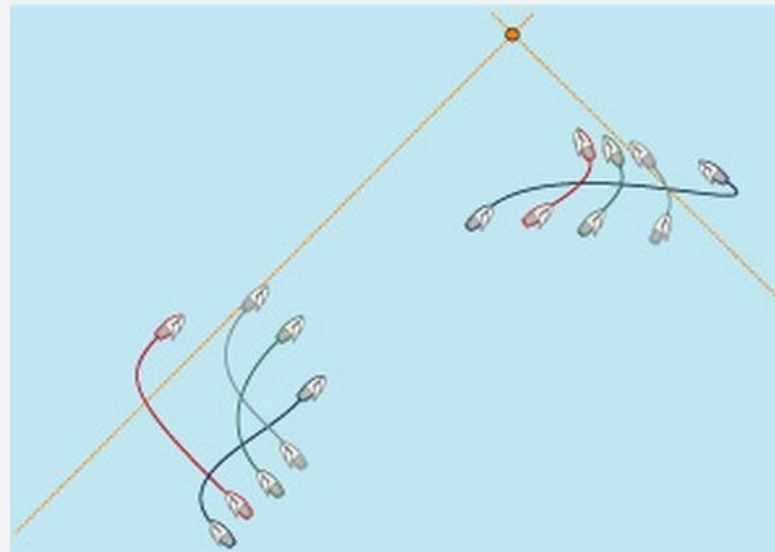
## When to Tack? Lifters vs. Headers



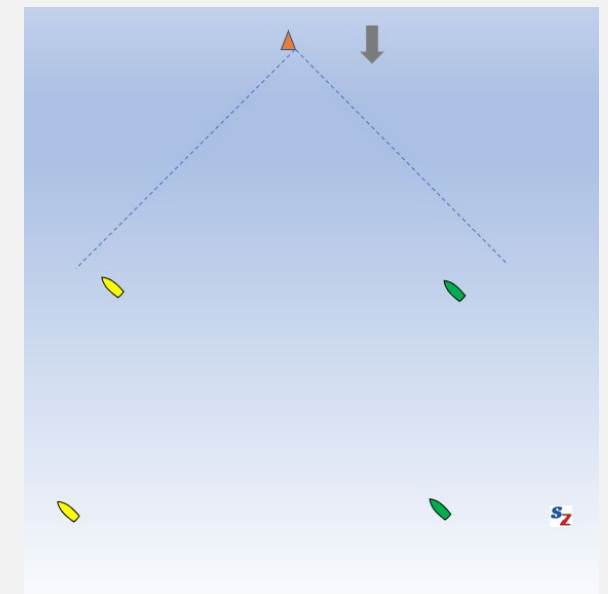
## When to Tack? Controlling other boats



## When to Tack? The top of the course



## Sailing on the “Long Tack”



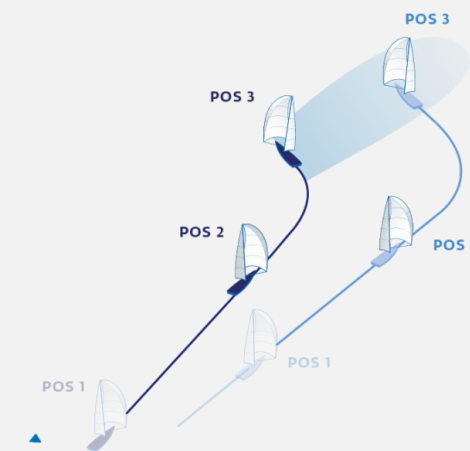
# DOWNWIND TACTICS

- Four key things to execute downwind
  1. Trim and go fast first
  2. Sail on the headed gybe
    1. That means gybe on the lifts
  3. Push competitors to the sides and attack on when they gybe back toward the middle
  4. When approaching the bottom mark, try to establish an inside overlap by crossing over

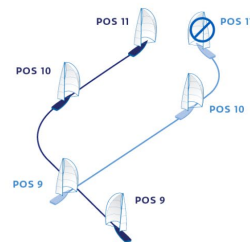
## Speed first... Trim and go...



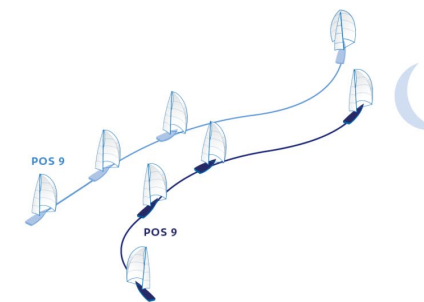
## Set-up for an attack to pass



## Cross over to control on starboard



## When attacking, gybe 2-3 boat lengths away





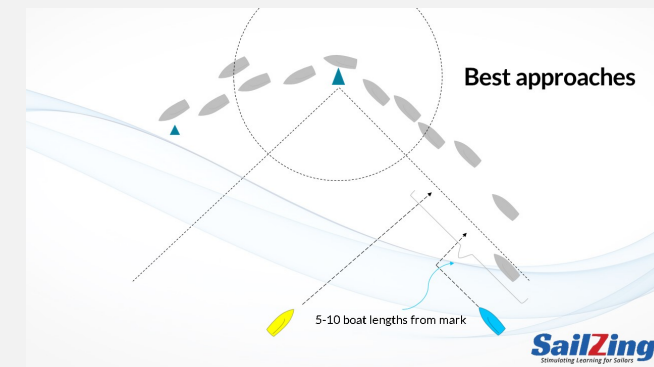
# TACTICS AT THE MARKS

- Windward mark roundings:
  1. Set up on the lay line 5-10 lengths away with about a 1/2 to one boat length above lay line
  2. Exit high to protect your wind lane, then soak and set
- Leeward mark roundings:
  1. Approach the mark wide and make your turn upwind tight to the mark
  2. Exit the mark in a high point mode (its slow but you will keep clear and have weather gauge)

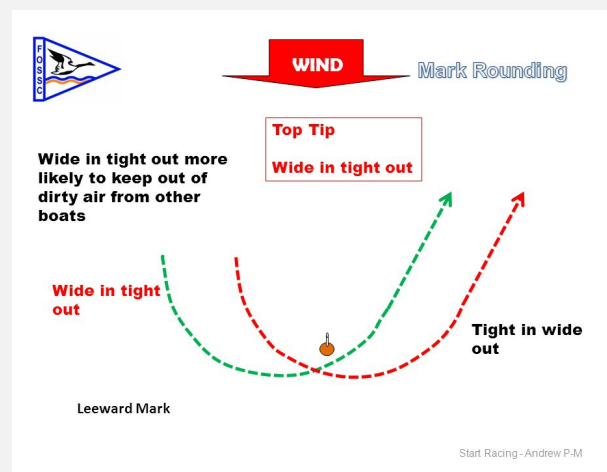
## Windward Mark: Set-up on lay line with "\$ in the bank"



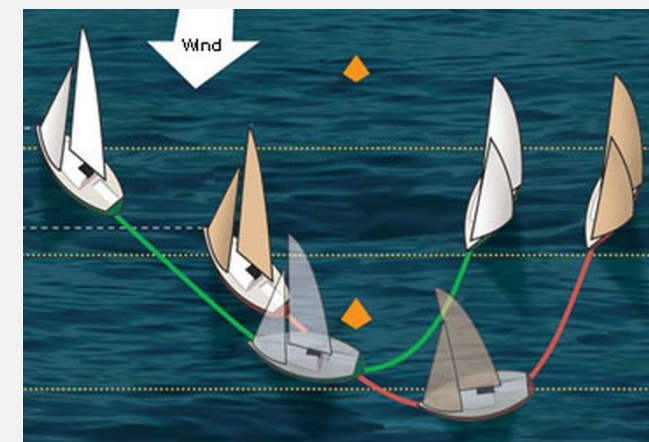
## Windward Mark approaches



## Leeward Mark: Get clear air

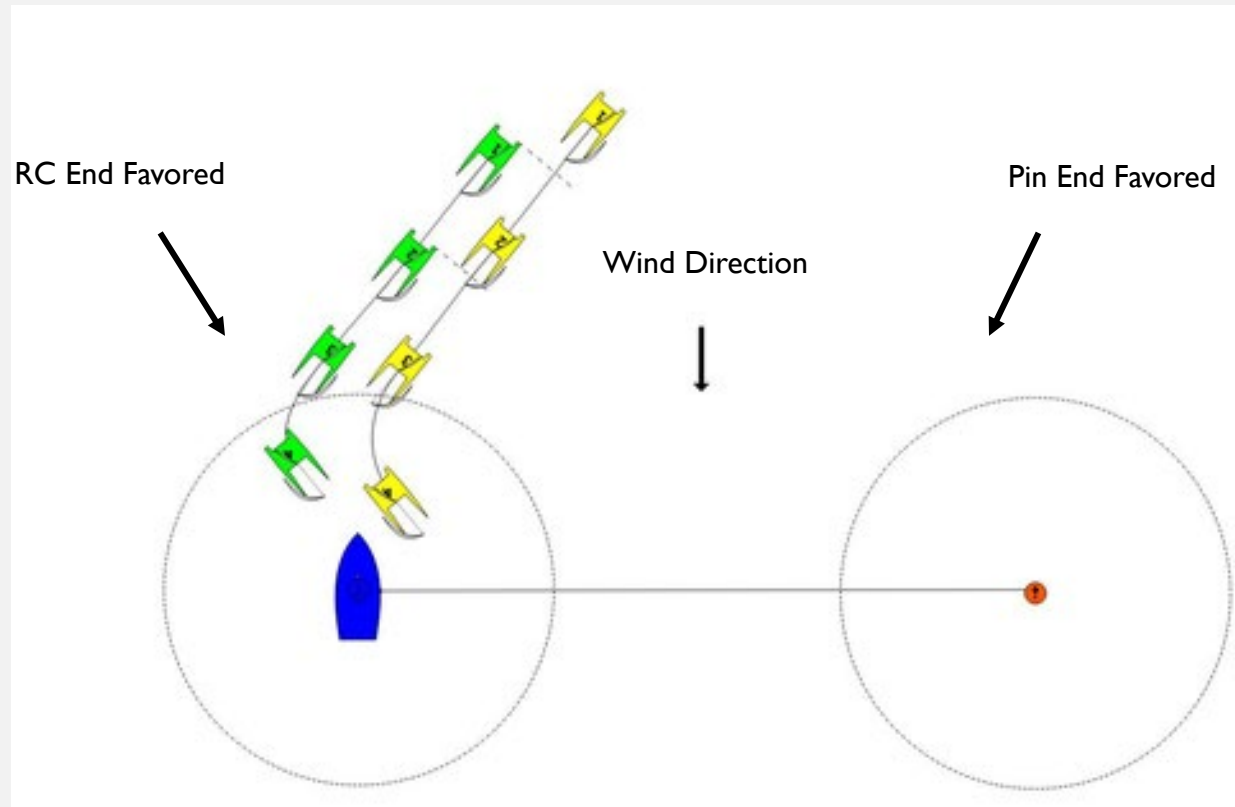


## Downwind: Tactical Rounding



# TACTICS AT THE FINISH LINE

- Starboard approach is very strong position
- Determine the favored end of the line
  - The most “upwind” end
- Negotiate with other boats around you
  - All boats must have room to finish
  - Leverage your inside overlap



# RESOURCES



**Performance Racing Tactics: Bill Gladstone**



**Championship Sailing: Gary Jobson**



**Advanced Racing Tactics: Dr. Stewart Walker**



**Speed & Smarts: Dave Dellenbaugh**



**CASRA: Racing Seminars (see website)**



**Go sail with a better sailor: Get an invite**



**You Tube: Upwind and Downwind Sailing Tactics**



**FINAL Q & A**