TEAM RACING

Team racing is format of yacht racing. It has unique characteristics which will appeal to sailors looking for something different to fleet racing.

In simple terms teams race against other teams. The teams are usually teams of 3 but it could be 2 or 4. As long as each team has equal boats they do not have to be all the same. You could have 2 teams of 3 Optimists or two teams each with a 420, a sunburst and a starling. Don't be constrained by not having enough boats all of the same type.

Teams sail a round robin whereby each team sails against each other team – maybe several times depending on the time you have. The team with the most wins is the winner If you only have a few people they can rotate around the teams. In that case if an individual is in a team which wins, they get a point. The person with the most points is the winner.

Some organisers will struggle to work out the format. How many races should they allow for? There has to be a change of mindset and realise that even at World Championship level it is quite acceptable to adjust the schedule to suit the time available. You might, for example, decide you will run the finals after lunch, but before lunch you will run as many round robins as possible.

Each race should take only between 6-9 mins each, resulting in between 6 and 8 races per hour. The number of races in a round robin where you have N teams is

N x (N-1) / 2   So 6 teams would be 6 x 5 / 2   =15 races or perhaps 2 hours for a round robin.

It is important to draw up the schedule of races early so that all teams understand when they are sailing. A team might do races 1 & 2 but then go ashore for races 3,4 and 5, and then back out for races 6 & 7. They need to keep track of this or there will be excessive delays and time is of the essence. If possible have someone ashore looking after this aspect.

The course is very short. If boats are being shared organise changeover from an RIB on the water near the finish. The starting schedule will be determined by how quickly the sailors can get back to the start area and if you have umpires, how quickly they can break away from a previous race in order to be in the start area by the 2 min prep signal for the next start. There is a 3 min start sequence.

The following pages contain advice on how to run a major team racing regatta. We suggest you do not attempt to achieve this level just for club activities. If you can umpire races that's great but not essential. Give it a go at a simple level.

Remember half of all contestants in a team race are winners. That may be a new experience for some sailors and does their egos no harm at all.

Race Management of Team Racing for a major event when boats are supplied.

1) Notice of Race

The Notice of Race should be issued far enough in advance of the contest to allow teams to form. This may take longer than the normal decision making process for fleet racing events.

The Notice of Race should advise what types of boats will be used, whether boats will supplied, details about any damage bonds, and requirements of the crews such as age, sex and weight requirements.

It should preferably state whether the contest will be umpired, although this <u>must</u> be stated in the SIs

2) Format

Team Racing is normally based on 3 identical boats in each team racing against another 3 identical boats. Every effort is made by the Race Committee to set the boats up equally or at least to even up the teams. It is the team result which counts rather than individual performances. In practice the races are short tactical events where boat speed is of lesser importance and a knowledge of the rules, and manoeuvring ability are paramount.

A contest would normally consist of a Round Robin(s) where each team races each other team and this is followed by a final's series of the top teams. If time allows a 'plate finals' might be sailed amongst those teams eliminated earlier.

Races are timed to last around 6 - 9 minutes although races as short as 5 minutes are quite effective. The course length is quite short depending on the class of boat being used. Courses used are box courses where the start and finish are at the same place, an 'S' course and a 'W' The latter two have the advantage of having the finish separate to the start so that racing is not held up whilst boats finish.

Unlike fleet racing, it is acceptable to vary the format throughout the event. This can be done by changing the number of rounds so that the time available is filled with racing.

3) Sailing Instructions

The Sailing Instructions (SI) for team racing are very different to those for fleet racing. Umpiring introduces a new set of requirements which must be included in SIs for team racing. There are usually a number of SIs related to borrowed equipment and how damage will be dealt with, how bonds will be forfeited, and what can and cannot be adjusted on the boats.

4) Personnel

The **Race Officer** is in overall control of the event but does not necessarily sight the line and could be based on land. He will make all calls as to the running of the programme which may be affected by weather, gear breakages, problems with changeovers etc etc.

If the start and finish are not at the same place there is a requirement for both a starter and a finisher. The start boat will have a starter / line sighter, a timer controller, and a flag operator. Although individually skilled none of these need the skills of a race officer.

The **starter** is in charge of the starting system and needs to be familiar with recalls, postponements and abandonments. There is not usually any provision for general recalls but a call of "All boats OCS" is a feasible call. The Race Officer usually takes responsibility for when to interrupt the programme for weather or logistical reasons.

The **finisher** normally just records the numbers of the boats as they cross the line. The results section is responsible, frequently through a computer programme, to decide which team won. He will also need to be familiar with the rules that apply near the finish especially those regarding penalty turns.

The **Mark Layer** needs to be very familiar with the whole race programme so that changes of course layout are dealt with without bringing the whole event to a grinding stop unless there has been a major windshift. If the mark layer can lay a mark in the new position before removing the old mark, without confusing the sailors then a quick change can be made. A skilled mark layer will constantly monitor the duration of races and will be ready to adjust the course length after consultation with the Race Officer. There is no requirement for any signals related to course changes.

The Boatmaster should have boatbuilding skills and have the ability to make quick repairs to keep the yachts sailing.

The Boat Marshall This involves monitoring progress and keeping the crews informed as to when they are needed for their next race. Although it is their responsibility to find these things out, they need good information.

The **Scheduler** advises the Race Officer on matters related to how the programme is running with a view to planning a suitable ongoing format

The **Results** person who receive information direct from the finisher uses a manual or computerised programme to keep and display an up to date record, as there is always a pool of spectators ashore wanting to know the latest score.

Umpires are central to team racing in the more important contests. The umpires make calls for on the water penalties and monitor boat damage. If they witness a collision between boats they will advise the Race Officer, who in turn will alert the Boatmaster, and advise the competitor by the use of the black flag.
It is important that they are competent as they have limited time to make their decision. NZ has a small pool of umpires and clubs are encouraged to train new umpires by placing them alongside more experienced umpires during a contest. Ideally there are two umpires per umpire boat and 3 umpire boats per race. This puts a huge demand on resources and sometimes cannot be achieved. In this case umpires should be situated at the hot spots - starts, mark roundings etc.

5) Equipment

Separate start and finish, boats are required. However team racing usually takes place close to land for the spectators and to make for easy changeovers. A smaller committee boat might be quite adequate in these circumstances. The mark layer will need a dedicated boat. Changeovers will probably be done by ferrying crews out to the race area in RIBs if the yachts are to come alongside. If yachts are to go alongside a wharf or other large hard sided structure it is important there is plenty of padding.

Umpires will need a number of boats although these could be rigid sided boats. They should however be small easily manoeuvred and capable of keeping up with the fleet.

Marks can be small because the course is so short. As a result the ground tackle can be quite light.

Because of the high numbers of start sequences to be run it is convenient to have an automatic timing device operating a sound signal. If you use one of these the Sailing Instructions must state that the sound signal takes precedence over the flag signals as the flag signal system as outlined in rule 26 does not apply. There is normally an attention signal (often Flag W) at the start of any session, and a warning signal at 3 minutes to go. This is followed by a series of count down signals at 2 mins, 1min, and 30 seconds etc.

The recall system is usually similar to fleet racing involving Flag X and Rule 29.2 but in addition it is normal to display a flag of a colour corresponding to the colour of the team whose boat(s) are OCS. It is acceptable to hail the identification of the boats OCS e.g "Red 7 Red 8 Blue 3" The committee boat therefore needs to be equipped with such flags.

It is helpful to display the race number and the colours of the teams to start next. Not so much for the teams, but the umpires who are dealing with a large number of races. They need to keep notes of what happened in which race. A board which displays the race number and some other simple way of displaying the next colours to start, such as the recall flags, should be added to the list of equipment. They can be removed one minute before the start to be available at recall time if needed.

6) The Course

The course is very short. The target duration is about 8 minutes although anything from 5 to 12 seems to be acceptable. This means that the first beat is about 100m long. Because Team Racing is a spectator sport with at least the non sailing teams ashore watching, it is important to site the course close to land. Less significant is any land effect on the wind which in such a small course area affects everyone equally. More important is the need to minimise travelling distance for crew changeovers.

There is no specific course configuration but a popular course is -: the Starboard 'S' - beat to mark 1 (S), beam reach to mark 2 (S), run to mark 3 (P), beam reach to mark 4 (P), beat to the finish. Sailors like the run to be a long leg and for the last beat to be fairly long. To maintain the target time it is necessary to make the first beat and the

reaches short. Consequently a relatively small windshift can convert the first beat to a fetch, and bring mark 3 too close to boats starting the next race. In fresh breezes when legs can be longer this can be avoided, but in light winds it is a juggling act.

A skilled mark layer who is responsible for maintaining the course configuration can be left to move marks as and when he thinks fit between fleets. No change of course signals are given. Marks are simply dragged into their new position.

Most attention is paid to maintaining the first leg and keeping the lines square to the course, but the mark layer should be constantly watchful for changes that are required.

Courses are not shortened nor adjusted for length during a race, and normally only abandoned if the first beat becomes a fetch or the time limit runs out.

The start and finish lines are short - say 20m, as there are only 6 boats racing at any time. Consequently the angle can easily change significantly as the committee boats swing with the breeze or tide. If this becomes a problem it pays to lengthen the line to reduce the effect.
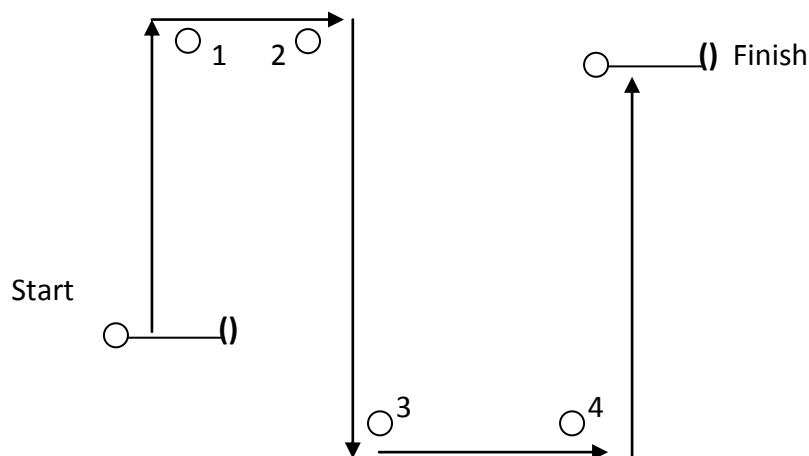
7) Race management

Team racing takes place over an extended time, possibly several days, and it is not easy to state exactly how many races will be held. The rate at which the organisers get through the races will depend on how many yachts they have. Sailors transferring in and out of boats all takes time. It will also be affected by the number of umpires they have, who at least need to monitor the starts. Ideally a team of umpires will work with a race from start to finish and so it may be necessary to have more than one team. With one race about to finish, another half way and another about to start a high demand is placed on umpires.

From an organisational point of view the delay between starts should be kept to a minimum. If you have plenty of umpires a typical schedule would be -:
3 Minute start sequence, Fleet 1
3 minute spell
3 minute start sequence, Fleet 2
3 minute spell
3 minute start sequence, Fleet 3
3 minute spell
3 Minute start sequence, Fleet 1 and so on.

This means that Fleet 1 for example sail their race for say 8 mins and then have 4 minutes to swap crews and get down to the start area for the start of their next start sequence. If this is too quick the spell period can be adjusted. The Race Committee should be ready to postpone at short notice if the umpires have not returned to the start area by the preparatory signal. (the 2 minute in a 3 minute start sequence).
Five short sound signals is the usual postponement signal, combined with the removal of the start sequence flags if displayed. To re-start the sequence make another five short sounds just prior to the new <u>warning</u> signal.

At this rate it is possible to maintain roughly 8 races per hour. The number of races in a round robin can be calculated from the formula N x (N - 1) divided by 2 where N is the number of teams
e.g 6 teams is 6 x 5 / 2 = 15 races. It would be possible therefore to sail a round robin in 2 hours if everything else goes smoothly.

To make best use of the time allowed for the event it is normal to schedule one or more round robins to start with followed by a finals series. This provides a number of points at which the programme can be truncated and a winner found. This concept takes some getting used to if the sailors are used to a fixed format fleet racing concept. It is therefore essential to be seen to be fair and to set out what you will try and achieve and what you will do if time is cut short. The Race Committee which should include at least the Race Officer, the Boatmaster and the Scheduler should meet regularly to review how the programme is going.

If possible organise a plate finals to establish the minor places. No matter what else is organised it is normal to try and at least complete the round robin for which a score sheet is illustrated on following pages

8) Umpiring
Umpiring is a very important part of Team Racing. At a junior level it may not be essential, but at a higher level it almost certainly will be. If there is an incident between boats a boat which may have broken a rule has the opportunity to exonerate herself by taking a 360° turn. If they do not, an umpire may impose a penalty which will be two 360° turns. Team Racing is a very tactical sport with boats trapping opposition team member boats in order to promote their own team. There are usually many calls for the umpires to make. The umpires also monitor any collisions to establish who pays for the damage.

9) Results

The finisher should be familiar with the rules relating to taking penalties at the finish. Frequently finishes are very close and a boat taking a penalty close to the finish may manoeuvre very quickly and possibly cross the finish line more than once. The finisher needs to appreciate what is happening in order to score the race correctly. (See Rule 44.2)

The most important information is which team won. However if there is a protest, or if a boat was OCS and subsequently disqualified or there is a tie, it may be necessary to know the actual finishing order of the boats. Every effort should be made to identify sail numbers but at least record the boats by team, e.g. Blue, Blue, Red, Red, Red, Blue – win to Blue

Results should be radioed ashore on a regular basis as there is keen interest ashore and with the tight finishes it is not always clear who won.