

## **New to Racing – During the Race, including some basic rules**

So, you've got over the start line – what now?? Hopefully you will have written down/memorised the course before you left shore so you know where you are going next.

At FOSSC, although the start and finish lines are (usually) the same, you do NOT have to go through the start-finish line on each lap (unless specifically indicated on the course board). You DO have to pass between the stripey pole on the Committee Boat and the buoy with the stripey pole in order to start and to finish a race (unless it is a pursuit race which doesn't have a finish line).

**Rules:** There is a whole book full of rules which is published by World Sailing and updated every 4 years. It is called the 'Racing Rules of Sailing' (RRS). You can find it online at [https://www.sailing.org/tools/documents/RRS20212024Final-\[26369\].pdf](https://www.sailing.org/tools/documents/RRS20212024Final-[26369].pdf). There are 50+ pages of rules plus another 100 or so pages of appendices!! It covers rules for all types of racing from club racing to the international round the world races, as well as dinghies, windsurfers, etc. To be honest, I wouldn't advise reading it thoroughly if you are just starting racing as it can be a bit complex. However, you should know about some basic rules to help you and others enjoy your race. The descriptions of rules below are to get you started. For full definitions, please ref to the RRS.

Also, you should be aware that our own FOSSC Sailing Instructions, which are on our website at <https://www.fossc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Club-General-Sailing-Instructions-Issue-2-Final.pdf> give more information about how our races operate, and in particular where we have changed the RRS, e.g. the RRS start sequence is 5-4-1-Go, whereas we use a 4-2-Go format.

### **Some Basic Rules:**

**Sportsmanship:** All racers should obey the rules, and if they accidentally infringe them, they should do penalty turns (one turn = 360 degrees including a tack and a gybe). You should also do what you can to avoid colliding with another boat. If you hit a mark, you need to do **one** penalty turn; if you collide with another boat when you are in the wrong, or if another boat has to alter course to avoid hitting you when you are in the wrong, then you need to do **two** complete turns. You should find a space as soon as possible, and away from other boats to do your turn(s). If there is disagreement on the water as to who was right and who was wrong, a Protest can be heard after the race. I won't go into that further here.

**Port – Starboard (RRS 10):** Most people should be aware of this rule as it is taught on every sailing course! If two boats are coming together, the one on port will give way to the one on starboard. (Note that there are one or two instances where this does not hold true, but it is rare that you come across them so if someone appears to contravene this rule, do ask for advice after the race).

**Windward Boat Keep Clear (RRS 11):** If two boats are on the same tack, and are overlapped, the boat to windward will keep clear of the boat to leeward. In this rule, the same 'tack' means both on port or both on starboard, e.g. if the course of the race crosses itself, you could be close-hauled on starboard and there is another boat sailing downwind on a reach on starboard. The other boat will have to give way to you. Another scenario where this comes into play is if two boats are close-hauled and beating, but the one to leeward is pointing higher into the wind than the other. The windward boat will have to tack (or go behind the leeward boat) to avoid a collision.

**Water at the Mark (RRS 18.2):** Imagine two boats are sailing towards a mark on the same tack. If there is no overlap between the two boats when the lead boat reaches an imaginary point 3 boat lengths from the mark, then the lead boat has 'right of way' at that mark and even if the boat behind is moving faster and catches up, it has no right to squeeze inside the other boat to get round the mark.

However, if there is an overlap at the imaginary 3 boat length point, then the outside boat (which is leading) has to give enough room to the inside boat for the inside boat to get round the mark without touching it. In this case, the helm of the inside boat will ask for 'Water, please' as the boats approach the 3 boat length imaginary point.

It is important to remember that the Port-Starboard rule takes priority over 'water at the mark.' This is why it is usually advisable to approach a mark on starboard.

**Changing Course (RRS16):** When you change course, i.e. tack or gybe, you must make sure that the water that you are about to turn into is clear of other boats, and will remain clear until you have completed your manoeuvre. You have no rights until you are sailing your new course, e.g. if you are on port, and there is another boat a little bit behind and to wind of you, you cannot tack onto starboard and shout 'starboard' until you have completed the tack, pulled your sails in and are moving in the desired direction.

**Over the Start line (RRS 21):** If any part of your boat is across the start line before your race starts, you must sail back so that all of your boat is on the pre-start side of the line before you can start your race. In doing so, you must avoid all other boats which have started the race. (You may hear things like 'round the ends of the start line.' We don't use that rule for normal club racing, but if you progress to racing at other clubs, or in one of our Open events, you may need to know about that and other related rules.)

**Fishermen! (No RRS!):** Like many other sailing clubs in the UK, we share our water with fishermen who have just as much right as us to enjoy the lake. We have a FOSSC rule that we should stay 20m away from the shore to minimise any conflict between fishing and sailing.

So, 7 basic rules which are plenty to be getting on with. Sportsmanship and fishermen are very straightforward; you probably already know port-starboard; so that only leaves 4 for you to understand. If something happens on the lake and you want to understand rights and wrongs, just ask one of our more experienced racers and they'll be glad to explain things to you.