

LimeLight Starting Sequence

1. Give skippers briefing, and prepare the boat for the days race, IE sail selection. Note when you have lots of space having to much sail area and rounding up isn't a big deal. On the start line very close to other boats being under control is vital. Just because the other boat doesn't have a reef in, doesn't mean you shouldn't either. Each boat has different sailing envelopes and performance characteristics. Do what you can while at the dock so that you will have all your crew available for the start. Now is not the time to be looking for the SI's or doing house keeping chores.
2. If you have the man power put a spotter on the foredeck with the instructions to call out the other boats using the clock ray method and boat length for measurements. Describing the boats by name or color / sail numbers etc. Make sure the spotter is looking below the foresail as well.
3. Monitor the RC radio frequency CH 9 & CH 16, RC should be monitoring CH 10 JOC as well.
4. Head for RC to determine the course. Merge with the other boats in the same directional sequence that they are all in. IE clock wise around, adjust your speed and distance so that you do not over take a boat or block their view of the RC course board. Check for flags as well. IE starboard rounding green flag.
5. Have the entire crew look at the course board and have someone write the course down on a piece of paper. Now that you have the course info, get out of the way so other boats can get their information.
6. Point out the start line to the crew, the direction of the start and the course marks. They will enjoy the start more and be better able to help if they understand what the plan is.
7. Next determine the length of the start line (IE 10 boat lengths) and the sailing time from the RC boat to the pin end while sailing at beam reach. (IE 30 seconds) this will help you understand how far away in terms of distance and time that you have to be away from the start line at the 4 min 30 sec point.
8. At this time you should be able to determine if the pin end or RC end is favoured at the start. Note: In a perfect world there should be no favourite end, but a wind shift or a current change can skew the line at the last minute. Also favoured side of the course is not the same as a favoured start line.
9. Check out the starting area and parts of the course you can see for crab traps, logs, kelp and other possible hazards.

LimeLight Starting Sequence

10. If possible sail close to a crab trap to determine the amount of current near the start line and how it might affect your start. IE drift you over early.
11. LimeLight tries to only tack during the start sequence, but is always ready to Jibe in order to secure a piece of water real estate we want during the start sequence, or deny another boat from having it.
12. 6 min multiple horn warning signal: When the warning signal is given, position the boat so that the timer can see the RC flags, and hear the horn. If you can have 2 timers, designate one of them to give you the count down. Every 30 secs for the first 4 mins then 15 secs, then every second. Main sail up if not already, Motor off
13. 5 Min, one horn division flag up: Start timers and watches, get foresail up if not already.
14. If its not your division starting, stay out of the starting box! but watch the other division start. Always entertaining and a good opportunity to learn.
15. 4 min 30 sec: Tell your crew the plan, IE we are going to start first or maybe last, on a starboard tack at the pin end. Be sure they know the plan is very flexible and not written in stone. Note it costs less to hit the pin than the committee boat!

Note: We have intentionally started last on LimeLight many times when starting crew training. The skipper, and crew must be able to manoeuvre the boat quickly to avoid collisions. IF you don't know your boat well enough, are short handed, or have inexperience crew, please start last. With a bit of practice it wont take long before you and your crew will be able to safely cross the start line first, without creating a hazard or being protested.

16. 4 min Prep flag goes up, horn: check your timer to see if it is accurate.
17. Count the other boats starting in your division, know which boats have experienced or inexperienced skippers and crew on board. An experienced skipper anticipates the start line problems and avoids them while still starting first. Those boats know the rules and know how to quickly respond. An inexperienced skipper may put their boat where it shouldn't be and realize this too late to take safe and appropriate action, forcing other boats to avoid them.
18. Know the performance capability of the the other boats in your division, IE Jack rabbit points higher and accelerates faster and will be able to force LimeLight into a tack on the start line if they are to leeward of us and they want to, so we try to position ourselves accordingly.

LimeLight Starting Sequence

19. Be prepared to communicate with other boats, IE starboard, I have no helm, I need room etc. If your intentions are clear there is less chance of an incident.
20. 3 min 30 begin to position your boat where she needs to be for a perfect start by yourself. Note: Don't try to follow other boats. Don't try to control other boats in the start sequence. First figure out how to get across the line by yourself safely. Once you and your crew become good, and your skills as a skipper are developed then you can become aggressive on the line.
21. Watch the other boats action, spotter should say things like White Wave is luffing sails bleeding off she's reducing speed. Or Jaguar is going to need room at the RC boat.
22. 1 min Prep flag down horn: Most of the boats will have started to head for the line from where ever they are in the starting box. It is now where the boats are all trying to position themselves for a perfect start. If they have luffing rights on you they may take you up and control your start.
23. 0 min division flag down Horn: Listen for the all clear or recall notices.
24. The idea is to cross the start line, first, at hull speed, and in clean air, but if you can't be first go for the clean air, unless you can over sail those who started before you.
25. Know the rules, all the other skippers expect you to act accordingly and abide by them.
26. Know what to do if your over early, or if there is an individual recall, or general recall. If you are required to do a penalty turn or re-cross the start line, ensure you do not impede other boats which have started clean.
27. Go out and practice on a non race day just trying to start on time on the tack and position on the line that you planned for. Use Fisgard light house and V17 green port buoy by Fisgard light house.
28. Now that your boat is racing it will soon be time to sign up for race committee duties. Don't be afraid to ask for some knowledgeable help, or you may end up setting a disastrous course like I did when I did my first RC Duty.

Over the years I have some very close calls during the start sequence because I was inexperienced, fortunately the other experienced skippers seen my errors early and gave me room I wasn't entitled to. They also followed up in the bar to educate me more till I finally reached a point where I can avert the disastrous start. We all make mistakes, but sailors learn from them.

Living Aloha on the start line...