

## Self-Service Race Starts at Fanshawe Yacht Club

Informal Wednesday or Thursday racing at Fanshawe Yacht Club does not require the presence of the Race Committee, whose members may wish to participate in the racing themselves. Self-service racing is easy, fun, and educational.

Signals from the race hut consist of two parts: the course to be sailed, and the timing of the start (which we always try to do according to Rule 26 of the Racing Rules of Sailing).

### Course Panels

In the hut you will find a number of white panels, 18” wide by 24” tall, numbered from 1 to 6, A or B and some with red circles indicating temporary marks, such as the red globes used by the rowing clubs. Upon arrival at the club, assess the wind and select two or three panels to lay a course. There is no need to mark the start and finish lines; informal racing always uses the line formed by the buoys A and B visible on the water in front of the Race Hut. Hang the appropriate panels on the front of the hut, and if you want to sail a course twice or more, add “T” panel(s) to the right of the mark panels. A red/green long panel indicates side of mark rounding.

To help you with the length of the course, the approximate straight-line distances between marks is listed here. Note it is not possible to sail a straight line from A, 4, 5, or 6 to 2 or 3.

Leg	Length [NM]
A-1	0.25
1-2	0.40
2-3	0.50
A-4	0.50
A-5	0.90
A-6	0.55
4-5	0.50
4-6	0.15
5-6	0.40

### Manual Starting

If you do have someone to handle the starts, use either the manual or automatic starting systems. The manual system uses the swing panels, stored against the inside wall of the Hut to the left of the door. Hang the panels on the brackets provided on the porch roof supports facing the lake. Pull the rope of each panel and hook it on the porch rail. There is a clock on the counter.

You can, optionally, make some kind of sound signal at each panel motion below, using a whistle or air horn. Absence of a sound signal is disregarded under Rule 26.

At exactly 5:00 minutes before each start, lower the white panel with the red circle. One minute later (4:00 before start), lower the yellow panel (preparatory signal). Three minutes later (1:00 before start), raise the yellow panel and hook its line on the porch rail. At the start, raise the white panel and hook its line on the porch rail.

### **Automatic Light Starting System**

An automatic light and timer starting signal system was designed some years ago to relieve the informal racers of the need for having people around to help start a race.

Place the light box (black stand with three traffic lights) on the Race Hut counter, lights pointed squarely at the A-B buoy line. Plug in the orange power cord below the counter. Turn the system on using the toggle switch on the control box on the inside wall of the Hut to the right of the door, at the right end of the counter. Press the RESET button once.

For an immediate start, press START. The red upper light will come on, and a single tone will be heard from the speaker outside. Note the clock time if you want timed races. One minute later, the yellow lower light will come on, with a tone. Three minutes later, the yellow light will go out with a longer tone. And finally, the race is started when the red light goes out, with a tone.

A delayed start is also available, to allow one of the racers to start the sequence and still have time to get down to the main dock or beach and get their boat onto the course. Press DELAY START. Approximately nine minutes later, the green middle light will come on twice with a double tone. The regular start sequence of lights and tones will commence about four minutes after the green. The total time from the start of delay to final start signal is about 18-1/2 minutes.

If at any time you want to stop the sequence, press RESET. The timers are reset to zero, and you have to start from the beginning again.

Each racer notes their finish time, and the name of the boats ahead and behind, if they wish.

### **Wrapping Up**

When racing is done for the evening, remove the panels from outside the hut and porch and bring them back inside. Unplug the light timer system if used. If you leave it plugged it, it may be irreversibly damaged by future lightning strikes.