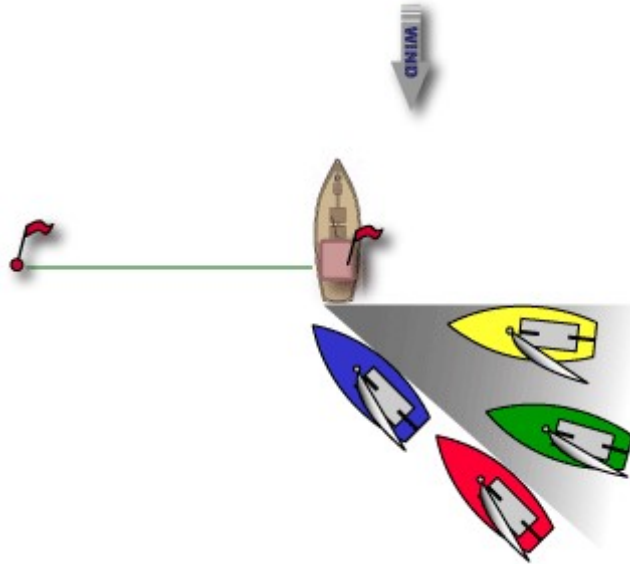


Article by Greg Chisholm, Diagrams by Paul Pascoe

Barging at the start line is a very poor strategy, it is unprofessional and is totally illegal.



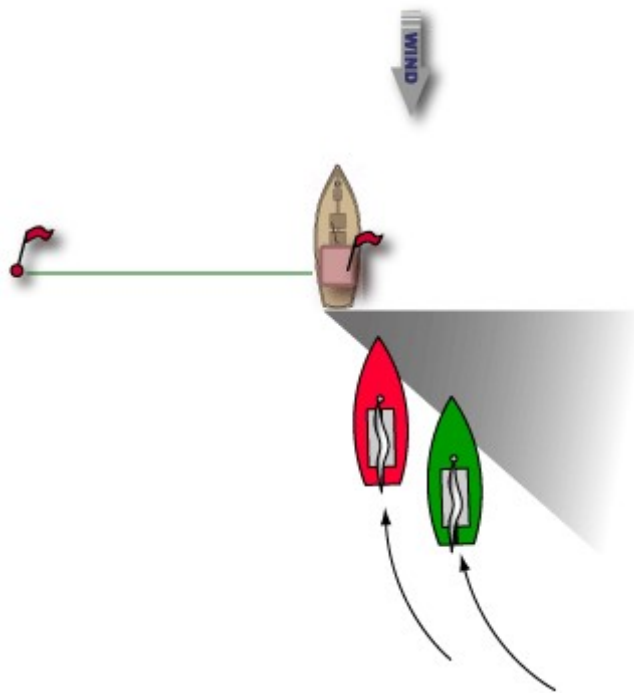
What is “barging”

Barging is approaching the starting line from a point to windward of the lay-line of the starboard or committee boat end of the line.

In the diagram, the blue and red boats are on the layline to the committee boat. The green and yellow boats are windward boats and are required to keep clear.

What is wrong with “barging”

In order to sail through the start line the barging yacht must sail at less than close hauled. Any yachts with an overlap to leeward (i. e. forward of a line projecting to leeward from the transom, hence nearly all the fleet) have right of way and can push the barging boat to windward. This will cause the barging boat have to sail to windward of the windward end of the start line and miss the start. That can be extremely dangerous if there is no barging buoy.

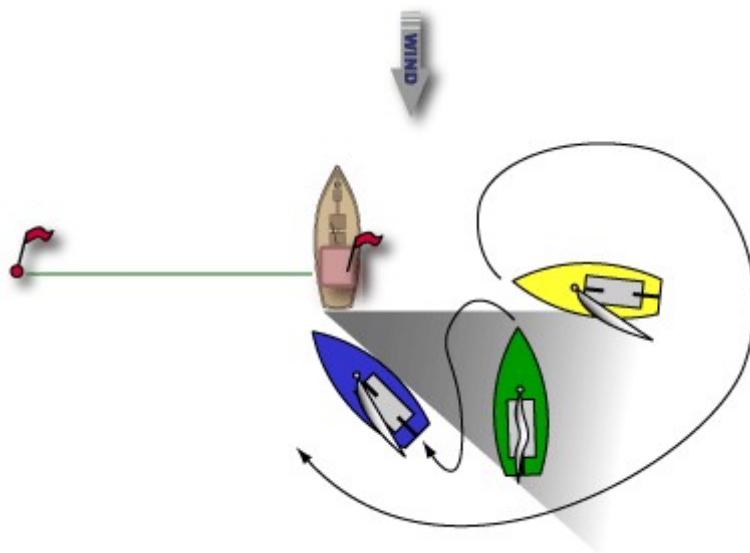


Note the overlapped boat can push the barging boat as high as head to wind, as long as enough room and opportunity is given. The barging boat has to respond immediately.

If you are thinking of barging - don't

As you will put yourself in an indefensible position. At best, you may find a hole on the second or third row, at worst, you will be pushed to windward of the start-line and miss the start completely.

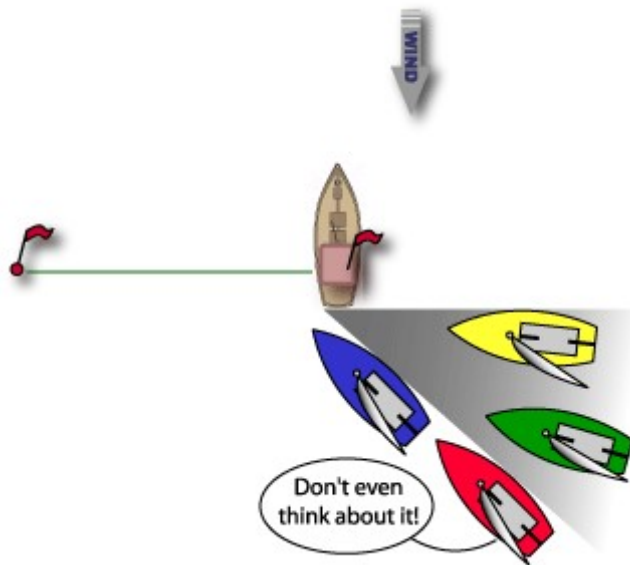
If you are caught in a barging position



Firstly, recognise early that you are going to be in trouble rather than leave it to the last minute. Then all you can do is slow or stop the boat, wait for a gap in the fleet, which may mean waiting until all the boats at the windward end of the line have started, then proceed when it is clear. You do not have any rights at all, so do not try to force your way in. Alternatively it may be best to peel off, tack onto port, gybe back on to starboard, sail behind the fleet to find a hole

and re-approach the start line from a safe position.

If it appears that other boats are going to “barge”

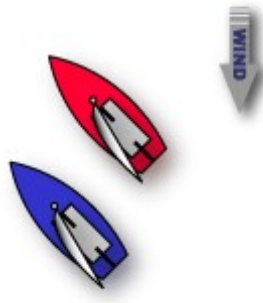


Call them early and call them loud - **the earlier the better**. Start looking for potential barging boats at about the one-minute mark. Call them by name or boat number, try and catch the skipper's eye and let them know they have no rights and there will be no room. Watch their tiller for a reaction - you will know if they are responding. If they are responding give them room to manoeuvre. If tiller does not move and the helm does not go down, call louder and by name. Counting out loud can help, as it lets the other skipper know you are serious and it is useful if you do end up in the protest room. Whilst all this is going on keep your cool, keep control of the position of your boat relative to other boats to leeward and behind and watch your own speed in approaching the line.

The rules that apply

Definition: Windward / Leeward

A boat's leeward side is the side that is or, when she is head to wind, was away from the wind. However, when sailing by the lee or directly downwind, her leeward side is the side on which her mainsail lies. The other side is her windward side. When two boats on the same tack overlap, the one on the leeward side of the other is the leeward boat. The other is the windward boat.



In the diagram, the red boat is the windward boat.

11 On the same tack, overlapped

When boats are on the same tack and overlapped, a windward boat shall keep clear of a leeward boat.

Note: The following rule is included to show why there is no such thing as 'bouy room' at the first mark

18 Rounding and Passing Marks and Obstructions

In rule 18, room is room for an inside boat to round or pass between an outside boat and a mark or obstruction, including room to tack or gybe when either is a normal part of the manoeuvre.

18.1 When This Rule Applies

Rule 18 applies when boats are about to round or pass a mark they are required to leave on the same side, or an obstruction on the same side, until they have passed it.

However, it does not apply

(a) ***at a starting mark surrounded by navigable water*** or at its anchor line from the time the boats are approaching them to start until they have passed them