



## Finishing

Radio sailing courses are usually set with upwind finishes, so the final leg to the finish will generally be a beat to windward.

A good finishing leg can often gain you a couple of places. To finish well, you need to hatch a plan for the last leg before rounding the leeward mark for the last time. Your plan should consider:

- What were the conditions on this part of the course on previous laps?
- Is it a long beat, or short beat to the finish? A long beat might offer opportunities to improve your position.
- Protecting your current position – rather than attacking, should you be defending the position you currently have?
- Line bias – which is the favoured (downwind) end of the line?

### ***Conditions on the Last Leg***

If your race strategy has worked for you and conditions remain unchanged, stick with the plan. Don't stop looking for advantages on the final beat. If you can catch the last shift or get into more pressure, you will continue to gain on your competitors.

### ***Long or Short Last Beat***

The finish line can be set anywhere up the course. Your plan for the last beat may depend on whether you have a long or short beat to the finish line.

- If your race strategy has proved successful, stick to it on a long beat to the finish line. Continue to attack boats in front, but keep a close watch on boats behind. Switch to defence and cover boats behind only when it becomes obvious that you won't catch boats in front.
- On a short beat, where there's no chance of overtaking a boat ahead, sail defensively and cover boats behind. The objective is to protect the position you currently have by positioning your boat between the finish line and the following competitor.

### ***Protecting Your Position***

Sometimes the most important consideration on the last beat is protecting your current position by ensuring nobody passes you. In such cases you will want to cover boats behind you. Think about covering if:

- You are the lead boat.
- You have no chance of catching the boat ahead, but want to avoid being passed by the boat

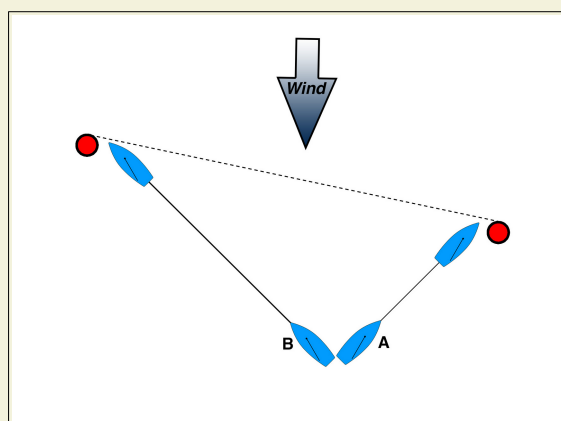
behind.

- You need to stay ahead of a particular competitor to ensure a series place.

Review the article on *Covering* for more on this race tactic.

### **Line Bias**

Review the description of line bias in the **Start Line** article. The finish line is often not square to the wind. For upwind finishes, the favored end is the end furthest downwind.



*Line Bias at the Finish*

In the above diagram, the finishing line is not square to the wind. The line was either laid with a port end bias or the wind has shifted left. A will finish at the downwind end of the line and has a shorter distance to sail to the finish than B sailing to the upwind end. When beating to the finish, work out which end of the line is most downwind and plan to cross there.

### **Conclusion**

Don't ease up on the last leg to the finish line. Keep pressure on your opposition and they may make errors that lets you pass:

- Sail to the conditions and be aware of any changes in wind direction or speed on the last leg of the course. Use the lifts to get you to the line faster.
- Knowing the wind direction, work out whether there is a bias on the finishing line and sail to the end that is furthest down wind.
- While trying to pass boats in front, keep an eye on any competitors behind you and stay between them and the finish line. This makes it harder for them to pass.
- Always shoot the line at the finish. The manoeuvre may gain you a place when boats are very close as they go over the line.