

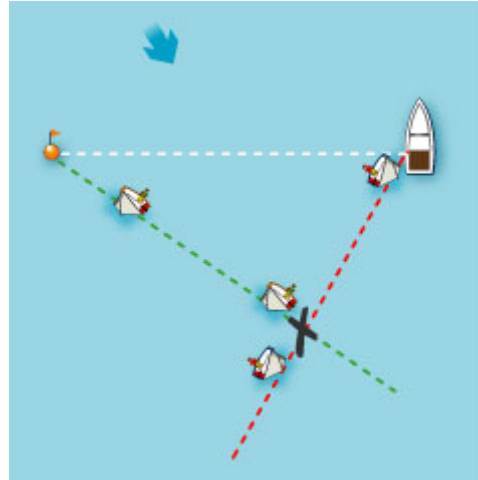
Finding the X

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By Angela Garcia

Everyone knows there's a favored end of the starting line and a favored side of the course, but many sailors forget that there's also a favored end of the finish line. Like starting lines, finish lines are rarely square. The sailors who know how to figure out which end is favored will gain two to three boats a race at a big regatta. Over a 10-race regatta, that's 20 to 30 points.

Never fear, today you're going to learn how to find the "X," which will allow you to predict the favored end of the finish line 100 percent of the time!



David Norton

For fast finishes...find the X

Look at the diagram below. Like Pete and Susan, you can make your approach on either the green (starboard) or the red (port) layline. Caution: This does not mean to sail to the corners, but you should be on these laylines in the last 50 yards of the leg. You will hit the X at the point where the red and green lines intersect. At that time, look in front of you at the side of the line you are approaching, and then over your shoulder at the other end of the line. Decide which side looks closer, and head in that direction. Here, Pete didn't pay attention to the X and is heading to the unfavored side of the line. Even though Susan was behind him when they crossed, she'll beat him by several boatlengths.

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