

SUPPLEMENT A

GATE START PROCEDURES

Concepts:

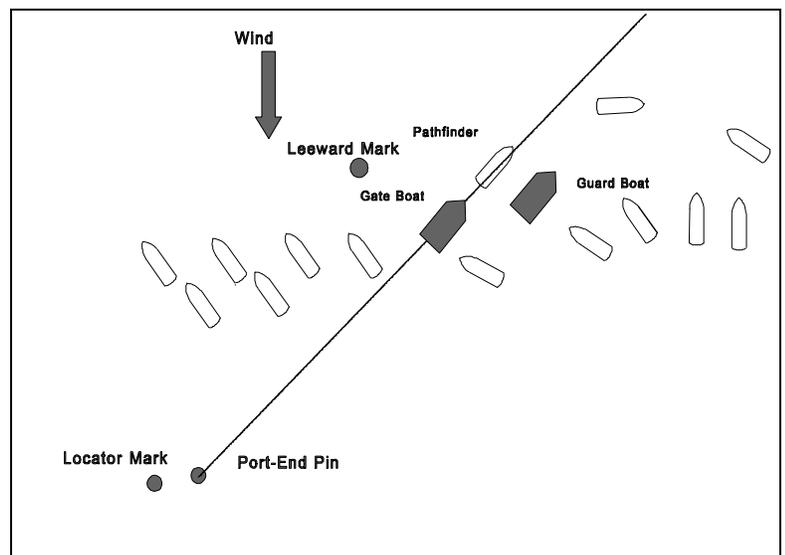
The original concept of the 'Gate' or 'Rabbit' start was to provide a system where a group of competitors could start a race without a Race Committee. The idea was that if one of the competitors acted as the 'pathfinder' or 'rabbit' and started on port tack and remained on port tack until all the competitors, who were waiting near the projected path of the pathfinder, passed behind the pathfinder, everyone would have a fair and equal start. Modern refinements include a gate boat that would fly the usual starting signals (a separate boat can be used for the starting signals) and trail about one boat length behind the pathfinder to protect him from aggressive competitors. This gate boat may even trail a small float (usually a red ball) to protect his boat. If available, a guard boat may travel in the lee of the pathfinder with about 75% overlap to further protect the pathfinder.

Selection of the Pathfinder:

The Pathfinder for the first race of the regatta is selected by a drawing from a list of the top sailors registered for the regatta. One or two additional competitors may be selected in case something happens to the first selection. For subsequent races, the competitor finishing tenth (this can vary depending upon the size of the fleet) in the previous race shall act as the pathfinder. If the tenth place finisher has already served as the pathfinder in this regatta, the eleventh or subsequent place competitor shall act. Failure to act as the pathfinder may be grounds for disqualification. If the Race Committee finds it necessary to select a new pathfinder, it may do so by posting a change to the Sailing Instructions or by oral instruction on the water.

Procedures:

1. At the time and place indicated in the Sailing Instructions, the Gate boat (flying flag G) (or a separate boat indicated in the Sailing Instructions) will display the course and starting signals.
2. Not later than the preparatory signal, the Race Committee will set a Locator Mark in the position indicated in the sailing instructions (usually down wind and on the port side of the leeward mark).
3. Not later than the preparatory signal, the designated pathfinder shall proceed to the Gate boat near the Locator Mark and follow the directions of the Race Officer.



4. The Race Officer will direct the pathfinder so as to be in the approximate location of the Locator Mark at approximately 15 second before the start. At this time the Race Officer will hail 'Race' to the pathfinder. The pathfinder will then begin racing close-hauled on port tack. The Gate boat will assume a position about one boat length behind the pathfinder and, if available, a Guard boat will assume a position on the pathfinders starboard side far enough away such that her wash does not interfere with the pathfinder.
5. At approximately 3 seconds before the start, the Gate boat will drop a free floating mark that becomes the pin end of the gate.
6. The Pathfinder shall remain on port tack until released by the Race Officer.
7. Competitors may start on starboard tack after the starting signal, passing between the free-floating pin mark and the stern of the Gate boat. After the starting signal, competitors shall not pass between the Pathfinder and the Gate or Guard boats.
8. The Gate will remain open until all boats have started but not longer than the time indicated in the Sailing Instructions (usually 2-5 minutes). The Gate boat will lower the G flag when the gate is closed and all boats that have not yet started will be scored as Did Not Start (DNS).
9. When the Race Officer on board the Gate boat is satisfied that he has the speed and compass bearing of the Pathfinder's port tack, that the wind is steady and that most of the fleet has started, he may, by hail, release the Pathfinder which may then tack on to starboard or continue on port as she wishes.
10. From the Preparatory signal until released by the Race Officer, the Pathfinder has complete right-of-way and any interference may be grounds for disqualifications. From the preparatory signal until the gate is closed, the gate boat (including any float she might be dragging) is considered the starting mark and contacting any part thereof is an infringement of RRS 31.1. The Guard Boat, if used, is considered a moving obstruction.
11. If the Race Officer considers the start to have been unfair because of such things as interference with the Pathfinder, Gate boat or Guard boat, or a significant wind shift, he may call a general recall prior to the closing of the gate or abandon the race and restart if possible.