

SOME IDEAS FOR TEACHING THE RACING RULES

from Dave Perry

On the Water

- Practice starts with “live coaching” (vary the favored end)
- Starting line too short for all boats to fit at same time
- Extremely short beat (upwind start) or run (downwind start) – or start upwind, then reverse fleet and have them race to a nearby leeward mark
- Videotape races or sessions and do debrief on shore
- Pull boats aside right after incident and debrief while still fresh (have small dry-erase board in coach boat)
- Race around tiny track, keeping boats compressed
- Have sailors raise hands as they enter the zone; give feedback
- Create drills for ducking / slam dunking / lee-bowing
- Simulate rules situations right off the dock (with good sailors in boats and class on dock watching with an instructor doing “play by play”)

On Land – outside

- “walk” boats through scenarios - use actual boats when possible
- set up marks, zones (with line), starting lines, etc.
- have sailors move boats, give explanations, etc.
- put smaller kids in the boats for more fun and interaction

On Land – indoors

- use magnetic dry-erase marker board and model boats (US Sailing sells a set – see Resources below)
- have kids give an explanation of a rule (give them a day to prepare)
- put scenarios on board (live or hypothetical) and work through them
- look at video of situations and work through them
- create a “Rule of the Day” poster. Put pictures, rules quotes, appeals quotes, etc.
- create “mock hearing”
- do a quiz format (use quizzes from my book “100 Best Racing Rules Quizzes” published by US Sailing)

General thoughts

- make it age and level-appropriate

ages 8-11 or beginner: show the patterns and “what” to do (not necessarily the “why”) – make it situational. Don’t discuss numbers or memorizing text.

ages 12-14 or intermediate: discuss the structure of the rules and what they actually say – focus on the “biggies:” rules of Part 2, Section A and B; basic rules in Section C; rules on touching marks (31), taking penalties (44) and propulsion (42); rules on how to protest (Part 5).

Ages 15 and up or more advanced: expand into more tactical uses of the rules, and the nuances in the appeals for a deeper understanding and application.

Resources for Teaching the Rules (all available from US Sailing):

- *The Racing Rules of Sailing* (the rulebook) – also available in an app (from the App Store – search “US Sailing Bookstore) <https://ussailing.store/collections/race>
- *The US Sailing Appeals Book and World Sailing Cases* <https://www.ussailing.org/competition/rules-officiating/appeals/>
- *Understanding the Racing Rules of Sailing*, by Dave Perry (is included in the US Sailing rulebook app) (a comprehensive book explaining the rules, and including the rule book and appeals quotes), and *Dave Perry's 100 Best Racing Rules Quizzes* <https://ussailing.store/collections/race>
- *US Sailing's Rules in Brief* (a card sized summary) is available at the US Sailing Store link above
- *Model boats* (from the US Sailing Store) <https://ussailing.store/collections/race>
- *Dave Dellenbaugh's Learn the Racing Rules through 2024* <https://www.speedandsmarts.com/>
- *Boat drawing program* (Google Boats Race Scenario Drawing Tool)