

Footy Internet Course introduction

This is a fantastic course for beginners and experts alike. It may sound tame racing round 2 buoys not far apart, but it is amazing fun, fascinating, absolutely gripping and very instructive! You don't need your own Footy to participate and with very few boats, lots of sailors can enjoy the fun!

The course

This is a guaranteed standard 50 foot long windward /leeward course that can be set up anywhere in the world and provide a comparison of Footy performance. It consists of a windward mark laid anchored to the ground in the normal way and a leeward mark attached to the windward mark with a 50 foot underwater line. This mark has a 'sail' to drag the leeward mark dead downwind. In very light airs a bigger area may be required, as on the Footys themselves. In order to keep the line from sinking or floating to the surface, intermediate floats and weights keep the line in equilibrium.

How does it work?

Unlike normal radio racing courses, boats don't race each other in close company on the water, but race against the clock to complete 3 laps. Timekeeping is required and by using a suitable record sheet at the end of this article it is not difficult to keep tabs on 4 or 5 boats racing and starting at different times. You may start at either end of the

course, but starting on a run is the easiest for the timekeeper as the boat is going straight down the lake past the windward mark. To finish, sail close to or hit the windward mark.

No rules

This course is great for the beginner, as there are no rules except to get round the course 3 times! You may go round the marks either way, you may hit them or other boats without penalty, although all this does is to slow you down. The advice to skippers is to be co-operative, give way to the boat nearest to the rhumb line, so beautifully marked by the floats and most important, **talk to one another!**

Performance

With regard to getting good times it may not appear to be a level playing field, because of different wind strengths. Whilst this is true to some extent, on the day everyone is trying to beat the fastest time set whatever the wind and this makes the challenge fascinating. Best results have been set in a variety of rig sizes including the small 305mm rig. This course makes you very critical of your rig trim, to aim for perfection in a more concentrated way than for fleet racing. It teaches you to sail **straight** downwind and in flukey conditions to sail **close to the rhumb line** on the beat; all good lessons for any fleet race!

Other benefits

It is interesting that wind changes affect the line of floats slowly and so it becomes the perfect wind direction indicator for any Race Officer trying to set a good course for ordinary racing. Often the wind on model yachting lakes is frustratingly variable, but this course reflects the overall direction well and doesn't vary too much with wildly eddying gusts. Occasionally a bend in the float line at the leeward 'sail' end shows the start of a persistent shift. See the photo on the front page. You might imagine that a steady breeze would give the best times, but these can often be made in winds varying in direction.

Buoys, floats and lines

These can be made and assembled in several different ways, but the design shown is a development of an initial construction with a continuous 50 foot line with small weights on lines below corks, which gave problems of tangling when gathering back on shore. The line is divided into 4 equal lengths of 12' 6" (3.81m). Each is tied to the bottom end of a 1/8" (3mm) rod with two 'widgets' out of a beer can at the top. These act both as the float and when retrieved, a shape round which the line can be wound. This is held in place by the pear shaped 1.6mm (16swg) stainless steel wire clip primarily used for holding the parts together.

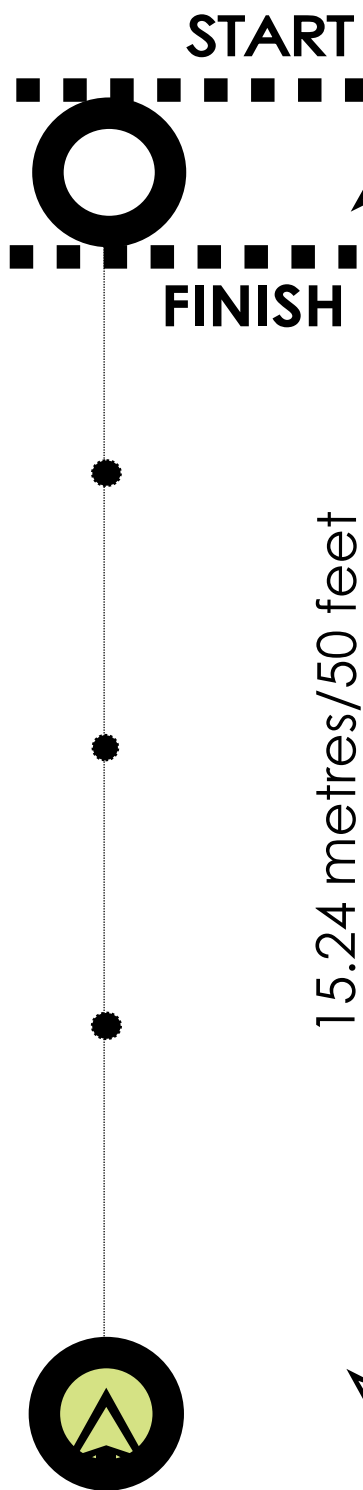
The results

When the times are worked out from the record sheet (the correction factor being the time after the first boat of the session started) they can be sent for posting on the Internet to current FIC event organiser, Brett McCormack whose brilliant idea this course is. Thank you indeed for the fun that you have helped to create.

Roger Stollery 2008-11-03

Footy Internet Course

A standard windward/ leeward course 50 foot long, 3 laps.



The objective is to record your best time: 3 and a half minutes is a good time!

Times are posted to event organisers, who post your best time on the internet; in 2009, Brett McCormack in NZL.

Sailing rules

Start and finish at either end close to mark, as shown on diagram. Marks may be touched and left on either side. No penalty turns.

Advice to skippers when several are racing

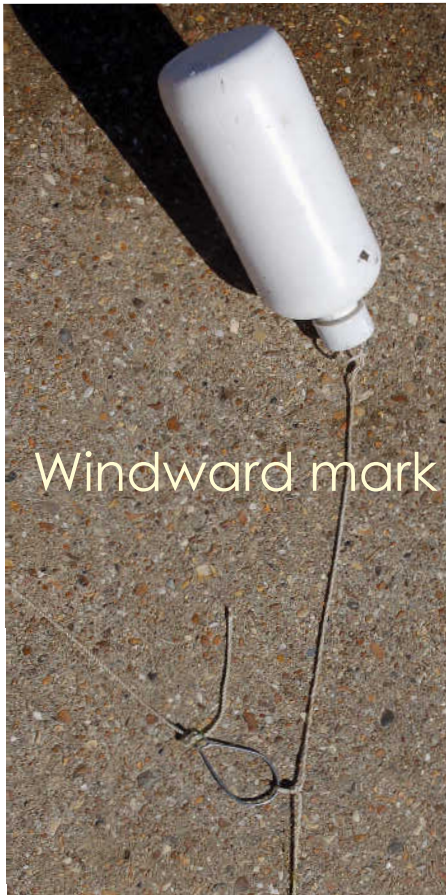
Avoid other boats. Give way to boats nearest the line of buoys.

Be co-operative. **Talk to each other!**

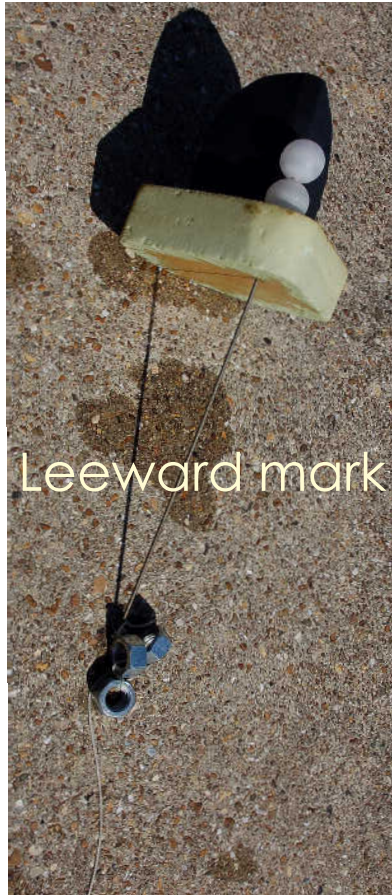
Course

The windward mark is moored to the ground as normal for any mark.

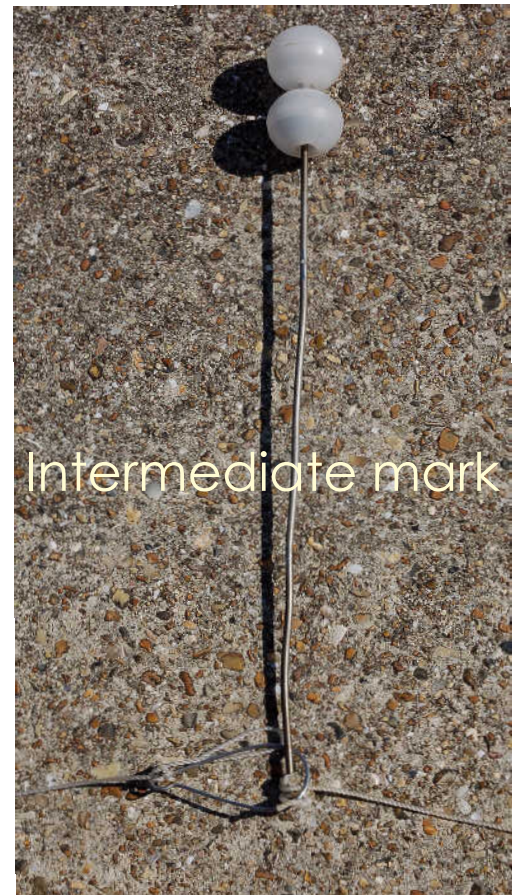
The leeward mark with a 'drag sail' is tethered on a 50 foot underwater line below keel depth and streams downwind. The intermediate corks and weights below keep line from floating or sinking.



Windward mark



Leeward mark



Intermediate mark

Footy Internet Course construction



Course is divided into 4 equal lengths of 3.81 metres. A 3mm rod with 2 'widgets' from beer cans hold the line in equilibrium when laid. A 1.6mm stainless steel 'ring' holds the line together when stored and links round and through a small loop at the bottom of the rod when laid. Like a Footy it can be stored in an ice cream tub!



