Charles River at Harvard
By Michael O'Connor, Harvard Head Sailing Coach

NORTHERLY:
In a northerly we try to put the starting line in the southeast corner of the basin near the Hatch Shell. This provides as much fetch as possible. Many would argue it isn't enough fetch for a course to fit eighteen boats. The velocity tends to be very inconsistent. Puffs touch down on the water and spread out in all directions. It is crucial to stay near the middle of the starting area so you can get to the first puff asap. This breeze is characterized by short-lived puffs with lots of shear.

SOUTHERLY
Luckily straight southerlies are rare. They are also characterized by inconsistent velocity and lots of shear. The puffs tend to last longer but they are less frequent, which means there can be huge holes in the breeze. It is even more crucial to connect the puffs in this direction. Autotacks are not uncommon. They occur more frequently closer to the shore.

EASTERLY
This is a good direction at our site. The velocity tends to be most stable from this direction. Shifts are relatively small in amplitude, but they last longer. Thus it is crucial to be in phase. We try to keep the windward mark as far off the Boston shore as possible. This enables sailors to see the wind on the water and avoids some of the CBI traffic. In a northeasterly the windward mark is in line with the Longfellow Bridge. People tend to favor the right side because you can see more wind on the water. However, lefties do touch down on the course and can be used to get back into the mix.

WESTERLY
This also a good direction. We have a nice fetch so you can see the breeze on the water well. This direction tends to be puffier than an easterly. Shifts can be big and frequent, especially when there is a mixture of warm and cold air in the atmosphere. Breeze out of the southwest tends to have slightly more consistent velocity. Breeze out of the northwest tends to be puffier and shiftier than the southwest.

Extracted from Cleverpig.org, 2008