

## Charles River at MIT

By Fran Charles, MIT Sailing Master

### Northerly-

Starting on the Boston shore and working your way towards Cambridge in the puffs is a game of connect the dots. In your starting sequence, don't commit too early. Try to hang above the line and take a guess at where along the line you need to be to get into the best pressure that will meet you right after the start. Don't tack in a lull. Always be patient and develop a database of where you see the righties drop in at the pavilion or to the right of it. The lefties are easier to see as they form along the wall between the pavilion and Mass Ave and are often broadcast by the flags on Killion Court about a minute before they drop into the basin.

### Nahtheastahlees-

Starting area is usually down in the corner where Mass Ave meets Boston. A slow frequency to the shifts makes for longer durations on each tack. Righties are easy to see as the pressure comes down from Harvard sailing and is very visible. Talk with your partner and verbalize what phase you are in. Usually the right is more consistent at the top of the course. However, down by the start and until about half way up the beat, you have a pretty good percentage of seeing some nice lefties drop in. You will see it on the flag at the pavilion and they come in with a dark streakiness about 1/3 of the way out across the river.

### East-

Straight down the river from the Longfellow to the Mass Ave bridge. If starting out in the middle, just try to get a front row start and not be too creative. The shifts won't be too dramatic and holding your lane and going fast is going to give you a consistent finish. If the breeze is a bit south of east, the direction is less stable and you need to pay attention to watching where the pressure drops in along the Boston shore or filling straight down from the Longfellow. With the starting line closer to Cambridge, the lefties are more prevalent as your first shift because the breeze gets squeezed and starts to run parallel to the trees and wall along the Cambridge shore. The difficulty comes with trying to connect yourself to a rightie at the top which is more frequent late in the day or if the seabreeze is feeble.

### Southerlies-

This is by far the worst direction to run races and to sail in them. Warm breezes don't have much density. The wind gets all disturbed by the buildings in Boston and just randomly drops in on the right or left side. Roll the dice and work an edge. Don't get frustrated as there will be plenty to go around. It is rarely worth fighting for a spot on the crowded end of the line. Breeze usually doesn't fill in the middle-pick a side.

### Southwest-

This is a wonderful breeze to race in on the rivah chuck. Righties and lefties alternate with a regular frequency with about 4 shifts per beat and half that for the downwind legs. Go all the way into the pressure if it is having a hard time pressing in from one side or the other. Keeping your boat speed up in the lighter spots and not tacking in the velocity headers is important in a SW breeze.

### Westerly-

The most amazing breeze as the course length is not limited by geography and you can always see the shifts coming. Lefties will show under the Mass Ave up towards BU. As they make their way past the bridge, they often get funneled down along the Boston shoreline. Big pay offs can occur from the starting line on the left but you need to keep your eyes open for more leftie over your shoulder or go straight across to a rightie filling from the Cambridge shore or Cambridge side of the bridge. Protect your edge and pick one for the top third of the beat. Getting stuck in the middle can result in giving it up to both sides at the top. Change gears for the different pressure with vang, sheet and board angle in techs.

### Northwesters-

Point at the mark and when the boom whacks you in the head, it is time to tack. Don't think too much and be instinctive. Line yourself up with the best puff off the starting line. Again, don't tack in the lulls. Rather, go to the next puff and do not consolidate losses by crossing behind your competition.

Extracted from Cleverpig.org, 2008