

Harbour Racing Tips



Peter Danby

Hayling Bay

Introduction

The keener racers amongst you will find yourself racing in Hayling Bay at some stage during the season. So, who better to provide this year's Harbour Racing Tips on racing in Hayling Bay, than Jim Saltonstall, who is a legend amongst all those that have been through Royal Yachting Association's Youth Training Scheme in the last few years.

Jim has distilled his experience from racing and coaching on all the UK's leading race courses by writing a superb Venue Guide exclusively for the www.madforsailing.com website. This article is produced with their kind permission, but don't go away to an open race meeting without checking the site's venue guide for the tips on the tide and wind at your destination. It is a great sailing website!

Racing Area

The racing area is in the Bay outside the entrance to Chichester Harbour. So leave the beach, turn to starboard and head out to sea down the channel – passing the beacon to starboard, especially at low water springs! The race area is now on your starboard side, head that way and look for the committee boat. The principle race area is normally to the west-south-west of Chichester beacon. Make sure you allow plenty of time when going out to the race area against the flood tide, especially spring tides. Chichester Harbour is a big piece of water and it's all got to get in and out through that narrow channel. The good news is that it will take you rather less time if you're going out with

the ebb! The other thing for first-timers at Hayling to watch out for is the waves in the channel, when the wind is fresh from anywhere out of the southern sector and blowing against the ebb tide. In these conditions steep, standing waves develop quickly in the entrance next to the infamous Chichester bar. So be careful when these conditions prevail, many a ferret has been caught out in the past, and will be

again in the future. But once you get out there, it is GREAT! This is a superb yachting venue, especially with the onshore winds giving some great waves to play with.

Wind Direction

340-040 degrees: The offshore wind sector which is not too bad for shifts, as the land to windward is quite low. That means that the shifts downwind are not that big or frequent, however they are there to be had, so know your numbers on the compass, and the high and low headings on both tacks.

040-100 degrees: For the wind, go left up the beat as there is more pressure closer to the shoreline. If the race course is close enough to the shore, you may pick up the header on starboard tack as you go in, with lifts on port along the beach. This is one effect you can check for before the start.

100-200 degrees: This is the clear wind sector for the race area – nothing to disturb the wind except the French! The wind is at its most stable in both strength and direction, tide is the major player now, which we will talk about later.

200-250 degrees: The wind is now coming off the Isle of Wight. In theory, the island will set up a convergence band of stronger wind that will blow downwind towards the race course. This may mean more wind on the right hand side of your course (looking upwind) – but it will depend on exactly where the course is positioned. Certainly, the island will stir up the wind and you can expect it to be more shifty, than when it's blowing from the purely onshore direction. You will need to know your numbers on the compass again, as on starboard tack you cannot see France in the background!



This article is an extract from the venue guide on the madforsailing.com website.

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TIDAL VECTORS IN HAYLING BAY



250-270 degrees: The wind is now coming to you having been squeezed through the Solent and is quite stable. I've experienced shifts with the wind in this sector, but nothing too dramatic either in strength or direction.

270 degrees: With the wind now parallel to the

shoreline, it pays to stay left-of-middle for better breeze, as there will be less wind within half a mile of the shore in the divergence zone.

270-340 degrees: The shifts are back again, now that the wind is coming off the land. Left-of-middle normally pays for the wind as there tends to be slightly less wind near the shore in the divergence zone.

Sea Breeze

A good sea breeze at Hayling provides almost perfect sailing conditions – waves and sunshine, couldn't be better! During your early morning warm-up jog(!) watch out for clear blue sky and a light offshore north-west wind – these are ideal conditions for the sea breeze day. As the cumulus clouds develop over the mainland, the sea breeze fills in close to the shore, as the circulation begins. Then it fills in from seaward at approximately 160 degrees. As it fills and grows in strength, it backs slightly to approximately 150 degrees. Then it starts to veer and follow the sun as the day gets older, finishing the day at approximately 240 degrees. In the afternoon, protect the right-hand side of the course!

Tide

Plenty of it again, even during neap tides, and you will have to build your race strategy plans around the tidal direction and strength. If you look at the chart, you will see that the seabed is very shallow, it's well offshore before it shelves into deeper water. Sometimes the race area straddles that depth change, and

it's vital to try and pinpoint where it happens. Being the right side will determine whether you will be amongst the chocolates at the windward mark – or not. This is especially true with a cross-shore breeze and a strong flood or ebb tide.

The flood tide flows towards the north-west across the race area, and the ebb tide flows to the south-east. But if you are near the main channel going into Chichester Harbour, the tidal direction is more north on the flood, and due south on the ebb. On the tidal change it rotates in an anti-clockwise direction fairly quickly in the race area. Don't forget to chat to the local yachties and fishermen for more detailed info, as you would at any tidal venue.

**QUEEN STREET,
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