

Winds Off Marblehead

Northwesterly / Characteristics

1. A cool, puffy wind with oscillations of 5-15 degrees on either side of the mean wind direction
2. The harder it blows, initially, the longer it will last
3. The shiftiness of a particular Northwester can be gauged from the length of the oscillations which are easy to time with your stop watch
4. A Northwester is strongest near shore and as it weakens, it may blow Northwest in Marblehead Harbor and East at Halfway Rock at the same time
5. As it weakens, a Northwester veers clockwise
6. A weak Northwester eventually will be undermined by sea breezes

Strategy

1. Start on the lifted tack
2. Tack on every header
3. Play the windward shore as much as possible
4. Stay in sync with the wind so that you are always sailing on the lifted tack

Northerly / Characteristics

The Northerly that follows a Northwester is a very undependable breeze

Strategy

Be prepared to take advantage of its totally dying out in the afternoon and its subsequent replacement by an Easterly

Northeasterly / Characteristics

1. Generally a strong, true breeze
2. Plenty of seas
3. Barometer high with light and dry air
4. In waning phase, will veer to Southwest

Strategy

1. Watch for and take advantage of persistent shift
2. Play the veer that occurs farther from shore
3. In a waning Northwester, stay in the old conditions as long as you can, keeping the boat moving until you reach the new wind

Easterly / Characteristics

1. Generally unstable – up and down in velocity
2. Starts dead East, then shifts to Southeast – back to East – then shifts more to the South
3. Clocks in 3 or 4 hours
4. A dying Easterly generally will be replaced by a Westerly

Strategy

1. Sail up the middle, tacking on the shifts
2. Favor Southeast layline, if any, and go Southeast later in the day

Southeasterly / Characteristics

1. Rain likely, if it appears the previous evening as a weather system wind
2. A very undependable breeze
3. Will follow the sun clockwise as the afternoon goes on

Strategy

1. Watch for and play the persistent shift
2. Favor the right hand side of the course from 3:00 on

Southwesterly (the prevailing wind) / Characteristics

1. Morning dew on the grass and other flat surfaces
2. Generally a good, blustery breeze
3. Haze in the Southwest skies indicates the probability of a Southwester in the making

Strategy

1. If the Southwester is strong and true, work due South, Southwest
2. If you have any doubts on the reliability of this breeze, work West
3. If the wind is a little West of Southwest, go West

Seabreeze / Characteristics

1. Created by land being warmer than the sea
2. If weather system wind is on-shore, the developing seabreeze will strengthen it to 20 knots or more, depending on how hot it gets ashore
3. If weather system wind off-shore (northwest), the seabreeze will conflict, creating a huge area of relative calm with a light Westerly near the shore and a gasping Easterly on the opposite side of the course
4. A quiet morning with sun produces seabreeze
5. Seabreezes progressively veer, as disparity between land and water increase
6. When the seabreeze dies late in the afternoon, it usually is replaced by an off-shore Westerly

Strategy

1. When a seabreeze is developing or expected, sail out to meet it
2. Play the persistent shift during 2nd and 3rd windward legs and downwind legs
3. Sail in-shore in a dying seabreeze