

The Corinthian Spirit

There are three forms of yacht racing: fleet racing, which is what we do, match racing, such as the America's Cup, and team racing.

Fleet racing is distinctive because, in contrast to the other two forms, it operates without referees. A fleet race is at once a competitive and a cooperative venture: competitive, because everybody wants to do their best, and cooperative, because we all rely on each other to obey the rules and voluntarily take a penalty turn when we realize (or are reminded) that we've broken one. This voluntary aspect is called the "Corinthian Spirit," and is best expressed by the statement that you sail by the rules even when no one is looking. It also means, no yelling or swearing and no bullying your fellow sailor. The great sailor Paul Elvstrom said it best: "You haven't won the race, if in winning the race you have lost the respect of your competitors."

The Corinthian Spirit is especially important to our club because we sail on public ponds, observed by large numbers of the general public. We represent not only ourselves but also model yachting as a whole. Our survival and growth as a club depends on attracting new members, most of whom will have first encountered us by watching us race.

Naples Model Yacht Club is about friendly sailing competition and social interaction. Winning heats and regattas is the added bonus we all strive for. When just one of us chooses not to sail fair, it diminishes the experience for all.

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