

The Ten Commandments

of Wednesday Night Racing

I Thou shalt not take anything other than safety too seriously.

If you can only remember one commandment, this is the one. Relax, have fun, and keep it light. Late to the start? - so what. Over early? - big deal. No instructions? - improvise. Too windy? - quit. Not enough wind? - break out the gin and tonics. The point is to have fun, but stay safe.

II Thou shalt honor the racing rules if thou knowest them.

Few sailors really read the rules cover to cover. It's about as interesting as reading tax codes or the phone book. Remember the big ones: port tack is the give way boat, windward boats avoid leeward ones, outside boats give room at the mark. Stay out of the way of bigger boats, pay your insurance, and keep a low profile unless you're sure you know what you're doing. Or ask someone - there are people around who seem to have memorized the rulebook and would be happy to help you out.

III Thou shalt drink responsibly.

There's plenty of beer at the Club after the race.

IV Thou shalt not covet thy competitor's boat, sails, equipment or crew.

If you're lucky enough to have a sailboat, just go use it! You don't need the latest in extendable whisker poles to have a great time out on the water. Even if your boat's a heaving pig, make modest goals and work towards improving them from week to week. Or don't.

V Thou shalt not wig out.

No screaming, swearing, or overly aggressive tactics. If you lose it in a Wednesday nighter, you're going to run out of crew - not to mention friends in a big hurry.

VI Thou shalt not protest thy neighbor.

This is tacky at the level of competition and should be avoided at all costs. On the whole, tossing a red flag is the height of bad taste in something as relatively inconsequential as a Wednesday nighter.

VII Thou shalt not mess up thy boat.

It's not worth risking your boat and gear in such casual competition, and like the song says, you got to know when to hold 'em and know when to fold 'em. Avoid other boats at all costs, not to mention buoys, the RC boat, RC anchor lines, and the docks. If you have the luxury of two sets of sails, use the old ones.

VIII Thou shalt go to the Club afterwards for the Wednesday Night Buffet!

Etiquette demands that you congratulate the winners. Hanging out is a great way to meet other sailors, connect with new crew people, and learn more from experienced skippers.

IX Thou shalt bring thy spouse, kids, friends, and whoever else wants to go.

Twilight races are great forums for introducing new folks to sailing, such as your co-workers, neighbors, and out of town visitors. Always bring your significant other along, too - co-ed crews are happy crews. Get everyone involved.

X Thou shalt not worry, thou shalt be happy.

Lighten up, it's not the Lipton's!