

APBA Driving Schools

Welcome to the Ride of a Lifetime!

Background

- Mark Wheeler
- APBA President
- mark.wheeler@wmich.edu

Thank you

- Special thanks to the APBA Historical Society for its support of the APBA driving school.

Barriers to Entry

- The driving school is one of several programs designed to reduce the barriers to entry into powerboat racing.

Junior Racing



Junior Racing

- APBA offers complete engines to APBA members.
- APBA, the APBA Historical Society, and Dewald Props all provide propellers for Junior Hydro and Junior Runabout at no cost to racers.

Formula 4



Formula 4

- Formula 4 is a “one design” APBA class for tunnel boat racing. Formula 4 uses a 4 cycle “green” outboard on a composite tunnel boat.

Driving School Requirements

- Each student must be a member of APBA.
Single event memberships are available for \$35.
- Comply with all APBA safety rules and requirements.
- Two rescue boats
- Onsite Ambulance
- Insured

Two Types of Driving School

- Schools for drivers in reinforced cockpits:
APBA Driving School Committee.
- Schools for drivers in open cockpits:
APBA clubs/regions.

Reinforced Cockpit Driving School

- 5 Litre Inboard Hydroplane
- SST 120 Tunnel Boat

Open Cockpit Driving Schools

- Classes are selected by the club/region conducting the school.
- In most cases, the school will take place on the Friday before a sanctioned regatta.
- When the school is run in conjunction with a sanctioned regatta, there is no additional insurance cost.

Marketing Club Schools

- Steve Greaves
- sgreaves@portagebaysystems.com
 - Seattle Outboard Association
 - Region 10
- Club Driving School
- Otherwise known as “New Folks in Boats”
- Certainly not the only way; just some ideas about what has worked for us

Find the right audience

- Fourth of July Weekend
- Lake Union Wooden Boat Festival
- Seattle metro area
- Display of outboard race boats
- Junior, Stock Outboard, Modified Outboard, PRO
- Plus one partially completed Junior Hydro
- For folks who don't mind sawdust

SOA at the Wooden Boat Festival



An outside display



Find the right timing / distance

- Minimum time between show and school
- Minimum distance between show and race site
- School is following Friday after Show
- Race site (Capitol Lake, Olympia) is 60 miles South on freeway

Marketing messages

- Sign up here to:
 - Receive the club newsletter online
 - Test drive a race boat like this, only \$35
 - Build a race boat like this
- Hand out race schedules
 - Come see us race
 - Come race with us
- Fun, affordable, family sport

Contact info / sign-ups

- Treat contact information like gold
- Follow-up during the following week with emails and phone calls
- Object is to get folks to the site
 - Where to be, when to be there
 - What to wear
 - What to expect
 - Bring your friends
 - Bring a camera
 - Have fun

School Day

- Welcome folks; direct folks to registration
- Orientation session
- Safety equipment fitting
- Course, officials, rescue, ambulance all in place
- Junior Hydro for kids, detuned C Stock Hydro for adults
- One on course while next is suiting up
- Take a lap or two on the course solo
- Big grin!

Heading out for a first test drive



Staging a second test drive



Returning with a big grin



A few happy first-time drivers



Follow-thru

- Update contact info list
- Work the list
- Add to club newsletter email distribution list
- Follow-up with emails, calls
- Simple—just takes enthusiasm

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Results

- 4 years
- First year - 18 signed up
- Last year - 52 signed up
- Last year - 38 actually attended the school and took a test drive
- Over the 4 years, easily 10-12 brand-new full-time long-term active racers with equipment
- And also provided interested families into the Junior Hydro building project

Building a Junior Hydro is fun too



Sample Classroom Presentation

- Dean Sutherland
- Michigan Hydroplane Racing Association

Race consists of two heats

Heat consists of three laps of no more than 12 boats

If more than 12 boats are at a race in a given class, then elimination heats are run

Winner is determined by who scores the most points in both heats:

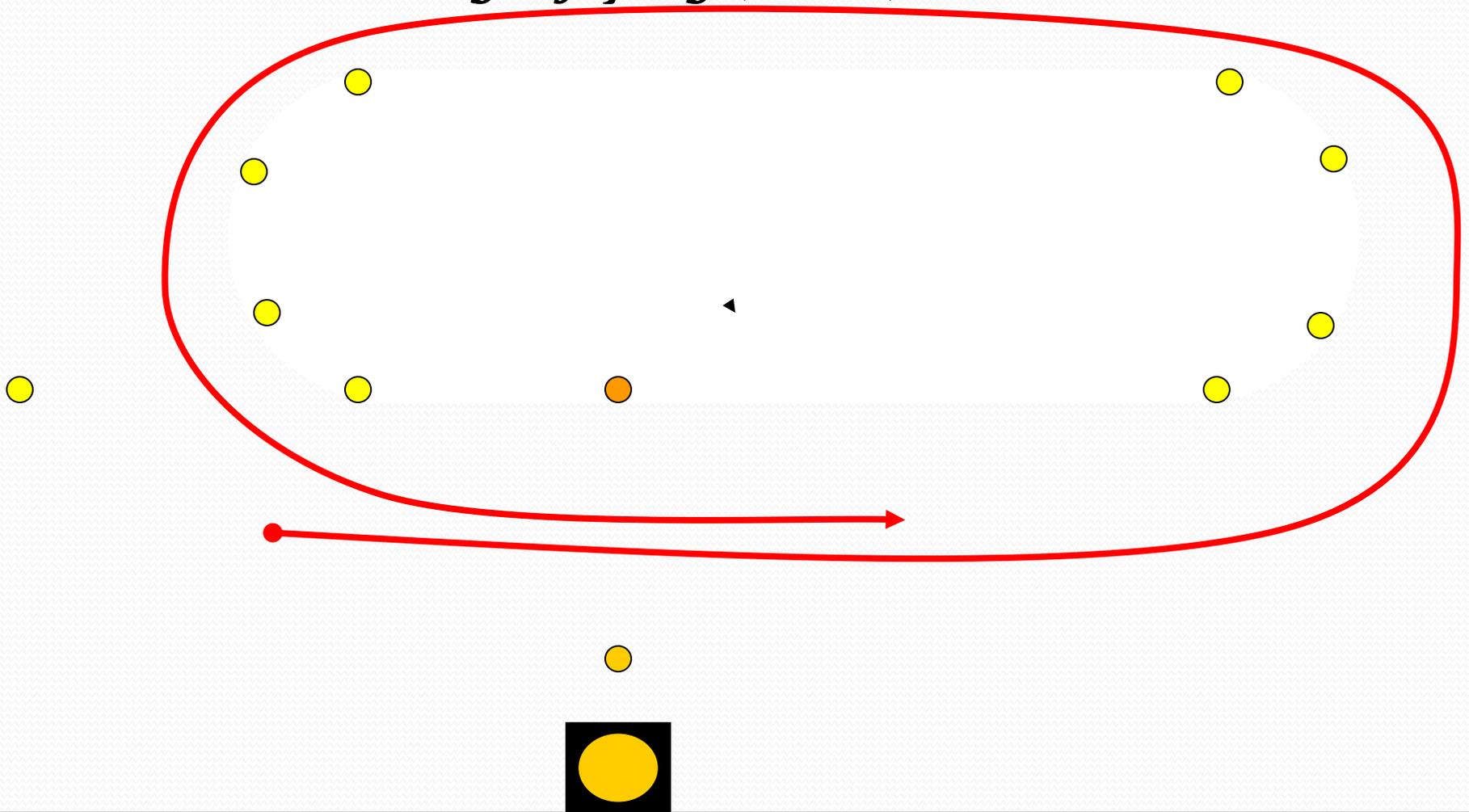
HEAT1 + HEAT 2 = WINNER

A tie in points will be broken by lowest elapsed time

Heat Point Breakdown

1	400	7	71
2	300	8	53
3	225	9	40
4	169	10	30
5	127	11	23
6	95	12	17

- *Heat = Three laps in a counter-clockwise direction utilizing a flying (clock) start*

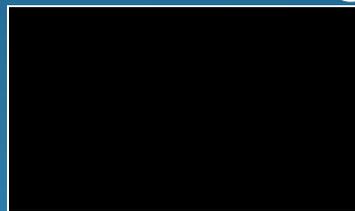


• Green Flag



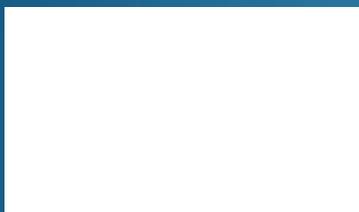
- Time between start of the race and “one minute gun”
- Displayed while race is underway except for last lap

• Black Flag



- Course is closed
- Return to pits
- Stay in pits

• White Flag



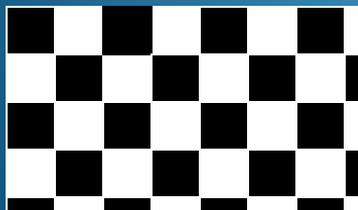
- Signals one minute to the start of the race
- Signals the leader has started the last lap

• Red Flag



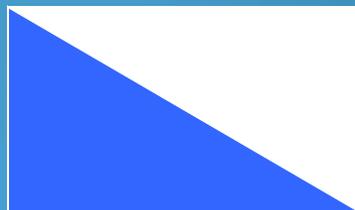
- **STOP! STOP!**
- Be alert and watch for other signals

• Checkered Flag



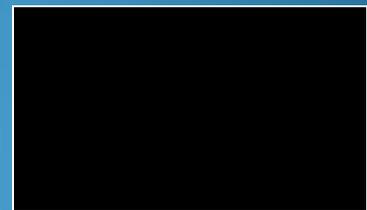
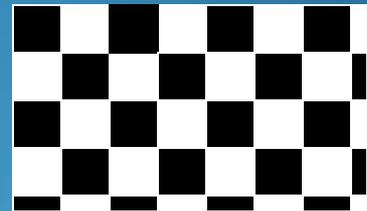
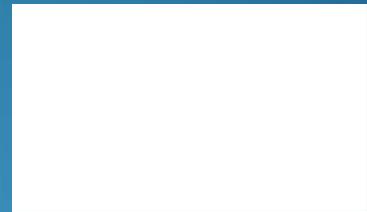
- Finish of race

• Blue and White Flag



- Caution
- Problem on race course
- Continue racing with caution

- “Normal”
heat flag
sequence



“Normal”

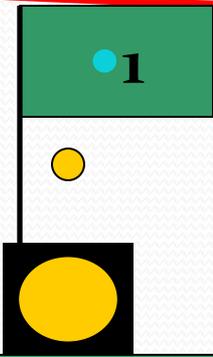
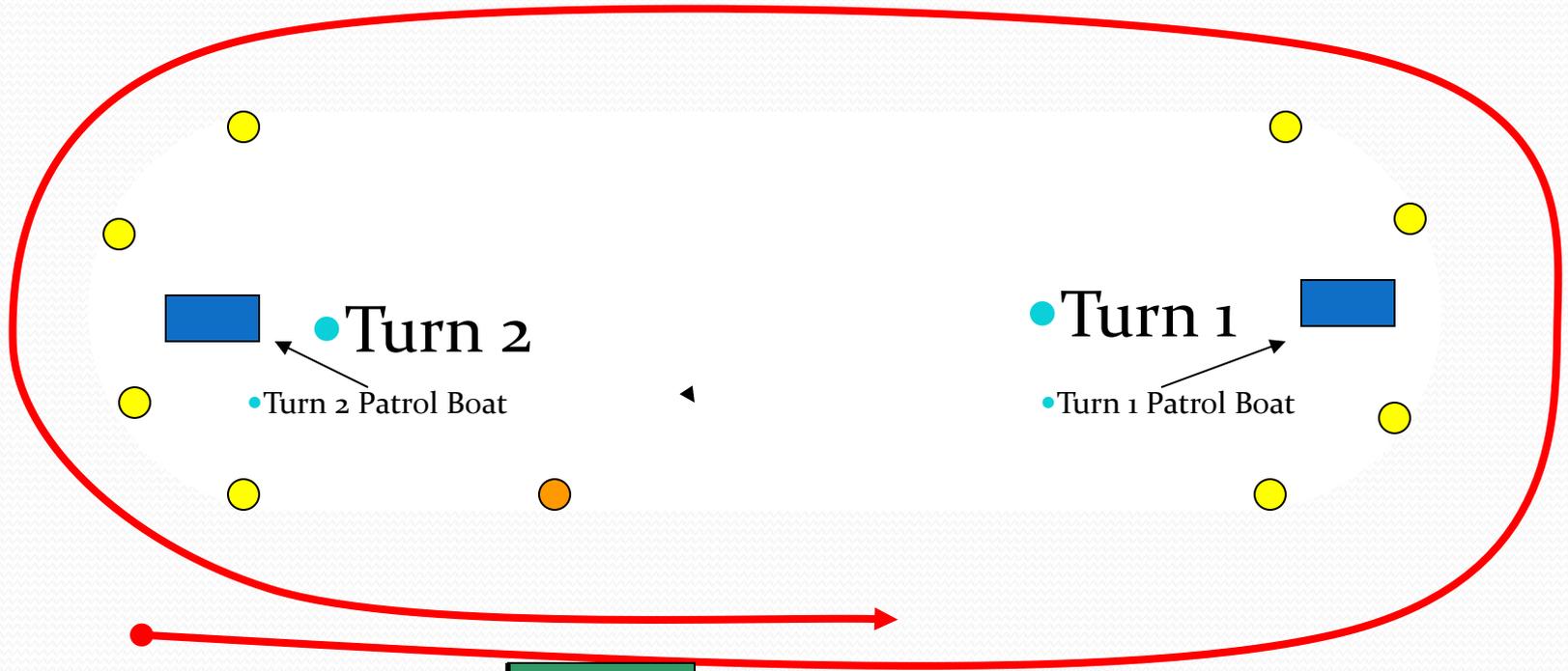
Sequence of Flags

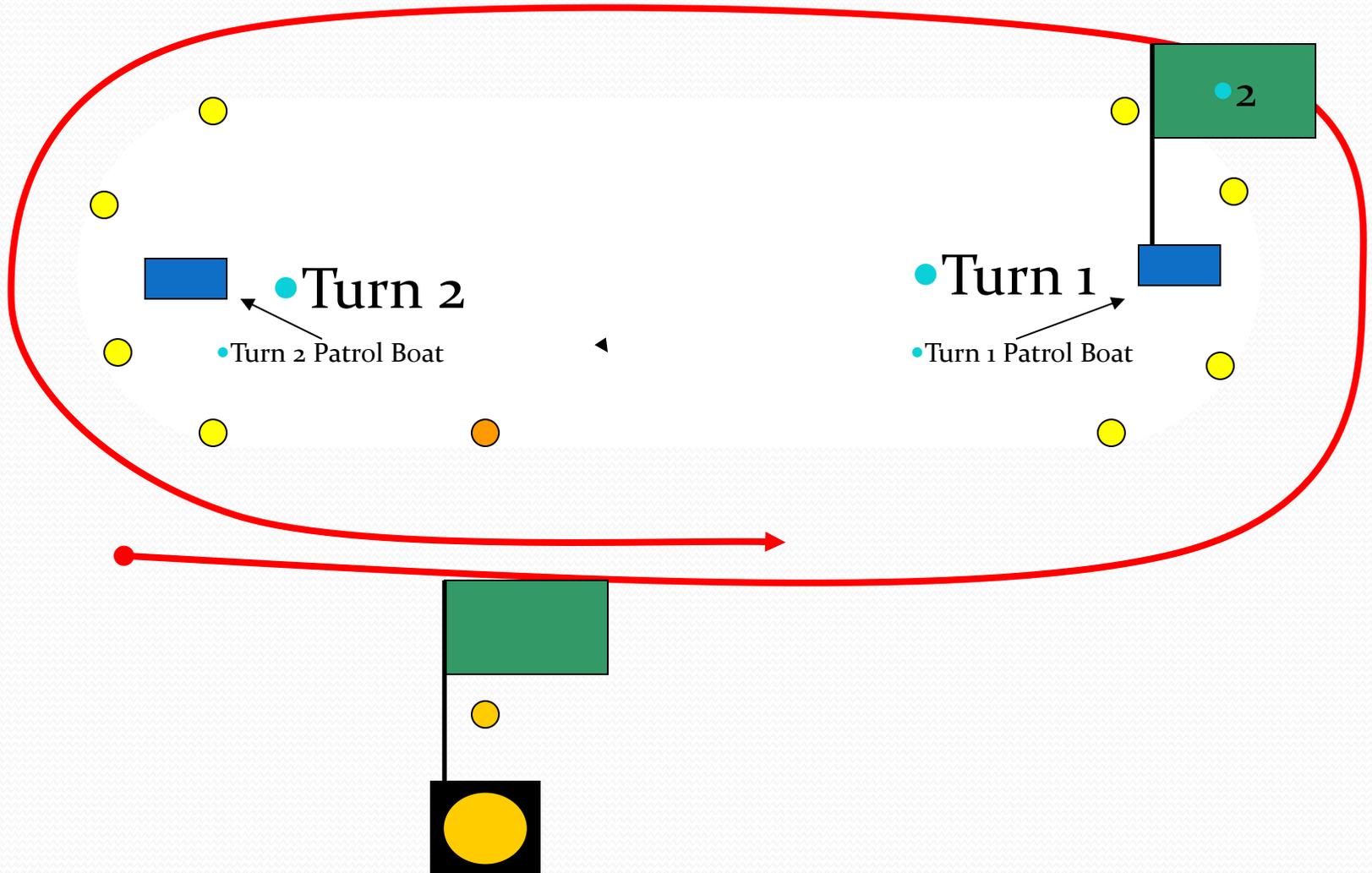
- **Green flag.** Leave the pits, plane off your boat and head for the milling area. Continue milling with caution until the white flag is displayed.
- **White flag.** 60 seconds to the start of the race. Drivers jockey for position and begin lining up for the start.

“Normal”

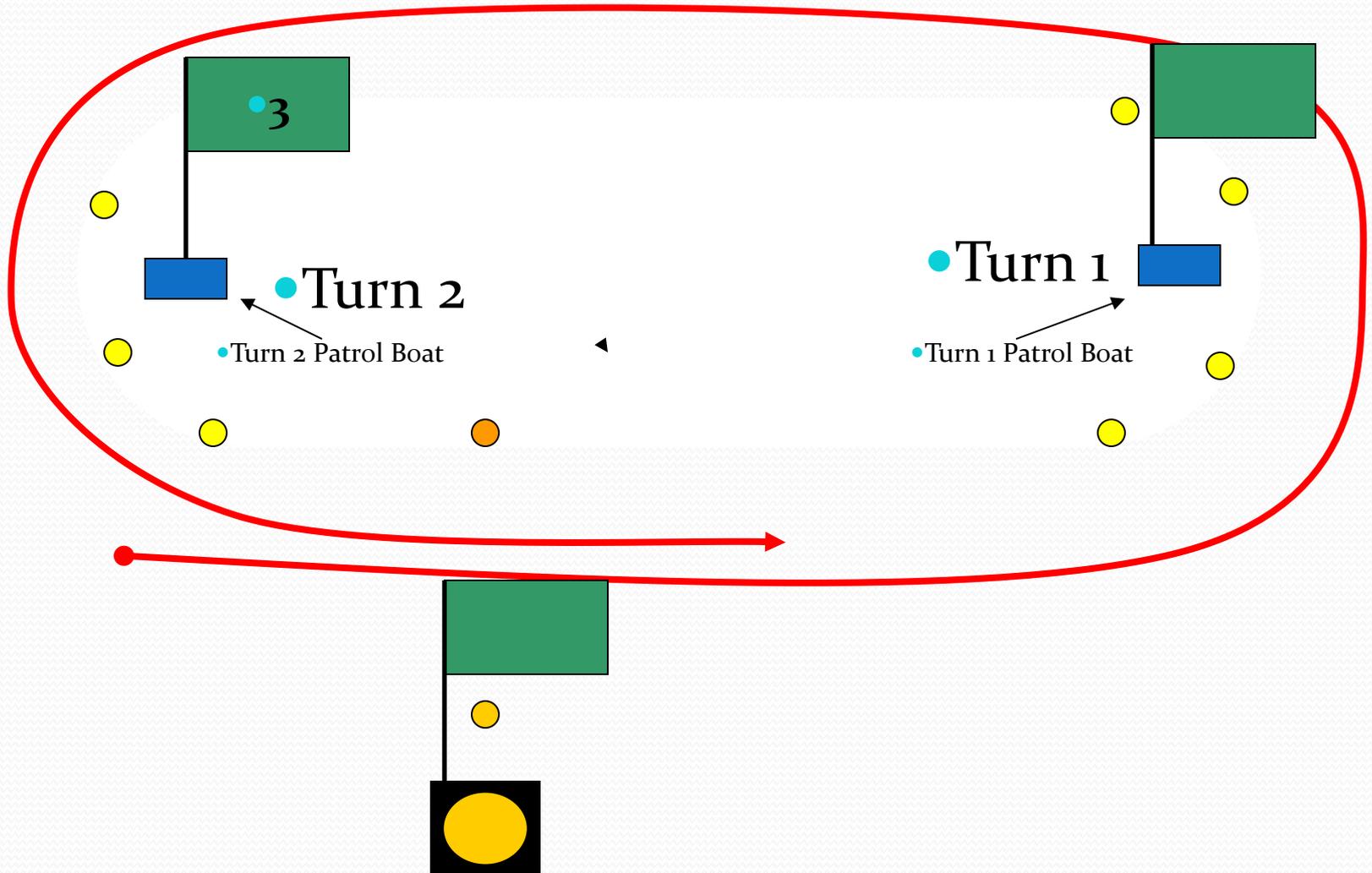
Sequence of Flags

- **Green Flag.** Displayed from the start of the race until the leader begins the final lap.
- **White Flag.** Leader has begun the final lap of the race.
- **Checkered Flag.** Finish. Safely proceed to the inside of the course.
- **Black Flag.** Return to pits.



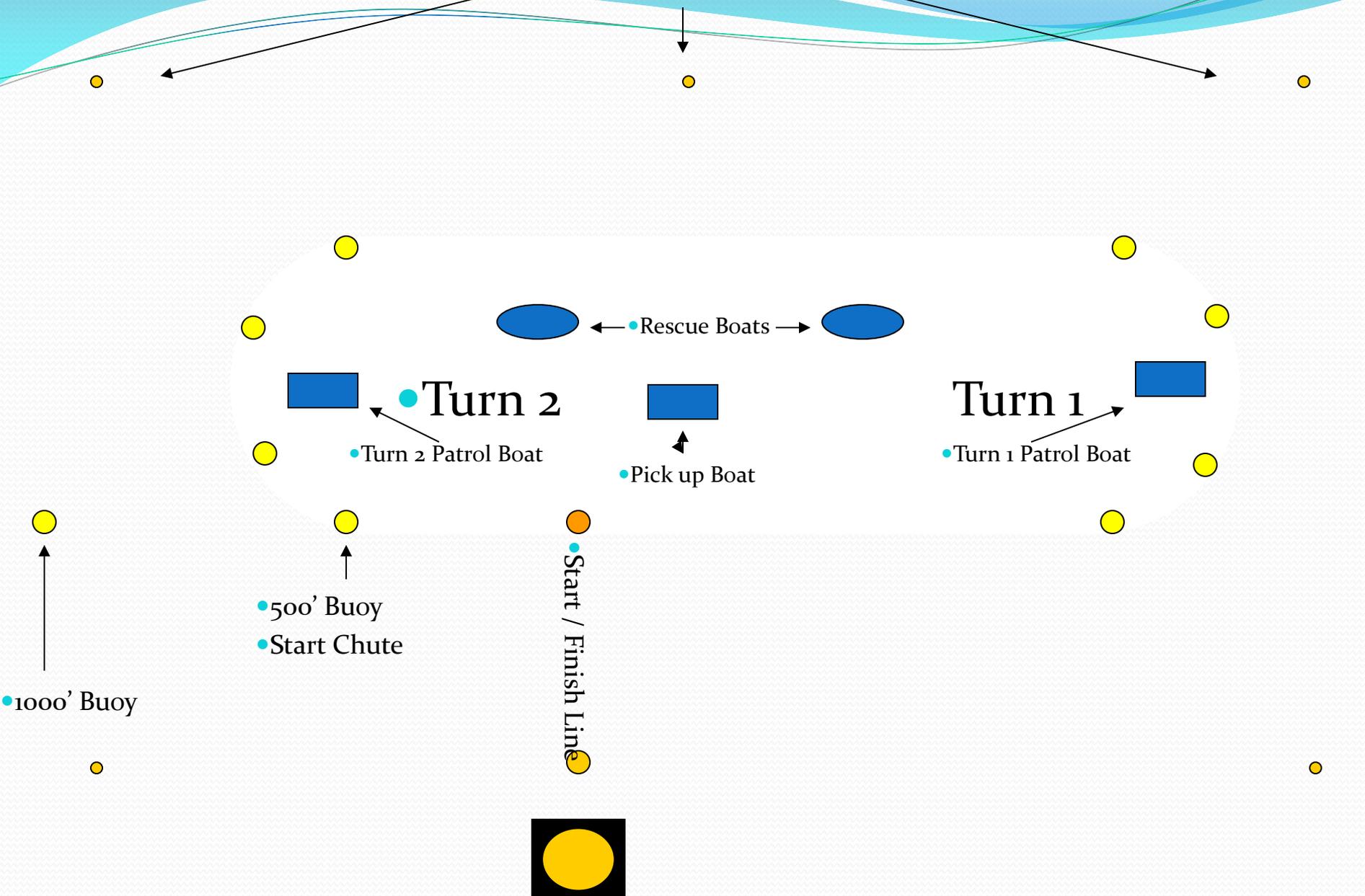


Shoreline and Pits • Judges Stand • Shoreline and Pits



Shoreline and Pits • Judges Stand • Shoreline and Pits

Outside Course Markers



1000' Buoy

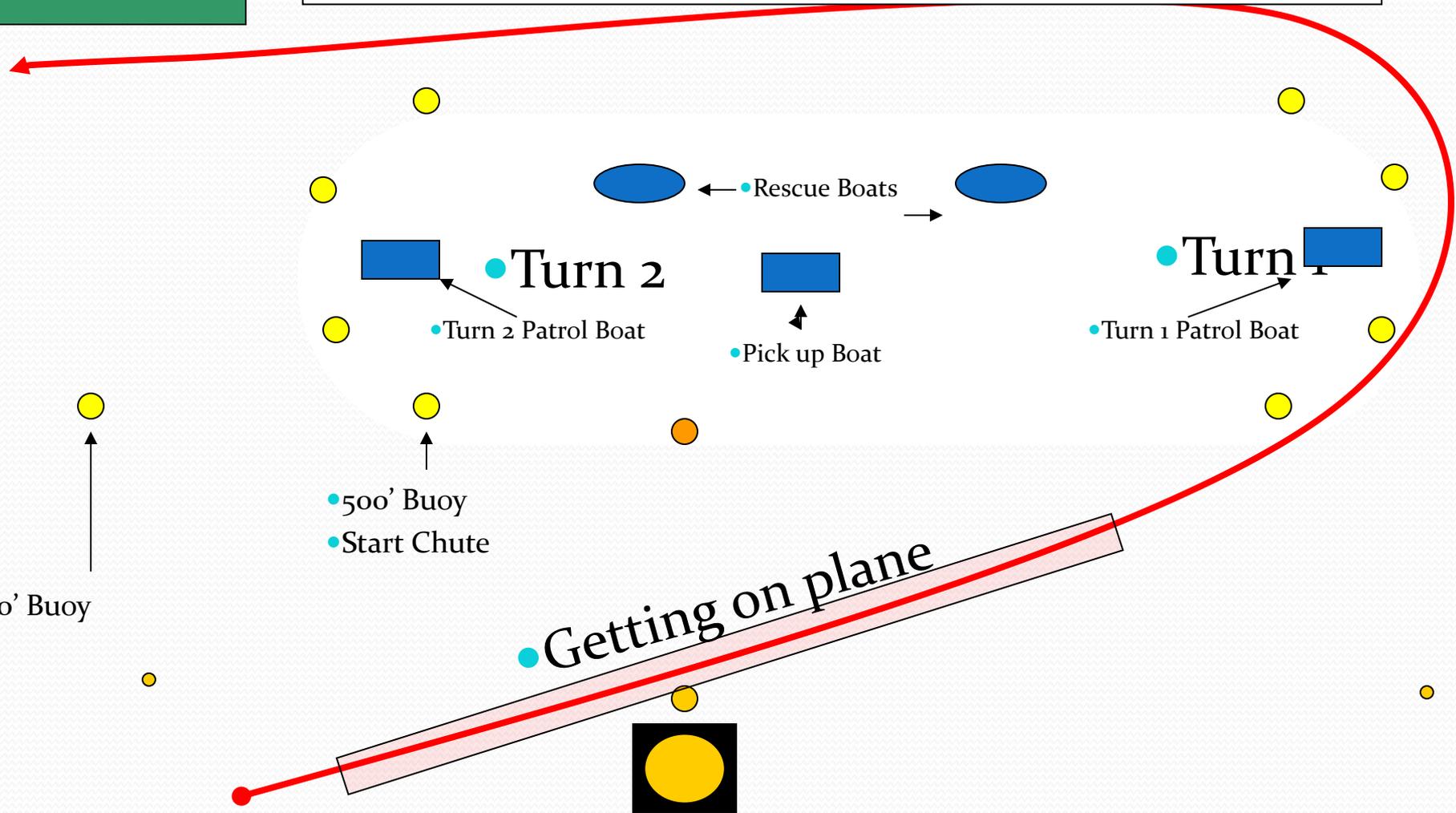
500' Buoy
Start Chute

Start / Finish Line

● **Green Flag** – Boats enter the race course, get on plane and head for the milling area.



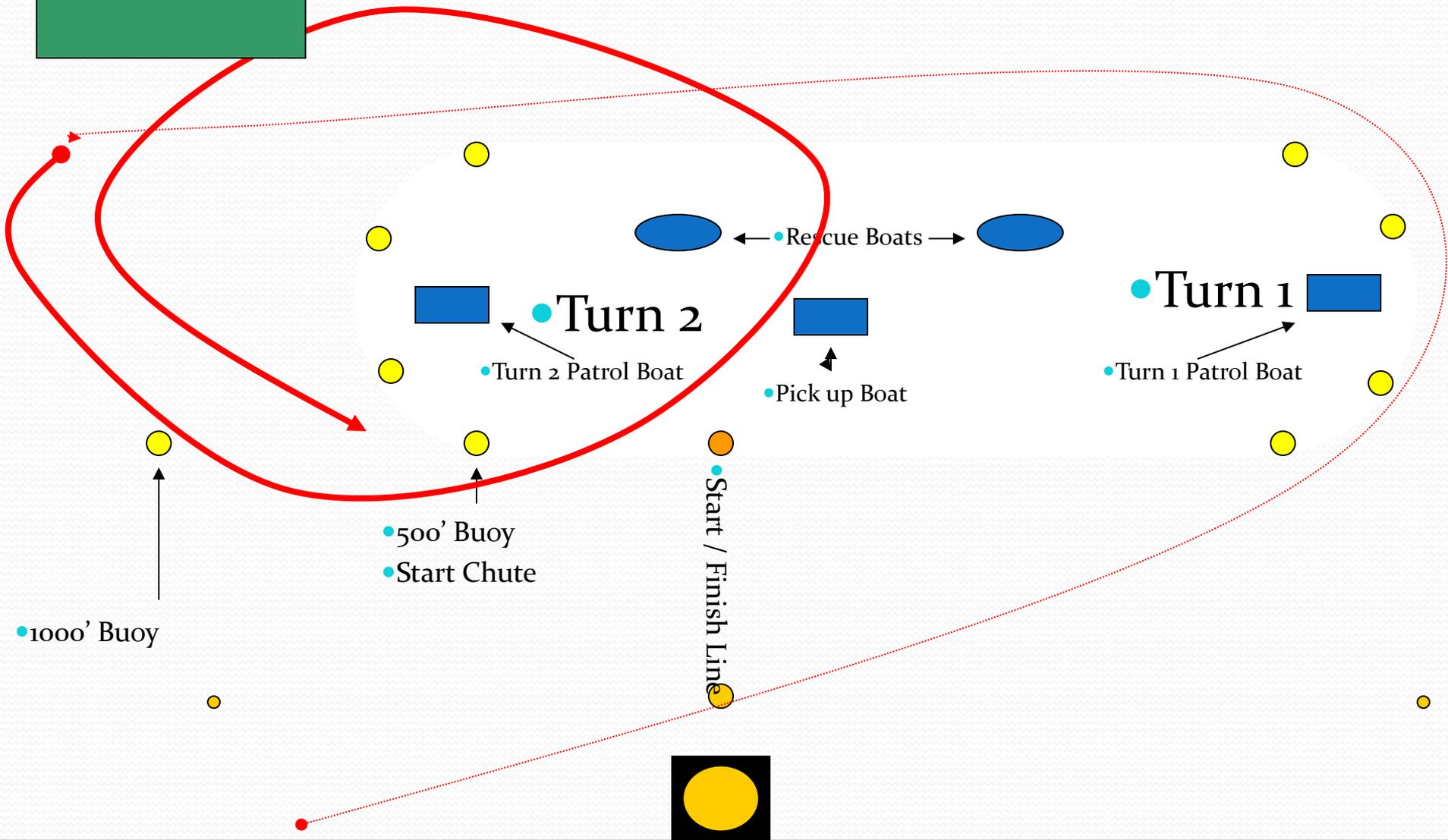
• **Green Flag** – Boats enter the race course, get on plane and head for the milling area.





- Lean your weight forward to get “on plane”

• Green Flag - Milling "on the race course"



• Turn 2

• Turn 1

• Rescue Boats

• Turn 2 Patrol Boat

• Pick up Boat

• Turn 1 Patrol Boat

• 500' Buoy

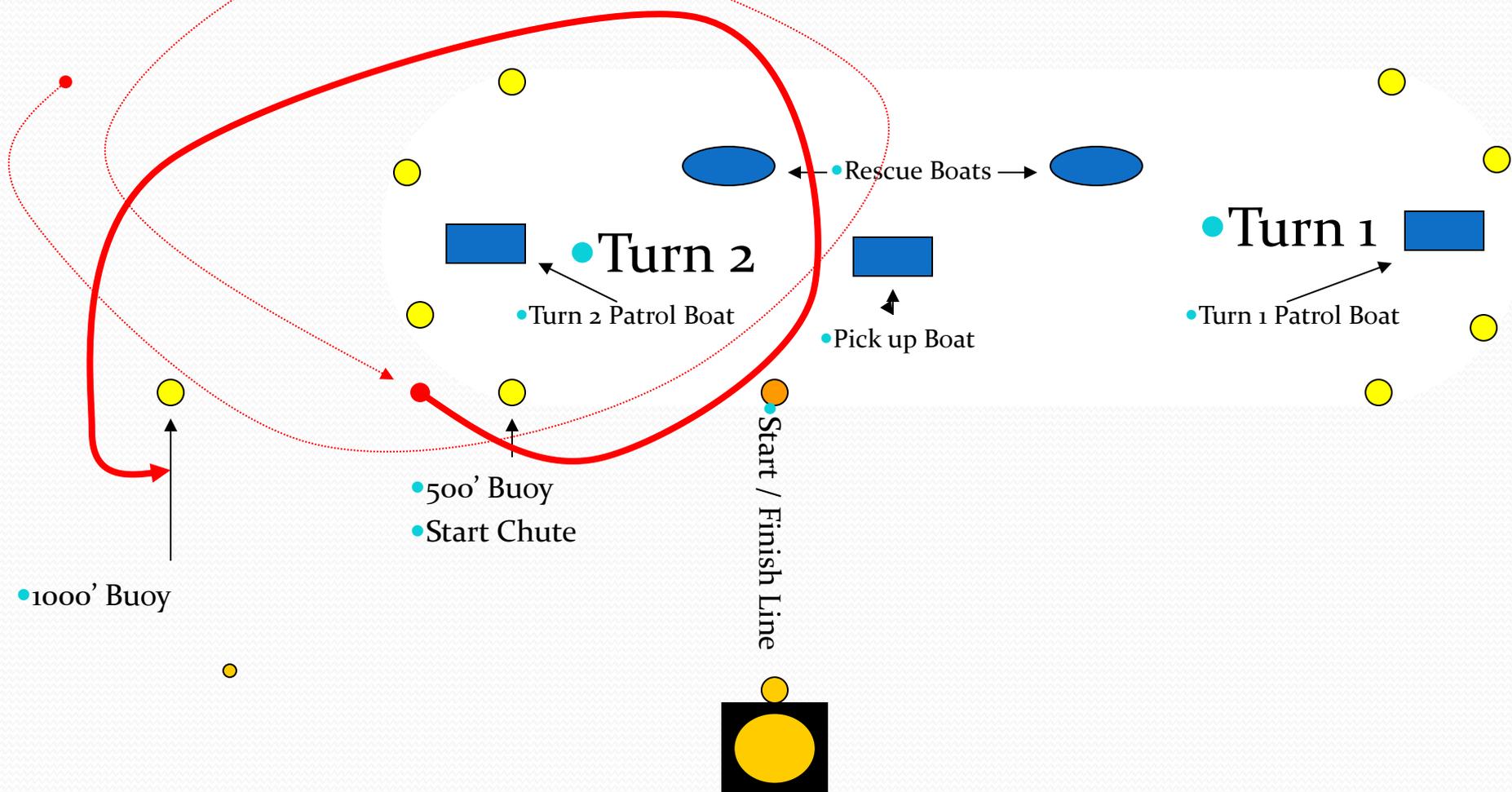
• Start Chute

• Start / Finish Line

• 1000' Buoy

Shoreline and Pits • Starting Clock/Judges Stand

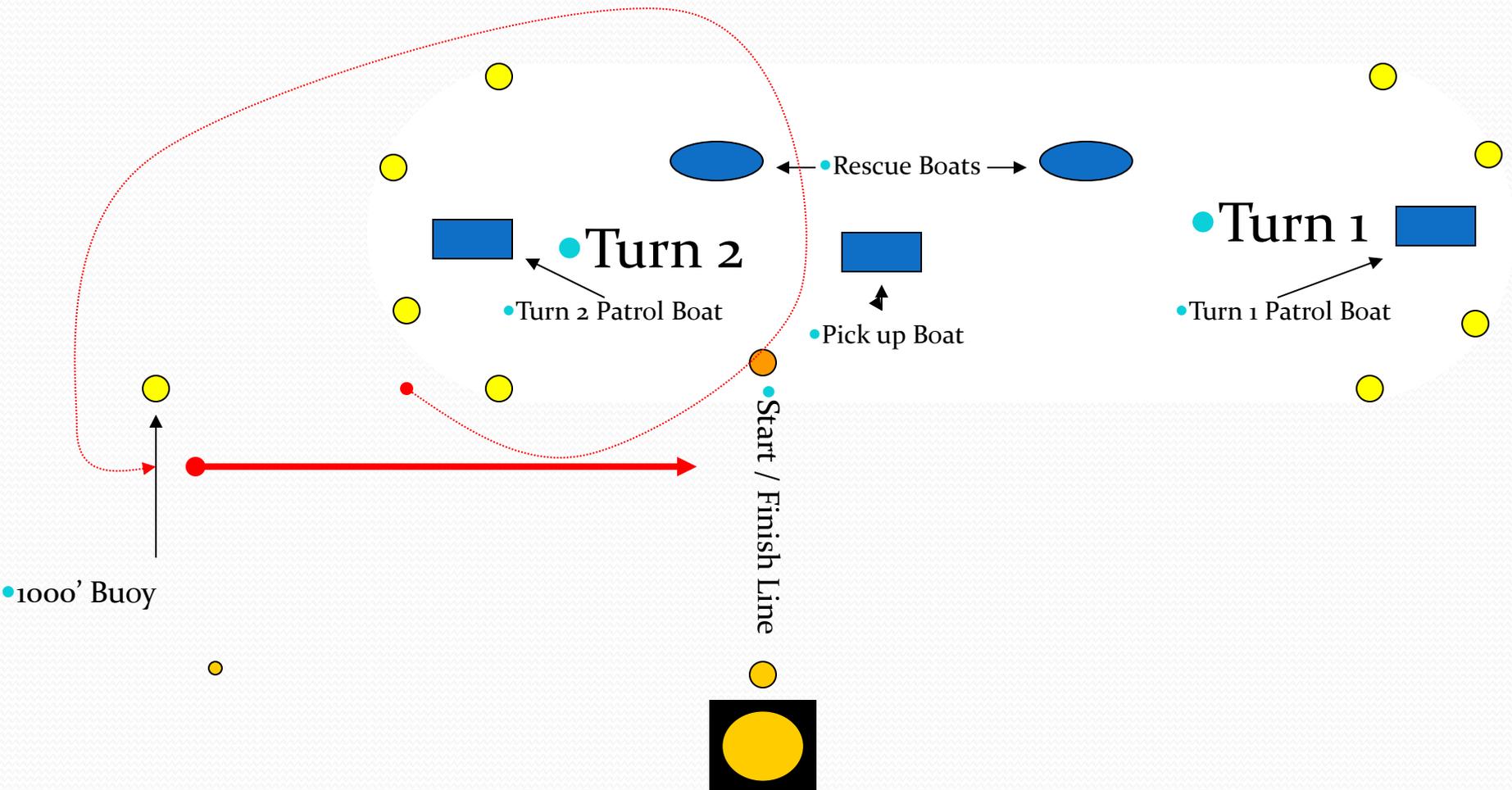
• **White flag** 60 seconds to the start of the race. Starting clock begins running off the last minute.



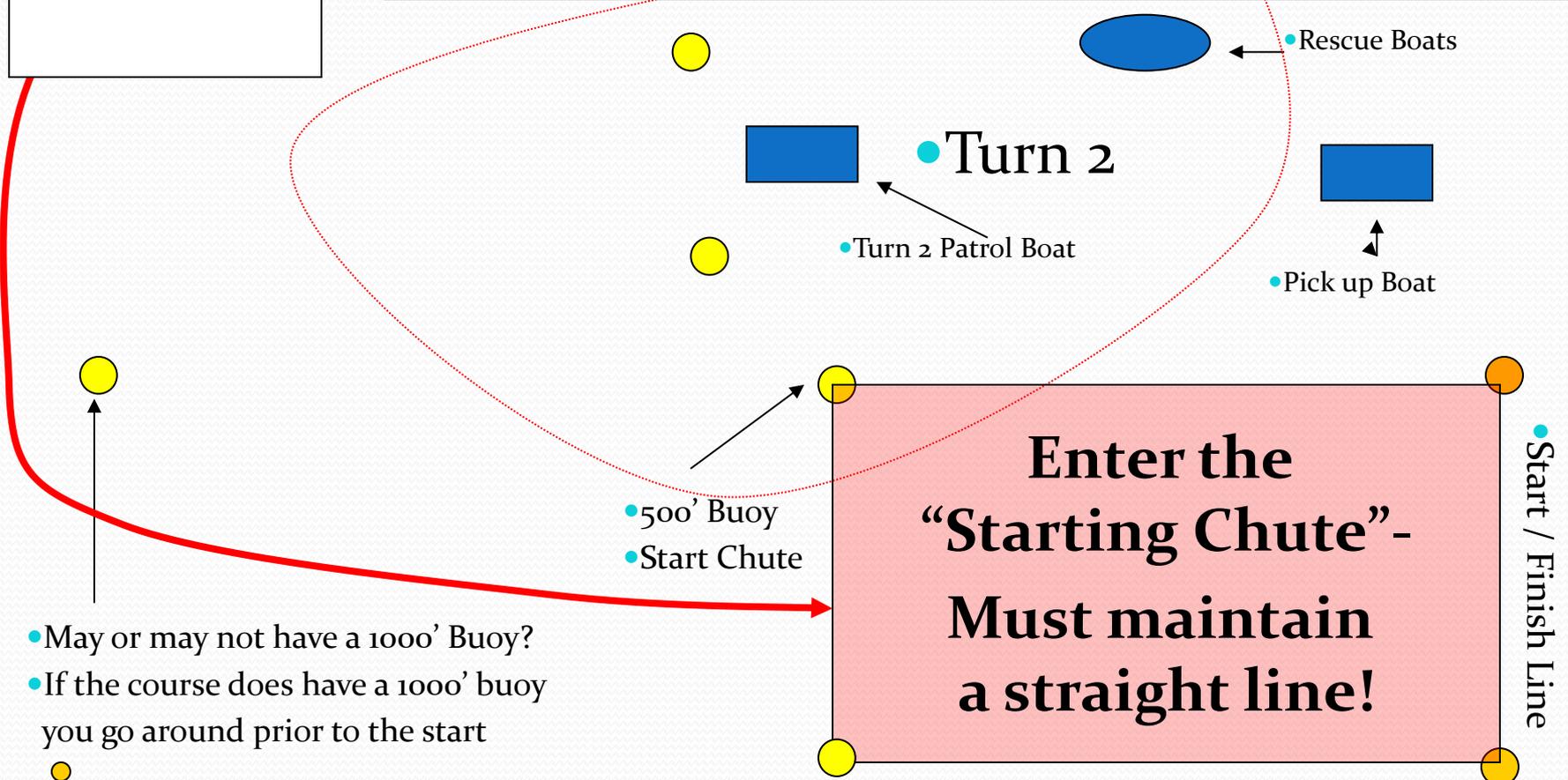
Shoreline and Pits • Starting Clock/Judges Stand



• **Final** approx. 15-20 seconds to the start of the race.



• **Final** approx. 15-20 seconds to the start of race.



- May or may not have a 1000' Buoy?
- If the course does have a 1000' buoy you go around prior to the start

**Enter the
"Starting Chute" -
Must maintain
a straight line!**

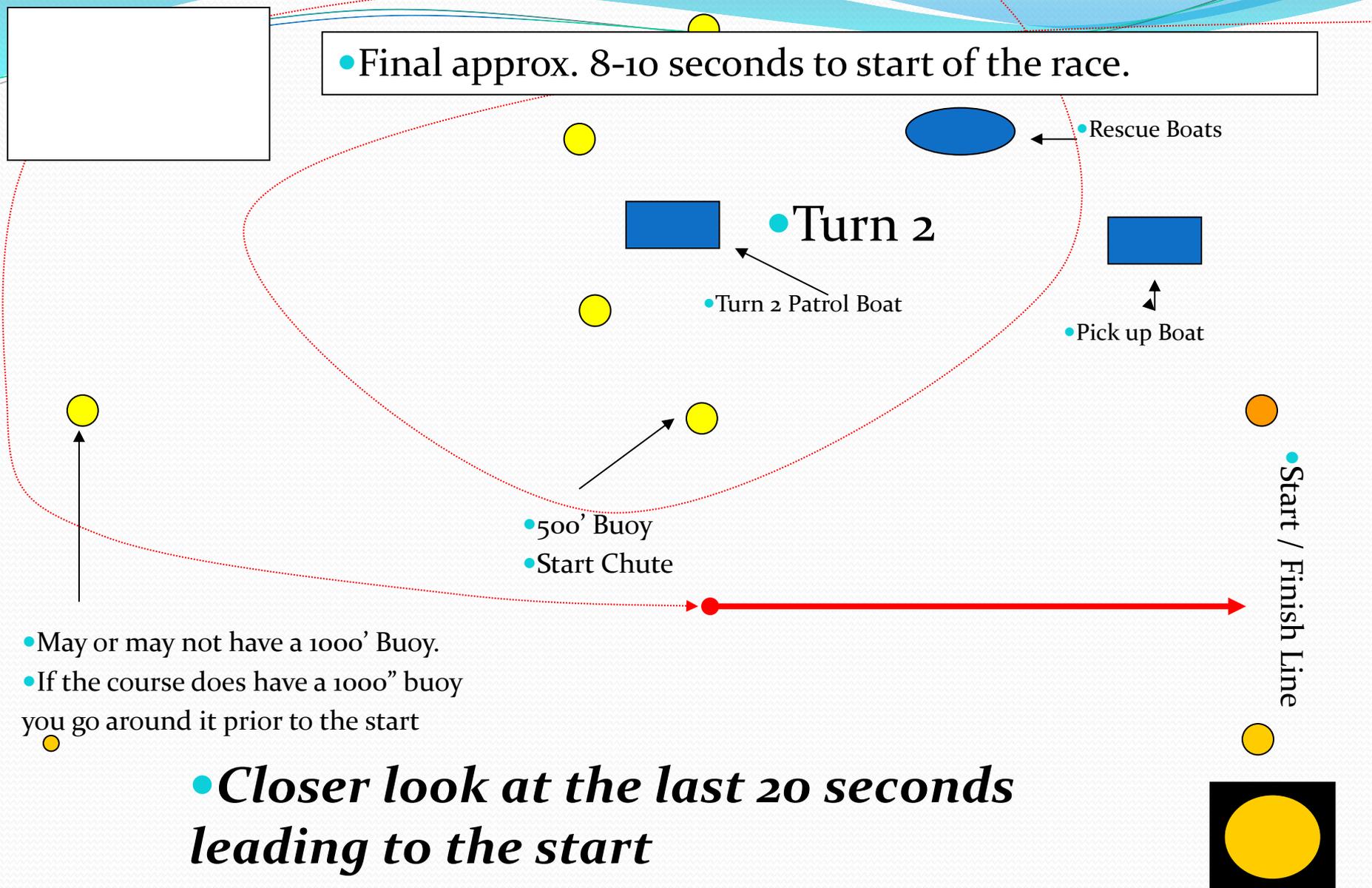
Start / Finish Line

• *Closer look at the last 20 seconds leading to the start*



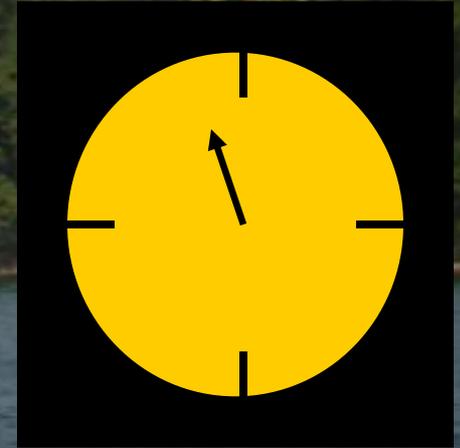
Shoreline and Pits • Starting Clock/Judges Stand

• Final approx. 8-10 seconds to start of the race.



- May or may not have a 1000' Buoy.
- If the course does have a 1000" buoy you go around it prior to the start

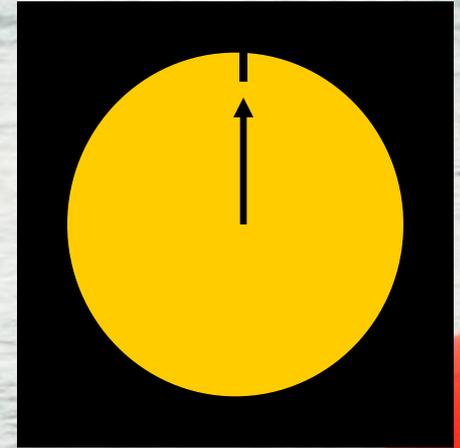
• Closer look at the last 20 seconds leading to the start



*• YOU MUST MAINTAIN A STRAIGHT LINE
IN THE STARTING CHUTE!!!*

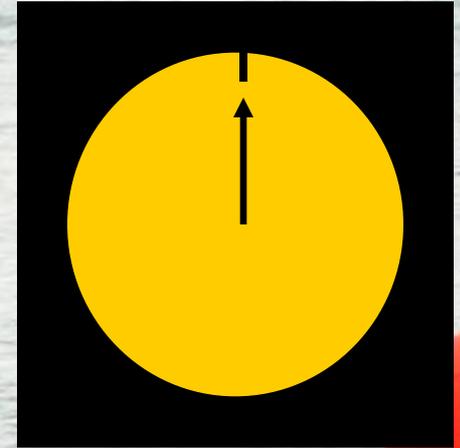


“Good Start”



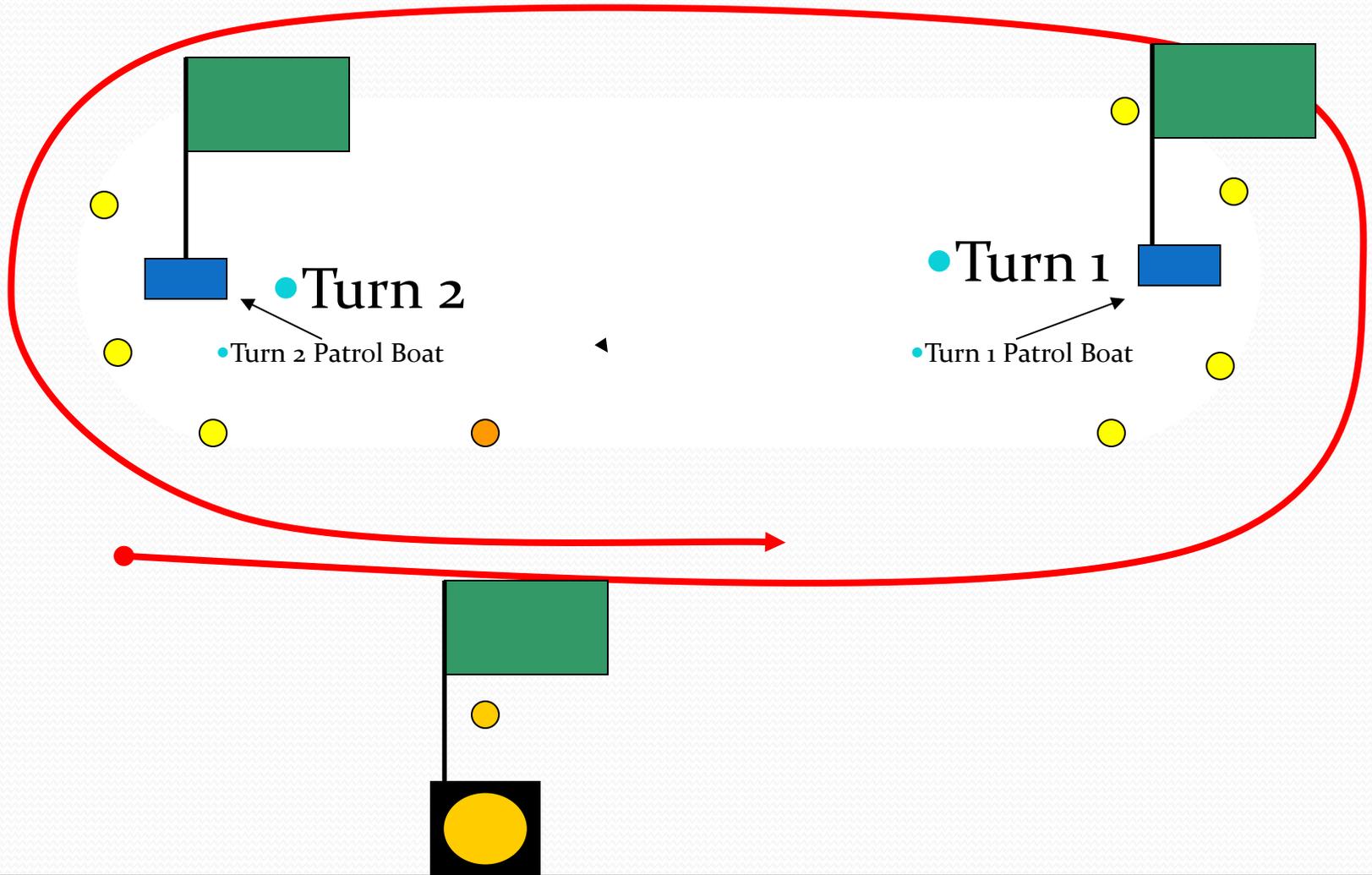
● Start-Finish Line

**“Jumping the gun”
= Disqualification**



● Start-Finish Line

**● 111P & 11F “Jumped the gun”
and are disqualified**



Shoreline and Pits • Judges Stand • Shoreline and Pits

On The Water

- Mark Miskerik
- Michigan Hydroplane Racing Association
<http://www.michiganhydroplane.com/>

On The Water

Inform your participant they need to bring:

- Nylon shorts or swimsuit
- Closed-toed shoes that can get wet
- Helmet (if they have one) as it is more likely to fit them well.
- Water/sports drink to stay hydrated
- Change of clothes for after event is over
- Camera

On The Water

Items to consider:

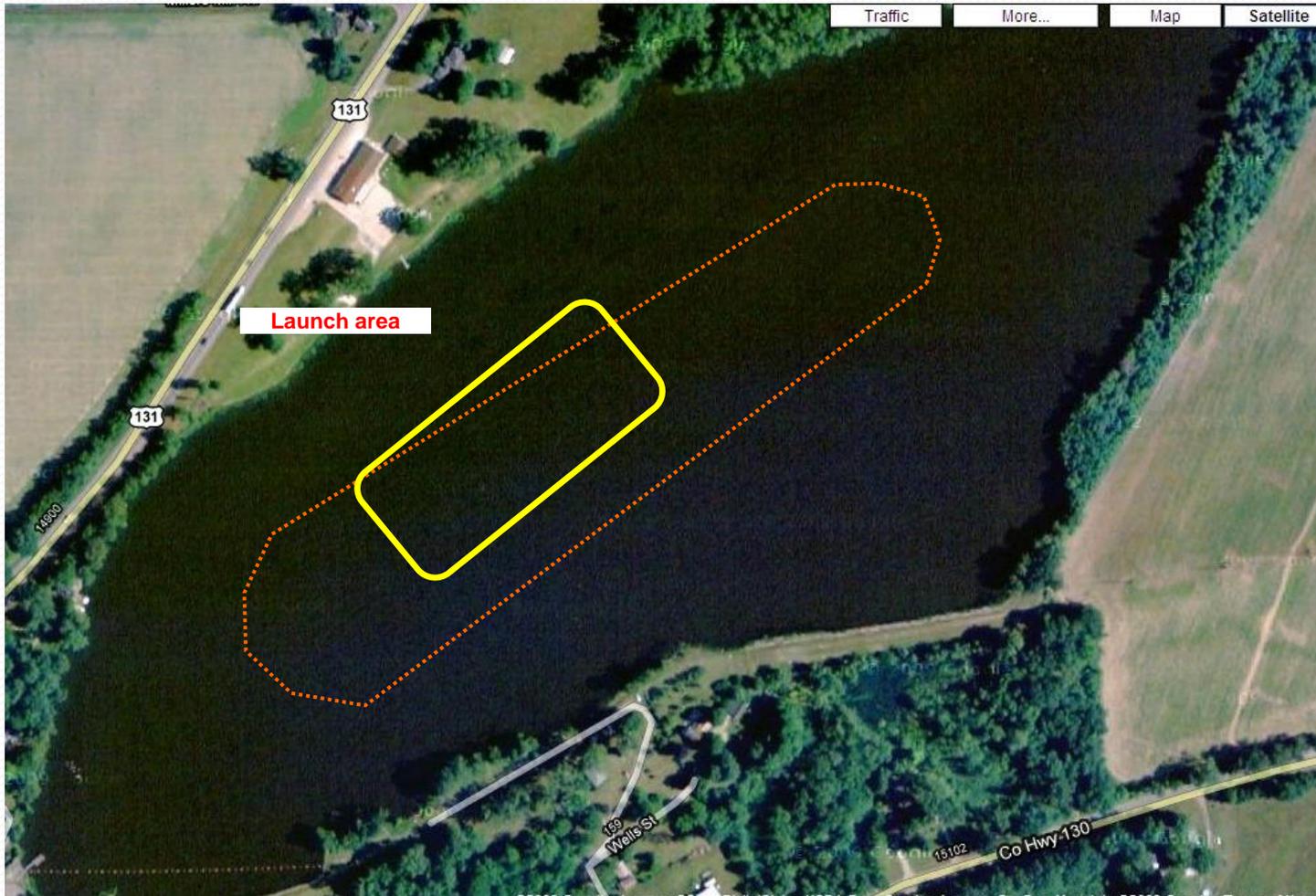
- MHRA runs the “on the water” portion for approx. 2 hours. We feel that anywhere between 4-8 participants is optimal for this amount of time.
 - Depending on the amount of equipment (boats and safety gear) you have available, you will need at least 8 volunteers.
 - 4 to man safety boats
 - 2 on shore helping participants get in and out of safety gear and make sure it's on properly (1 manning the radio in contact with the rescue boats)
 - 2 in the water with participants.
- Having a boat set up on shore to “beach race” is very important. An instructor should sit in the boat and show them planing techniques, driving/turning position, and general operation of the throttle and steering wheel. Each participant should perform these techniques prior to going on the water.
- Hand signals (such as slow down and cut the throttle) should be reviewed with the group prior to going on the water.
- Inform them that the Red/Black flag means their time is over and to safely come into the pits. Each boat should have a Red/Black flag.

On The Water

Items to consider continued:

- If possible, have rigs available based on participants' size and age.
- All rigs were set up with safety in mind and to get on-plane easily.
- Have one of the instructors take a few laps in a rig to show the participants planing, driving position, turning and coming into the pits.
- Each participant will take anywhere from 2 to 4 laps their first time out.
- After their first session is completed, explain what they did well and what they can improve upon.
- Their second session should consist of 4 to 6 laps and, if time permits, a third session is ideal. Each participant should get approx. 15-20 minutes of boat time on the water.
- If possible, provide them with a token (certificate, shirt, etc.) for their time and reminding them of the experience.
- Get all participants' contact information and follow up with them after the event.

Typical race course and racer school course comparison



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- Typical Course size on this body of water is approx. 1 mile in length per lap.

—————

- Racer school course much shorter with similar turn width. This keeps the top speeds lower. Course was approx. 3/8 mile in length per lap.

- The course was also kept in front of the launch area to allow the participants to more easily see the instructors.