Introduction to types of team racing and regatta formats

<u>Team Race Formats</u>
A team race features one team made up of some number of boats vs. another team. Technically, it could be sailed with any number of boats but for logistical and competitive reasons they normally fall into one of the following formats:

- **2v2**: Races with 2 boats on each team are the easiest to pull off (less boats needed!) and easiest for a spectator or beginner team racer to follow simply because the team who finishes with a boat in last place loses. When one team finishes in 1st and 4th and the other in 2nd and 3rd they both have 5 points but the tie is broken in favor of the team without a boat in last place, "last place loses". 2v2s are popular in keelboat team racing since it can be hard to secure enough boats to run a 3v3 format. Recently, the [Global Team Race](#) began to popularize this format on an international level.
- **3v3**: This is the most traditional team racing format with nearly all high level and championship regattas sailed 3v3. It's more complicated than 2v2 since a few different finishing combinations can win a race ([see this great resource to learn more](#)) but that's also what makes it so much fun. Most experienced team racers prefer a 3v3 format.
- **4v4**: A popular format in the Opti class to increase participation, 4v4 racing sounds complicated with all of the possible winning combinations but really it's a lot like 2v2. If one team has boats in 7th and 8th their team can't win so 4v4 racing is often intense near the finish line when one team tries to passback two of the other team's boats. It's good fun once you get the hang of it!

<u>Team Race Regatta Formats</u>
A regatta might host just a few or dozens of teams at an event. To pull it off, there's a few formats a regatta organizer might utilize.

- **Round Robin**: The most popular regatta format in match and team racing where every team races every other team one or more times. Sometimes this is followed by smaller round robins where teams are broken up into gold and silver fleets. Wins are totaled and the team with the most at the end of the regatta wins. This format is generally the most fair since everyone races everyone and points are carried forward so, like fleet racing, bad luck in a single race doesn't sink your whole event. The downside of round robins is you have to complete all of the scheduled races. If the wind dies in the middle of a 20 team event (100+ races) all the results might have to be thrown out.
- **Swiss League**: For large events, the Swiss League is the best format since you don't have to complete full round robins. Teams are randomly matched for their first race and after that winners race other winners and losers race losers. The cool thing about this format is it matches teams with similar abilities so everyone enjoys close, competitive racing. A modified version of this uses mini round robins with english football style promotion/relegation to move between groups. Regardless, for a swiss league to be the most fair it's best to take the top 4-8 teams and run a knockout at the end of the event.

- **Knockout:** A knockout is the most intuitive type of regatta and is most often run at the end of a round robin or swiss league to determine the top positions. Like March Madness, top seeds are paired against lower seeds where winners move on and losers are out. It's best for each match to be a best of 3 or 5 to prevent bad luck having a large impact on final results. Knockouts are exciting for both competitors and spectators as teams fight to survive and a team can't win the regatta before the last race!

Check out more tips on running a successful team race here.