A modified version of the “Vanderbilt Start” named after Harold Sterling Vanderbilt, a famous yachtsman who won the America's Cup three times in a row in the 1930s, may just be the ticket.

Here is how it works:

1.         Preparation:

•         Cross the starting line near where you want to start, but heading the opposite direction of your desired starting course

•         Start a forward counting stop watch.

•         Sail for 2 minutes (T1), or some other convenient time.

•         Tack, or Jibe

•         Head back to the line and stop the watch as your bow is on the line.(have a look out on the bow)

•         Write down the elapsed time (T2)

•         Note: you may repeat this several times to get good average of T2

•         Now divide T1 by T2 to get your magic Start Correction Factor (SCF)

2.         The Start:

•         After the Warning Signal (5 min.) cross the starting line near where you want to start, but heading the opposite direction of your desired starting course

•         Multiply the time remaining by the SCF. (T3)

•         At the end of T3 tack, or jibe (same as during the Prep.) and head for the line

With a little practice you should get perfect starts and be ahead at least at the beginning.

*From Peter Szasz 4/12/14*