

Cedar Point Week 1: Decision 2008: Standard or Radial?

This was a momentous week in that it was not only the start of a new Fall season but the first race week where we had a separate start for the Radial Fleet. I believe it worked well. The RC headed by Charles Stanley made the races flow smoothly with the same hurry-up-start feel that we are used to frostbiting at CP.

Although our standard fleet was much smaller than in past years the racing was competitive with many regulars, a few new faces and the return of some guys who we have not seen in a while.

I did not have the same game plan for each race. The first race favored the left and then from race 2-6 or so the breeze went right with each race. It became apparent that the breeze was going right since the RC had to move the windward mark 20 degrees or more between each race. What I did find helpful was playing the fleet and my competitors that were within close proximity. After the start and the first tack on port I would identify who I was close to. From this point on my goal was to beat them and not worry about people on other sides of the course. Because the beat was so short, by the time I established the person or group I had to beat we only had another 75 or so yards to the weather mark, so the chance of one complete side filling and 5 boats lifting inside on me was minimal.

On the downwind clear air and boat speed seemed to be the key ingredients. I saw the top guys make each side of the run work, so I would say there was no clear side to play. I have been working on light air downwind sailing a good bit this summer. Here are some things that I find valuable:

- Sheet between the boom block and ratchet block. This eliminates the friction of the ratchet block. There is little pressure on the sheet as is, so increasing feel will allow you to know when to bear off in the slightest puff.
- Hold the sheet between your index and middle finger when it is super light
- In light air, ditch the gloves.
- Sail with a great deal of heel. The more heel the more SA you raise higher, where the wind is stronger. As the boat heels more the boat becomes unstable and tippy. If you are hit with a tiny puff you will feel it as the boat will react. It will again be time to sheet in and bear off toward the mark.
- Derek clewed me into the 6mm rooster rope a few years ago and I will never go back. Most people sail with the 7 mm which is the black speckled rooster rope. The 6 mm flows much more freely through the blocks and does not weigh down the boom when going by-the-lee on the runs. Again the main idea is to increase feel on the runs. The line is yellow in color.
- The sea state seemed a bit lumpy for the wind velocity. I happened to be carrying my board lower than normal and I think it helped to track down wind a bit better than in the past.
- I have 2 windexes. 1 on the bow and 1 on the masthead. The masthead fly was almost too sensitive in the light air as it was simply spinning around as the boat

moved through the waves and the mast was jolting. It works best with just a bit more pressure. The bow windex is low to the water and is less sensitive to the wind direction than the masthead fly. But between the two I am generally very sure which jybe is the closest by-the-lee angle to the mark.

All in all Sunday was a great day. My wife Maria was out taking pictures along with other RC members.

Youtube video link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJOZP0IAjs8>

This is the start of the second race of the day. We will get better with the video quality but this is a standard start. The pin is favored and you initially see me Jybe out (bc I was too early) then John Bainton and James Barry end up rerounding. In the end Bill Dickey is the closest boat to the pin accelerating and footing off after the gun. I managed to loop around and start just to weather of Bill.

Thanks,

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