

## Week 5: What went wrong

First, nice job to John Bainton and the boys on RC. I personally liked the longer courses. I believe longer courses make us all better sailors as they better prepare us for outside events. Nowhere else do they sail super short courses so why should we if we do not have to?

As many of you know the writeups we all post to this laser page are mostly about what we did on the course that helped us win. I thought it might be time to talk about a few of the bad decisions and poor calls I did as well as a few things I saw other people do.

I had one poor start and another that could have been a lot better. The bad start occurred when I was about 6 boats down from the RC. Usually I am good about sighting the line in the final 30 seconds before the start by constantly scanning back and forth from the pin to the committee boat, closing in on the line with each second to go. In this particular start Britt Hughes pulled ahead in my leeward hole and when the gun went off he was more than "bow out" on me. I am sorry to say that I watched him pull forward and did not match his pace to the line as was I nervous of being over. What I should have done was stay with him or at least not let him pull so far out in front of my leeward hole. In the end Britt had a killer start and I ended up holding until I could spot a lane on port to tack off and clear myself.

I saw Trey Brazill trying to win the boat all day. Every start he was there duking it out with 1 min plus to go. The thing is he always arrived early and fell victim to the current. I do not think he ever won the boat end and usually ended up next to me 4-6 boats down the line. To win it he needed to set up later and time the current so he could be at the RC at 0 seconds. My question to Trey is, why did you want the boat so bad? I can only think of one time Jacobi dug hard right early and came out top 2 at the first cross.

Towards the end of the day we saw indications that the right was not the only ticket in town. While 99% of us were preoccupied with a good start towards the boat end, Steve Fisk dug deep in his weapons cache to deliver an explosive port tack pin end start and cleared the lead starboard tacker by 15 lengths or more. Steve was so far ahead I and others did not think he was racing! Nice job Steve, I guess that why we really call you the Captain. By virtue of Steve's big cross the rest of us sure missed out on a big opportunity. It goes to show all of us that we need to be super keen and aware of what the breeze is going to do at the gun. I know I did not stand up at 2 min to check. And now to burst Steve's bubble a bit. You had a wonderful start; you were all alone and heading to the right, the side of the course that had been favored all day. Shortly after you crossed the majority of the fleet you tacked back onto port and sailed to the left giving more leverage to the guys on the right. When you are ahead why not consolidate your winnings and cross all the way to the favored side of the course? Even if you had to sail through a header or two to do so it may have been a more conservative move. Either way you rounded top 3 so nice job again.

In another race Mike Matan and I were duking it out on the final beat. He rounded ahead and I was able to catch up so that he lee-bowed me when I was on starboard. We did this 2 times. The final time I hung on as the windward boat and thought that I could hold him until the port tack layline to the boat. At this point I got greedy and split from him once again when I felt a slight knock. He dug into the knock harder than I, tacked, and the next time he and I converged he crossed me by 5 boatlengths. Point: When you are ahead, stay ahead. I only needed to beat him by an inch, I split to beat him by more and ended up losing by a lot. Nice job Mike, and thanks for the kick in the ass.

On the downwind: We all knew the current was flowing from right to left. Although the current switched later in the day, the left looking down wind seemed to be the way to go in every race except one. I knew this, and in the last race I let Shattuck get to the left of me. Of course Brendan used this advantage and went right past me. Next time I will be super conscious to execute what I know. In this case I needed to protect the left side of the course from my closest competitor.

Play of the day: Scenario: I was on the port tack layline for the finish boat. Jacobi and Paul Crane were on starboard with Jacobi bow out and to leeward, both shy of the starboard tack layline of the boat by 1 boat length. Paul saw that I was going to duck him and finish on port right at the boat. Jacobi was in the squeeze position urging Paul to tack so he would not lose us both. Paul kept his cool by pinning Jacobi out past the RC boat and tacking just to weather of me so that he finished first. Nice job Paul! I believe Jacobi could have minimized his losses by realizing what was going to happen ahead of time. If Jacobi had reached off on port he would have conceded his loss to Paul but could have tacked in front of me. All I would have been able to do was follow him to the finish just a boat length or 2 away.

Ahh retrospect. This week was fun with some challenging conditions. Next Saturday is the Fall Regatta...bring it!

Here is this week's Youtube video:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q3BcKYBUGTc>

Thanks,  
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