

Race 1 was a wildcard, or so it proved, with 4-6kt breeze for the Standard fleet at the start. The wind was oscillating through a small range, so the shifts were a relatively small factor relative to tide, puffs and clear air. I found a clear lane and made it to the windward mark first - a great confidence booster! That quickly disappeared as the wind became quite variable and both Derek and Brendan passed me to leeward showing a great turn of speed, both rounding the bottom mark just as the new wind spread across the course. They proceeded to match race back up the beat to the finish in fully powered hiking breeze. Once the breeze filled in, and it did so as if someone had flicked switch, it was important to be able to go through the gears and match power to the conditions. But definitely a race of two halves.

By the second race, the breeze was a steady 12 kts and had returned to its original heading, still oscillated through a small range. Tide and line bias favored the right but the competitive Cedar Point fleet always make it hard to get there. I ended up somewhere in the middle of the track - and dipped a couple of transoms in order to prevent being pushed all the way left. Its interesting how few people seem prepared to dip sterns - and frequently put their strategy in the hands of someone else via the "tack or cross?" war cry of boat on boat tactics. Its my view that while you might gain a boatlength or two over a rival by adopting this approach and executing it well, you surrender any bigger gains by making a strategic move. Be bold. Especially given the longer courses this season, there is more chance for strategic play.

The tide was really ripping, and stacks of boats were setting up on laylines 100yards+ from the mark and finding themselves pinching all the way in. Air tends to be bad, and the further you go the more traffic builds, making it harder to tack and take a bite to port. Respecting the tide and staying out of boat-to-boat tussles near the weather mark served me well.

Downwind the reverse was generally true - the stronger tide on the south of the course was where you needed to be, though later in the clubhouse it was noted that a couple of people made big gains going left/north. I missed this completely and will have to look out for it another day.

The wind was now steady and so the remaining races played out according to a similar formula. I would point to a few particular things that helped me remain consistent:

- Cold Management: As the day progressed, managing the cold and conserving energy became important factors. The possibility/probability of a capsize grows later in the day as movements slow and energies wane. Keeping your head out of the boat and aware of puffs coming down the course become key.

- Preparation: Approaching the weather mark I took care to sort out all the lines and make sure that the sheet would run and dumped some kicker and cunningham prior to the rounding - powering up the rig certainly helps to build and carry speed into the first part of the run as you bear away around the top mark. Likewise, at the bottom of the course, yank on the outhaul and the cunningham before you turn the corner. Not only will it

make the gybe simpler (the rig will be less powerful when it fills on the new side) but its a lot easier to do sat in the cockpit than when you are hiked over the rail.

- Set-up: I grew up sailing on inland waters where waves are rarely a factor and have had to adapt to the power/twist combination of looser outhaul and lots of cunningham that are required to power through the LIS waves. But it was notable how many people had lots more outhaul on than I did - be careful to maintain enough power low down in the rig to be able to punch through the waves.

Thanks to the PRO for running 2 two-lap races and keeping the course square. They hurt at the time, but they are true differentiators of both ability and fitness. Great job all around.

See you all for the Hangover Bowl!

-Alistair Duke