



Cedar Point Yacht Club

Sailboat Racing at its Best



Spring 2007 Frostbiting Week 2 (3/18/07) Report by daily winner Blake Marriner

Insanity reigns supreme

On a day better suited for ice hockey in the parking lot or sipping warm drinks by the fire, 18 crazy sailors and 7 foolhardy race committee volunteers shoveled, chopped and chipped their way out to the harbor for 8 races in a puffy, shifty Nor'wester. The early bird award (and dedication to more than just sailing) has to go to Ginny Worcester, who showed up sometime before 9 am to get her boat out of the ice and rigged prior to heading off to sing in her church choir, just so she could make it to the starting line in time for the first race. In a scene right out of the movie, *The Longest Yard*, head guard Ed Rickard had the rest of the RC crew laboriously chopping the ice out of the 3 RC boats. Lest anyone think this frostbiting sickness is US based, rest assured it has spread, as our participants represented France, Spain, Hungary, Israel, England, Iceland, Greece, Japan, and the USA

Sailing inside meant that the action would be fast and furious. PRO Eric Robbins kept the racers warm, cranking out 8 races in 2.5 hours. A variety of W/L, triangles and Harry courses kept everyone on their toes (when you could feel them). At the end of the day, Halsey Bullen (who had a fleeting moment of sanity when he decided use his Radial) took fifth behind Bill Dickey, Mike Matan, who started the day strong finished third, Danny Lent took second and Blake Marriner won the day.

Back in the relative warmth of the clubhouse, with more than enough pizza to satisfy everyone's hunger, Blake shared his thoughts for the day:

Preparation – Cold, windy conditions demand that your hands stay warm and functioning so you can aggressively sheet in/out in the puffs. I used the \$3 dishwasher gloves (I splurged and avoided the \$1.99 model) and a thin wool glove liner underneath. You can tape or velcro the wrist closed, or tuck them inside the drysuit seal. My hands were pretty comfy all day after the initial shock and shaking to get the circulation going.

When sailing on short courses like we had inside today, in shifty, puffy conditions, I tighten my hiking strap somewhat so that I can easily shift weight inboard and give a big pull on my rear foot to kick the bow down on the big headers instead of getting tea bagged or capsizing to windward. I also anticipate each blast coming down, sailing into it with sheet eased 12"-24". This allows me the option to sheet in if it's a header. If it's a big lift, it's easier to steer up with the sail already eased and the boat flat, going fast. I don't carry the vang tight (just a slack when two blocked), unless it's blast that will last a while and I need to go bow down to drive over someone or to foot to the next header.

It was important to get off the line with your head out of the boat; there were plenty of shifts and puffs to play. Towards the latter part of the day, when the wind backed, I felt getting over to the west shore got you out of the massive wind driven current that was ripping out more than staying in the middle of the harbor. There were also a few lefties over there if you were patient, but you had to pick them carefully, it wasn't just a case of drag racing to the port layline.

Downwind, it's always important to look behind and find the puffs coming down the course and sail to them either going up or heading down. A few boat lengths of separation was all it took to be planing away from someone sitting in the lighter air. The short beat to the finish put a premium on boat handling at both the leeward mark rounding and being able to snap off good tacks and clean ducks. The old adage to stay between the competition and the finish when ahead was never more obvious.

Finally, the good news - Spring is here! Look at this forecast for next Sunday: Mostly sunny. Highs in the mid 50s. See you on the water

- Blake Marriner