



Cedar Point Yacht Club

Sailboat Racing at its Best



Fall 2006 Frostbiting Week 9 Report by daily winner Chris Johannessen

Another bright and sunny fall day with 48 boats and a weak high pressure system made for more fun and challenging racing. The first question of the day was, would the seabreeze fill in as predicted? My iWindsurf forecast had the wind moving from WNW to SW by noon to S at 8 - 10 around 2 PM, with a later shift back to the SW and drop in speed. Tide was high late morning and would be going out all day.

I had a couple discussions about the expected conditions before we went out, but the RC PRO Eric Robbins through a wrench in the works by setting up the racecourse in an unexpected location farther east than usual and out in front of the swimming beach at Compo. With the 5-6 knots out of the SW at the start of the first race, and the current coming out of the harbor I thought I might see current more across the wind on the right side of the course, while the left side of the course would see current more from upwind (from the northwest on the right v. from the west on the left) so right was my call. Felt pretty lonely with everyone else going either left or middle save for Ched, who lost confidence and bailed back to the middle. I started getting scared too after the wind got light for me when I was getting near the corner. The tack back towards the mark didn't look pretty, but the boats coming in on the left were fighting much worse current and except for Sarah Hatsell, who was launched, all came in behind. Goind downwind the current propelled us quickly away from the mark, it became apparent that there was a tideline going across the course just upwind of the start line, outside the line the current was ebbing faster. Down at the gate the right hand buoy was upwind and a quick tack around it got me going towards the finish, with the current on my lee bow, I almost layed the finish pin from the gate, opening up quite a bit of distance on the boat that rounded the other gate. Sarah held her lead to the end, unfortunately neither of us were able to get the groove going for the next race though.

With a big lefty as the second sequence started, there was a big pin favor for race 2 that made it almost impossible to start on starboard. Down at the pin we all flopped right away with Ched and Steve Girling getting excellent starts. A little tease of wind from the left and a search for a good lane had us moving left, me thinking that the southerly was filling in. Instead, the wind went back to the earlier direction of southwest and the right came in beautifully again, leaving me, and more than a few others in the middle, gasping for breath. Not a pretty sight! By the leeward mark though the wind had backed again to the S and it was an easy lay from either gate to the finish. I managed to pass several boats this time by recognizing that would be the case and going for the left gate and going for speed rather than point, separating from the boats above for better air and coming up later in the leg for a not very respectable, but much improved, finish.

Third race started in a decent southerly, that held on to near the weather mark. Current moving from nw on right and west on left gave a relative push to the right hand boats that was decisive. Many of the left hand boats greatly overstood the mark. Coming downwind though things got tricky...first around Charles Stanley stayed on starboard, moved downcurrent and kept his air relatively clear. I came around third and went by-the-lee to avoid moving downcurrent. Looked good to me at first. Had Phil Hood and Steve Girling reach over me but they may in fact have been hurt by the current; certainly the wind didn't help them. Half way down the leg it was anyone's race but then the right side of the run crept forward with better wind and perhaps better current, dropping me to maybe 10th or so by the leeward mark. But from there it was all about getting to the new wind on the beat to the finish, with enough quick opportunities that I was able to pass half a dozen boats and get back to the top five. Charles held on his well-earned lead to win the race. PRO Robbins was offering beers to the veterans on the run expecting an early end to the day, but the new wind revitalized the racing and two more hiking out heats were still to be run.

With the more energetic southerly in place for race 4, the current was making it tough to stay on the prestart side of the line and starting seemed almost silly. It was quick up and quick down with the left working out nicely near the top of the beat. Boy is Paul Craine fast on those runs!

Race 5 was an HW, that is Windward, Reach, Pin, Leeward, Windward, Leeward, Finish. Left worked well again on the beat with the reach a little light, kind of marginal planing both out the gybe and back in to the pin. There were fun little waves to work down on towards the leeward mark and then something different for the long beat -- a solid wind line to the right visible about halfway to the corner of the course. A quick dash that way brought a big header, a tack and a near lay in a SSW wind direction. Big gainer relative to the middle and left hand boats. Again, Paul Craine came fast down the run and again going around the leeward mark was that wind line towards the right -- just like the long beat. A move that way helped and that was the day.

Obviously many traps and pitfalls, just look at the scores, not one boat had more than three top ten finishes, but a lot of learning opportunities and a welcome change of venue, thanks Eric! Charles Stanley, Paul Craine, Brennan Gerster and Tim Maier were the rest of the top 5 with Tim doing everything right in race 5, very impressive.

A little socializing at Chez Robbins after scores in the Governors Room made another great Sunday complete. Just one more for the Fall and then it's the Hangover Bowl! Don't miss it. Any Juniors reading this, us old folks need Chaperones for Hangover Bowl, can you help keep us out of trouble?

-Chris Johannessen