

Train Wreck Regatta Report

Race #1

By Scott Tillema

Who really knew that the wind was going to blow over 14 mph? At the 9 am skippers meeting it was announced that the LESC Jr. sailing kids were on site and available for crew. But at 9 am the wind looked like max wind at 5 mph. Race one winds were to be South, South east (coming from downtown Eustis) with wind speed of 14-16 mph with gusts of 18.

The real reason I won race #1 was the start. I believe I had the best start over anyone. After three minutes of racing I was in the lead. After that, all I did was cover Robbie Seidelmann.

As I said, the start was the important factor. While the race committee was setting up the course I could see more wind velocity to the left side (north). From the starting line, looking at the clubhouse, the place to sail was to the left of the clubhouse. The starting line was even so it wasn't an advantage to be at the pin end. I stayed up by the committee boat knowing that I was going to sail a long starboard tack. Another advantage by staying on at the boat end was that I didn't want to sail "too deep" onto the left side.

Within one minute of the start, I noticed that with the heavier winds, all those boats who were taking the 'normal' committee boat position at the start had not taken into account of the stronger winds. They had all drifted down below the committee boat by 40 seconds before the gun. By watching the boats drift down, I stayed higher longer than I normally would have. At 20 seconds before the start, there wasn't any one around the committee boat. I had complete free space and clean air to sheet in and take off at the starting gun, right next to the boat! And those of you who were even closer, were still a few seconds off to get to the line (this most likely being the first start most skippers had sailed in 4 months).

After sheeting in, hiking hard and accelerating off the line, I again noticed that I didn't have any boats near me to cause any trouble or give me bad air. When I looked down the line, I saw that Robbie Seidelmann and Dave Moring had started at the pin end and were sailing fast. Both were sailing in a crowd. This gave me some enjoyment as I knew that it isn't fun sailing in a crowd in heavy wind and here I was all by myself.

Midway up the first leg, I did get a small header that I tacked on. This lasted about two minutes and I tacked back onto starboard. This small windshift gave me a three boat advantage over Robbie who was off sailing for the port layline. After rounding first at the windward mark, my only game plan was to stay ahead and cover Robbie.

Race #2

By Scott Tillema

Second race was back to back after the first. The wind felt like it was decreasing in intensity. The left side showed stronger winds. Goal again was to sail to the left side. After the starting sequence, the right side was showing lighter winds than 15 minutes before. Using local knowledge that the left side of the course was going to be favored with a greater percentage of a wind shift to the east, I abandoned the committee boat and headed quickly to the pin end. Made it to the pin end with a few seconds left, I found an open hole to shoot through. Dave Helmick was below me and Robbie was above me.

The three of us got off to an even start and sailed a long starboard tack. Robbie tacked first of the group and got to the windward mark first. Dave and myself waited for the left shift to get to us, but with the shift we were above the layline and had to reach down to the windward mark. Downwind, Robbie had 7

boat lengths lead in which he increased by a few more lengths as Skip Moorhouse and the rest of the fleet were fighting the for air downwind.

At the leeward mark, Robbie sailed first onto starboard but then tacked onto port to cover Skip. This left me to go off on my own and get a good windshift in the middle of the course to get into the lead. Again my decision was to then to 'loosely' cover Robbie in the middle of the course.

Race #3

By Skip Moorhouse

The start of the third race saw a quickly dying breeze. A few minutes before the start, the wind swung hard left making the leeward end of the line very favored. There was no other place to start but at the lower end of the line. This end was favored by at least 25 degrees and the stronger breeze was holding on the left side of the course. Rule # 1- You must get a good start near the favored end of the line, you don't need the best start, but you need a good start and you must get off the line in good shape. This time, I did not and had to go further left to get some clear air. Scott Tillema and Rob Seidelmann won the start and looked like the race was over. I got into the left side of the course with more pressure and a huge left hand shift that carried me to first at the first mark.

Downwind is all about covering from ahead, which means staying in between the leeward mark and your fleet. The second upwind leg the breeze turned off. The fleet split with Tommy Harken and Scott Tillema going right and Rob Seidelmann going back to the left to see if there was any more magic left out there. Turns out, there was a whole lotta magic still on the left side of the course and Rob Seidelmann took over the lead. The second downwind leg remained the same, with Rob covering me from ahead staying in between me and the leeward mark.

The third upwind leg set up a battle between the teacher, myself, and the student, Rob. It was a Team Red battle that will go down in history as the old man stole a race from the young bull. Remember that magic on the left side of the course? After I out tacked Rob a few times, I got out to the left before he did and caught some magic in a bottle. We got within a hundred yards of the finish and Rob started a frantic tacking duel and I was able to hold on to victory. A very fun race for both of us.

The three rules I kept thinking about that race:

1. Get a good start and avoid the big bumper at the start.
2. Sail for breeze when the wind shuts off.
3. Cover when ahead. It makes it a lot easier to win a race

Sunday- Race #4 Cancelled- No Wind. Sunny Day with temperature low 80's