STUMP THE STARS

By Bruce Goldsmith

I don't envy my good friend Jack Tibbs' job of putting this book together. However, as I start to write, I don't envy the spot I'm putting myself in with many of our star sailors. I am going to try to point out their strengths, weaknesses, and personality traits to help you whip them on the race course. Please realize that a certain amount of tongue-in-cheek and friendly rivalry exists between every one of these guys and myself. I hope they will accept my comments in that spirit.

Tom Allen — Not quite ready for the back side of the hill yet, but not as consistant as when he was less than 50. Has superb eyesight which helps him spot shifts in the light flukey stuff. Has a cool head and a talented wrist. Weaknesses are starting line aggressiveness and speed when trying some way out sail idea. Will sometimes go low on a reach and lose a lot of boats. But don't try to fake him into it. It takes a bit to irritate Tom, but keep your distance once he's decided to protect. Also, there is nobody in the class I've learned more from about sailing Lightnings than Tom Allen. Thanks, Tom!

Tom Allen, Jr. — A carbon of the old man except not as good looking but with a better sense of humor. Better in light air than heavy. Wins races big on occasion. Carrying on a great family record.

Don Brush — A rocket in heavy air upwind. A real bulldog type and determination wins a lot of places for him. Could be had offwind and in the light stuff a couple of years ago, but has improved a bunch lately.

Mark Bryant — Young, unpredictable, inventive, talented, extreme --- and current N.A. Champion. Not everybody's favorite but has a lot of us who enjoy him and his competitiveness on the race course. There is nobody faster upwind in the mealy stuff and he really doesn't have a speed weakness. Likes to foot so can be slowed by a good "safe" leeward or a good pinch job right after the start. However, if you miss and he rolls, you better shut out the light—the party's over. Congratulations on the N.A. Mark.

Jim Carson — Grizzled veteran of hundreds of regattas. Best upwind in a breeze, but capable all around. Sometimes takes a corner shot after a good start and wins big or ends up mid fleet. Left corner at St. Pete after port end super start has winning history for Jim. Has trained a lot of our great young sailors as crew and skippers. Thanks, Jim!

Jim Crane — Busy man running North Sails, but has so much all around ability that he's always a threat. If ever you get to a big regatta and find Jim has sailed a lot before it — look out. By nature he's best in light staff but usually has really good heavy air crew so does particularly well offwind in a breeze. Aggressive starter. Sometimes overly impressed by speed or lack of it. Burn him early and you'll have a better chance to beat him later. One of the really nice guys that I've had the pleasure of sailing and working with.

Dave Curtis — When he's hot, he's hot! Quiet and conservative describes Dave, but not his sailing style. Probably the best breakway sailor in the world. Remember the Southern Circuit he won 8 of the 13 races. Develops deceptive speed because he's so smooth. Has no real weakness speedwise. Will sometimes hang it out to one side on first beat and either be first or mid fleet. Then will do same on comeback try. Result is occasional bad race. Don't we wish it was only occasional for the rest of us! A World Class Sailor, nice guy and fun to sail against.

Jim Dressel — Talk about personality not matching sailing style! Jim is really cool and conservative upwind. He never pinches, always going fast through the water, usually up the middle. Is particularly good in oscillating winds by "footing to the headers." Same as Bryant, he doesn't like to be to weather and behind. Probably better downwind than he gets credit for. Really good in planing conditions. If you need a little comedy (and red face anger) take Jim up on the reaches. I'll never forget my first World Championship with Jim crewing for me and some of those Buckeye Lake battles of the 70's. It's been fun, Jim!

Matt Fisher — Sailing style somewhat dictated by that vintage Lippincott #10956. Superb upwind in a chop, struggles downwind in planing conditions. Sails conservatively and fast. Sails a lot tougher than his quiet personality. A real battler in tight situations.

Fisk Hayden — Goes well upwind and down but is most fun when you are duking it out for 30th with him. Great sense of humor when he and I are having a bad race or series at the same time.

Dick Hallagan — Someone along the way came up with the handle "Nervous Norvus", for Dick's unassuming personality. However, don't spend all your lunch money on a bet against Dick in drifting to light conditions. Heel it to reduce wetted surface and be patient seems to be his style. Not as strong in heavy air and a bit erratic down wind as will often go super high on reaches. Can really point high on occasion, but doesn't like to foot in a breeze. Best advice is to learn from him if possible in drifters. He is truly amazing.

Jay Lutz — World Champion! Hope we can get him back from his other sailing. See ya at the Southern Circuit Jay?

Larry MacDonald — He's One Tough Sailor! No real weaknesses. Don't be surprised to see this young guy break loose in the next couple of years.

Stu Nickerson — Stu's free spirit nature shows through into his sailing. He usually wins at least one race in a big series. He smiles while he pounds lumps in heavy air. But he may also dump at the jibe mark while leading a race. I've never quite figured out why his speed is not more consistant. Always seems to blow me off when near by. Average starter also. Another fun guy who is due! If not, on to Spofford, right Stu?

Colin Park — Many of you don't know Colin because he has mostly sailed in the Michigan District, where he is currently Champion. After a past of 470 Olympic competitions, he now finds himself getting ready to be a Lightning "Heavy" by beating on Holman, Nickels, Goldsmith, etc. in Michigan. At 120 pounds, he can pick from many size crews. Welcome Colin, it's been great racing since you've joined us in Michigan!

Bill Shore — Last and far from least. Not too many with the overall success enjoyed by Bill. A certain dedicated attitude is always present in Bill whether he's directing Shore Sails or racing Lightnings. When he first broke in he showed us all how to plane fast downwind in a breeze. He's probably still the best in the class at it. Now he has no real speed weakness. He sails conservatively as far as corners, but is sometimes so involved in a competitive idea that the big picture gets clouded. Recently having Ken Read on board to call the big picture really helped. Bill cleaned up at the '83 N.A.'s and '84 Southern Circuit. A World Class Sailor, good guy. Fixture in Lightning Class and fun to sail against.

OLD BARN

By Judy Bales

Webster defines character as a letter, sign or figure; distinctive qualities or traits. Anyone who has been a member of Devils Lake Yacht Club or who has sailed in the Michigan district in the past 40 years knows that C. B. Crittenden or *Old Barn* has distinctive qualities or traits.

Barney was one of the charter members, who along with Jack Beal and Dr. James Reynolds, started the Sailing Club back in 1938. They are still members of Fleet 31. The Sailing Club consisted of different classes of boats using a handicap system they had devised. Barney had built a 15 foot round in the front and back boat that had to much sail (as he says) and tipped over too easy.

In October of 1939, on his way back to Detroit, Barney saw and bought Lightning #22 for the total sum of $495. The next year Barney and his crew of John Hickory and Raymie Klein started racing the Lightning and were frequent winners of the Sunday races.

This was to be the start of Fleet 31, with four other sailors purchasing Lightnings. In 1941, he won the fleet championship and then repeated this feat 5 times in all. Money was scarce, so Budd Goodwin took an oil can, funnel and solder and made a Fleet trophy which is one of Barneys most cherished.

Later that year, Barney won the Michigan Districts, sailed in Lake Michigan at South Haven. He then told the sailors "Next year you come and sail in my pond." Ted Siefert of Lima, Ohio was the winner that year. Fleet #31 eventually deeded the trophy that was awarded to the Michigan District Champion until it was retired to the DLYC trophy case in 1979. Barney served as Secretary, Chief Measurer, Yearbook Editor, and in 1954 as the President of the ILCA.

Barneys wife Helen, was starting and finishing the races from the end of the dock after the regular race committee quit. So in 1960, Barney gave up sailing and told Helen "we'll do this together in the *Mother Hen*. Now the *Mother Hen* was a wooden boat that leaked. In fact, between the start and finish, Helen and anyone else that was along had to keep busy bailing water out. One day with water up to their knees, it became more than they could keep up with and the *Mother Hen* was retired. Barney and Helen continued to be the race committee for many years and after Helens' death, their granddaughter, Sheila Gregory, took over for Helen. In all the 23 years that Barney was the committee the familiar sound was "ALL CLEAR." Anyone who has ever raced at Devils Lake can relate stories of "Old Barn" shooting holes in sails, speeding to the finish line or sitting and waiting for Barney to show up because there was no wind in the big tree outside his house.

If you were lucky enough to go with him it was an education as Barney knew exactly how much anchor line to let out or "just sit tight as the wind will shift back." He always had a "Barneyism" to tell such as heavy dew in the morning — no rain today. If there was no wind and the sailors were ready to hang it up for the day, he would say "wind in 30 minutes" and darned if he wasn't right. He usually had his portable radio with him on the race course as he could tell how close a storm was by the static on the radio. Sailors learned not to doubt him.

One of the nicest things was if you were a new sailor and came in your usual last that day, he always had an encouraging word for you. He loves sailing and never had tired of talking about it. This past summer Old Barns legs gave out and he could no longer walk to the dock so he had to give up his job. He was still able to come up to the club occasionally and watch the races and to talk to the sailors. He especially loves to see the young sailors in the club and encourages them.

His Lightning #22 finally ended up in North Carolina turned upside down and Old Barn hopes someday they will have her fixed up and ready to sail again.

Oh—the stories that boat could tell if it could only talk, because if you believe the stories you hear around the club, Barney was a real character is his sailing days.

WINNING IN ONE-DESIGNS

Heavy Air Spinnaker Reaching

By Greg Fisher

Greg Fisher is a former collegiate All-American sailor and owner of Shore Sails Midwest in Columbus, Ohio. Both Greg and the loft are very involved with the Lightning Class — Greg finished second in the 1977 North Americans behind his brother Matt, who also finished second in the 1984 North Americans. Loft manager Bertie Gerling is an active Lightning crew. Greg is currently the Flying Scot North American Champion, the Highlander National Champion, was second in the 1983 Snipe Nationals, and first in the 1983 Thistle Nationals.

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Of all the parts of sailboat racing, heavy air reaching with a spinnaker provides the chance for the greatest gains and losses. Although large upwind speed differences can produce gains of 100 yards or so, on a close reach with a spinnaker in a real blow gains of 200 or 300 yards can easily be achieved.

Let's talk first about some of the basics for sailing on a heavy air close reach. One of the most important considerations is not how fast you can go, but how well you can keep your boat under control. It's true, though, that the faster a boat goes, the more stable and controllable the "ride" becomes. Because the fastest planing or surfing shape is a flat shape, most boats must be sailed very flat or heeled just slightly to take full advantage of their flattest area.

It's also important that the boat be kept in near-perfect balance at all times. This doesn't mean just side-to-side heel or fore-and-aft trim; it means the helm must be nearly neutral. Without a neutral helm the boat cannot be steered effectively and placed exactly where we want it. Just as when sailing upwind in a real blow, the tendency on a reach is for the boat to develop excessive weather helm. This means that in order to make the boat bear off, which we must be able to do easily to keep the boat underneath the spinnaker in a real puff, we're constantly fighting the helm. This increases drag, which is slow, and you eventually lose control when the rudder stalls out (which often produces a broach or capsize).

There are basically five controls that need to be adjusted continuously while close reaching in heavy air. The first three are fairly obvious — the mainsheet, spinnaker sheet and tiller. The next two, although often forgotten, can be nearly as important as the other three all put together. These are the vang and (for boats that have them) the centerboard (or daggerboard).

Let's first set our boat up for a heavy air reach when we're still under complete control. The main should be set for the greatest power possible with the cunningham and outhaul both well eased, the vang set so that the upper batten is parallel to the boom, and the mainsheet played continuously to keep a slight bubble in the luff all the time. The spinnaker should basically be set with the two clews even. (Although some people have experimented with lowering the outboard end of the pole to move the draft forward in the spinnaker and open the leech, we've found that this makes the sail's entry too deep and therefore difficult to fly.) On many boats, it's a good idea to ease the spinnaker halyard off 6 to 12 inches to help open the upper slot between the leech of the spinnaker and the main. The centerboard should be positioned so that when the boat is sailed flat or with a slight heel, the helm is neutral. This usually means the board is positioned much higher than we're used to seeing on a light or medium air reach.

On keelboats, where a centerboard cannot be raised to help reduce weather helm, crew weight must be positioned as far aft as possible. The last thing we want to happen is for the bow to bury itself in a wave and allow the narrow front end of the boat to take over and steer for us. You will notice on well-sailed J/24s, for example, that the crew is in the aftmost, windwardmost corner of the cockpit on extremely heavy reaches. Crew weight moved aft also allows the boat to slide easily off and over waves.

Before we get hit with our first puff, it's important to mention that every puff should be anticipated by the skipper and crew. That is, somebody on the boat should always be watching out and calling the puffs well in advance. This allows time to adjust the sails' shapes for overpowering conditions. For example, the cunningham, outhaul and backstay should be tensioned to flatten the mainsail and open the leech. (Remember to ease these adjustments back off in the lulls.) It also permits the sheet-trimmers to prepare for the moves they should make when the puff first hits.

As we get a puff and the boat begins to become unbalanced — that is, to develop more heel and weather helm — the first move is for the skipper and crew to ease the sheets together. It is no surprise that the skipper must ease the mainsheet slightly the boat balanced, since the main has a great effect on weather helm. But most important, the crew needs to ease the spinnaker sheet at the same time, sometimes as much as three feet, to keep the boat under control. One reason for this is that, as the puff hits, the apparent wind shifts aft and increases the angle of attack on the sails. Secondly, the skipper must be able to bear off quickly to keep the boat under the spinnaker, and the boat can only be borne off if the sheets are eased.

When the main and spinnaker sheets are worked in harmony, it should be necessary for the skipper to move the tiller only a little (thereby keeping drag to a minimum) to make the boat bear off as much as 15 to 25 degrees. In the puff, it's also important for the skipper and crew to all slide aft and hike out to allow the bow to lift and permit planing as soon as possible. Or at least this will keep the bow from plowing.

If the puff is severe or if another blast hits and the boat begins to get unbalanced again, we must turn our attention to the boom vang and centerboard. First of all, the vang must be eased. Actually, "eased" is perhaps not the best word for it — "dumped" is a better description. This allows the top of the main to go into a complete flog and depower the whole upper part of the sail. The boom will rise, and if a threatening amount of heel has developed, this will keep the end of the boom out of the water. On heavy air reaches, I usually have my forward crew play the vang continuously — easing it to depower in the puffs and tightening it again to power up when the puffs die.

In addition to playing the vang, the crew should have the centerboard pennant handy, ready to pull up the board in extreme puffs. This relieves weather helm by moving the center of lateral resistance aft and also allows the boat to slide off to leeward, putting the hull even more quickly under the spinnaker. At this point the boat will be sailing on spinnaker alone, with the main essentially in a complete rag.

If another puff comes that is even more overpowering, the boat must be headed off until it is stable. There is simple no other alternative once you've depowered the sails as much as possible. (Of course, when a puff hits unexpectedly and you can't bear off, luffing the chute is preferable to capsizing or broaching.) At times in a very wild puff, the boat may be sailed as much as 40 or 50 degrees below course. For example, in a heavy air Lightning race, boats will often round the weather mark, put the spinnaker up and take off way to leeward of the rhumbline at a very high rate of speed. The Lightnings large spinnaker makes it worth setting early: The chute can always be dropped part way down the leg and the boat headed up on a planing close reach for the mark.

On the other extreme, the Flying Scot and Thistle have relatively small chutes and can sail as fast with their jibs if control is a problem. The small gain in speed that amight be made with the spinnaker for these boats doesn't outweigh the danger of getting out of contol or of sailing way below the rhumbline. A good rule of thumb is not to be the first one to put your spinnaker up in marginal conditions. But be prepared, and if you see that others start to gain with their chutes, then go for it.

Always remember that your primary goal at the end of the reach, in addition to being upright and in complete control, is to be inside at the mark. You must avoid, almost at all costs, getting caught on the outside of a boat trying to jibe in heavy air. A sloppy jibe on their part can mean much wasted distance and the loss of boats if you're trapped on the outside. A better alternative is to slow the boat down early and jibe behind the inside boat, so if they do lose control, it will be very easy for you to round inside and overtake them to weather on the next reach. Remember, though, that any boat is most stable when it is going as fast as possible, so try to jibe only when the boat is going at top speed, either on top of a wave or on a plane. If you have to slow down to make a good mark rounding, do it before, not during, the jibe. Otherwise you may find yourself on the brink of disaster with a forward crew on the deck and the bow buried in a wave.

Kinetics (movement in the boat to help promote planing or surfing) definitely has a place in heavy air reaching with a spinnaker. Although much of the time in heavy air on a reach the boat will be planing or surfing already, many times when the boat slows down and the bow is buried in a wave, a quick pump or ooch (the rapid movement of one's body forward in the boat) can help break the boat free and re-fire the plane. Usually oaching is the more preferred action to help rekindly speed (see "Winning in One-Designs," August 1983), as pumping the sail can create instantaneous weather helm and throw the boat off balance. Ooching can sometimes give the boat the extra shot it needs without affecting the balance.

It's easy enough to write and read about heavy air reaching with a spinnaker, but there's no substitute for getting out and actually doing it. Stick on an old spinnaker and an old main, and go out and blast around until you and your crew are really confident. Sailing your boat under control and therefore faster will always mean a better finish in a heavy air race.