

TANKTALK

\$4.50 FALL 2000

THE MAGAZINE OF THE 505 CLASS, AMERICAN SECTION



IS THIS FLEET BUILDING?

Mike Martin and Steve Bourdow power to a first place finish at the 2000 North Americans. Martin and former driver Howard Hamlin have built a world championship fleet in Long Beach. Lessons learned. PAGE 13



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The Magazine of the 505 Class
American Section

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Message from the President

Well, I suppose I'm a glutton for punishment, because here I am again in office, now as your new 505 American Section President. As I write this, I still haven't mustered the courage to tell my wife! Those of you who attended the American Section Annual General Meeting may recall me saying, "If I were elected, you would all pay the price." Here's how you are going to pay:

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE: The American Section will finally finance a promotional video or poster. Ben Benjamin has looked into both possibilities, and I'm going to make certain that he has the funds and manpower to make it happen.

PAYING THE BILLS: We are running a rather large budget deficit now, and we need members to pay their dues. Dave Stetson will be collecting dues each year from members. I have asked Dave to reinstitute the self-addressed stamped return envelope to assist everyone.

PLANNING CHAMPIONSHIPS: I will be working with Canadian Section President Hugh Morrin to solicit bids for the 2002 and 2003 North Americans. If multiple bids are received for 2002, we may have an e-mail ballot from American and Canadian Section members to make the final selection. It's rumored that bids from San Francisco and the Midwest will be received for 2002.

COMMUNICATION: I have already asked all regional coordinators to define what the American Section executive can do to help increase participation and enthusiasm. I will also be in contact with fleet captains to find out what's going on locally. Communication is a two-way street. If you have a problem or a concern, feel free to contact me.

BRAVO! The 2000 North Americans was a huge success! I'd like to especially thank Bruce Edwards, the Santa Cruz Yacht Club and West Marine for contributing so much to the event. It was a fantastic regatta, and I was happy to meet more West Coast sailors.

Also, I'd like to thank the past president, Sol Marini, for his many contributions to the 505 American Section.

Fraternally,



Jesse Falsone

SHORT TACKS

Kingston to Hold 2001 North Americans

The dates are not yet firm, but the Kingston Yacht Club has been selected as the site of next year's North Americans. The event will likely be held the first two weeks in August. Kingston is an ideal location to sail 505s. The fresh water racing area is just minutes from the club and Lake Ontario is well known for strong breezes. Kingston is a charming town, full of good bars, good eateries and lovely parks.

Did we mention that the Kingston Yacht Club bar is one of the best on the East Coast? ☼



SCOTT LECHNER

2000 North Americans in Santa Cruz.

Overlooked?

CO-ED REGATTAS TAKING HOLD

Like many modern sports, 505 sailing has gradually subscribed to the "size matters" mentality. Unfortunately, this has led to the exclusion of many great sailors from the 505, namely women. With the exception of some Midwest fleets, the 505 is dominated by all-male teams. This wasn't always the case. Class veterans could tell you that 505s were actively sailed by numerous mixed-gender teams from the 1960s through the mid 1980s.

After a long respite, women are coming back to the 505. East Coast and West Coast fleets have recently run co-ed 505 regattas this year with great success. The West Coast sailors held their co-ed championship in July at the High Sierra Regatta with six teams. They enjoyed a weekend of sailing and camping. The East Coast hosted their one-day "505 Region II Co-Ed Championship" in September with 14 teams. The enthusiasm was unmistakable, even if the wind did crap out. Consider scheduling a mixed-gender event in 2001. Emphasize the elements of friendly competition and fun, and use a little more rake if you need it.

A Gripping Development

The crew's union is full of strong opinions about the right pair of gloves. Just for the record, we are partial to Harken Black Magic's and have strong opinions about those wimpy Ronstan full finger versions. But it turns out, the best of glove of all can be found at your local Home Depot—in the gardening section of all places. They are made by the Midwest glove company, cost about \$3 and feature comfy interiors and a patented grip technology. They do wonders to cut down on cramping and all around gripping ability. Sure, they wear out after about a regatta, but at three dollars a pop that puts them on a par with the Harken's, which last about half a season. They come in pretty colors, too.



UPCOMING 505 EVENTS

It's fall, and that means the season is winding down after a fast-paced summer schedule. But there is still some sailing to get done. Chilly fall regattas include the annual **Pumpkin Patch**, Oct. 14-15, at West River Sailing Club near Annapolis and the **Fall Dinghy** event, Oct. 28-29, at St. Francis Yacht Club in San Francisco. Even if you can't make it to the **2000 World Championships** this November 16-24 in Durban make sure to follow the results on the web. American teams have their best chance in years to dominate. The **Pre-Worlds** are November 13-15. Looking to the new year, the **East Coast Midwinters** are slated for Feb 2-4 at St. Petersburg Yacht Club. This is a schedule but not a venue change for the event. And next year's **Worlds** will take place Sept. 19-28 in Portugal.

For more information about these and other events go to: www.int505.org/usa/events/regs.htm. To get your events listed send them to tanktalk@ziplink.net.

GO Sailing!

Something to Sing About?

At world championships, the Brits are fond of breaking into a theme song every time our own Ali Meller makes a public utterance. The song is not exactly family friendly, if you know what we mean. Well, the Brits may be singing that tune a lot more in the future. Meller, the current international vice president, is being nominated to replace Pip Pearson as the 505 international president. The election is slated for November in Durban. Closer to home, Geoff Hurwitch has been appointed as the new acting class measurer. He replaces Bruce Tilley.

Cam Update

The American Section has donated \$100 to Cam Lewis' Team Adventure program, which is fielding a boat for The Race. Lewis tells us he will be proudly carrying the official 505 flag during the competition.

GETTING TO THE 2000 NORTH AMERICANS



Ten boats shipped to the Santa Cruz NAs from the East Coast. So imagine their surprise when they showed up to load boats at a New Jersey parking lot, only to find that the shipping company had dispatched the wrong container. Instead of a "sea container" with plenty of fasteners and hooks, the sailors were left with a "rail container" with absolutely no tie down points. Team Engineer Barney Harris and crew completely retrofitted the container, attaching about 20 U-bolts to the deck to help secure boats. They also attached several wire loops with cable clamps (above left) to hold tie down lines and slings. The boats made it out and back with no major reports of injury.

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Master Your Domain: Learning from a Champion

By *Tim Collins*

I got the call a couple of months ago from my crew Bill Smith. He would be recovering from the second of two operations needed to repair his severely damaged elbow during the East Coast Championships. I was bummed at first. We had won the regatta two years running. But then I thought back to a conversation I had with Mike Mills. Over a couple of beers, I had mentioned to Mike that it was time for him to return to the class. I followed up, and after some persuading, he agreed to sail. His retirement was over at the ripe old age of 29.

Almost two years had gone by since he and Nick Trotman won the coveted 505 World Championship, and neither had stepped foot in a 505 since. Nick and his beautiful wife Abby recently had a daughter named Eva. Mike had his own distractions.

He and his dad had undertaken the gargantuan task of taking a 100 year-old marine supply company into the 21st century. On the sailing front, Mike had put his energy into windsurfing and racing an A-Class catamaran.

Which brings us to the 2000 East Coast Championships. By now you've read the regatta report and seen the results. So we didn't win. These two guys from Canada did. They sailed a great regatta! In the end, we had our chance—three teams, all even, going into the last race. Mike and I talked over our strategy, took a drink of water, gated early and watched the race for the championship unfold from the cheap seats. With that said, it was a great experience sailing with Mike as a teammate rather than a competitor. The following are some observations.

TALK, TALK TALK

Communication for any new team is of the utmost importance. We are both pretty laid back, and we realized that speaking up and being straight made a big difference in our performance. Sounds obvious. But it took us a couple of days to be able to say things like, "Tell me when you think we are going slow, or if we

are not pointing", or: "If I were you, I would put wax all over the rail because it gets very slippery without it when the breeze is up." Mike has his own way of talking. It took me a couple of races to figure out that when he says, "It's all good", that really means: "Suck it up and have fun, because we ain't looking so good!"

SPEED RULES

The last time Mike sailed a 505 he raced the fastest 505 in the world. We spoke often about the speed equation, but we couldn't get there no matter how



Tim and Mike at the East Coast Championships.

hard we tried. With the added 15 pounds on the wire, I was able to put the bow just about anywhere I wanted. However, we were often slow and clumsy on the reaches. I should say that I was very impressed with Mike's aggressive nature off the wind. He puts a premium on surfing each wave (crews take note). Working the boat harder downwind than up has always been Mike's style. Upwind, Mike and Nick always had this bow down, healed over look that took you by surprise. For the first couple of races, we tried this technique but wound up going low and slow. We tried not to think too hard about it, but we both came to the conclusion

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Champion CONTINUED

that the hull shape and blade differences between Mike and Nick's Rondar and my Kulmar might be the answer.

MASTER YOUR DOMAIN

Strength + speed = complete domination. I like to remember the famous quote from the *Tank Talk* Fall '98 article when Mike was asked, "What is the Mike Mills formula for being a rock-star crew?" And the response: "Be large!" I think he understated the answer. Mike wrote an article a few years back that explained how important it is for a crew to master the four quadrants of the boat. This is a staple for any crew aspiring to go the distance. Over the years I have had the opportunity to sail with some great crews who carry that powerful presence in the boat. In my opinion it is a mix of foot placement, weight distribution, speed and power. These guys have tremendous success in all kinds of conditions. But if you ask what they prefer,

they all same the same thing, "Breeze on!"

I hope to get Mike out sailing 505s again soon. Shortly after the awards ceremony, I witnessed Mike and Lars Guck talking about South Africa. Who knows? Something tells me we haven't seen the last of him. ☼

MIKE MILLS' STATS

1998 505 World Champion
Vice President and stockholder in
Jamestown Distributors, Jamestown, RI
Princeton U. Grad
Lives in Portsmouth, RI

Spends most of his time automating his warehouse and increasing his supply chain efficiency, hanging out with his girlfriend Nina, windsurfing and surfing.

WATERAT

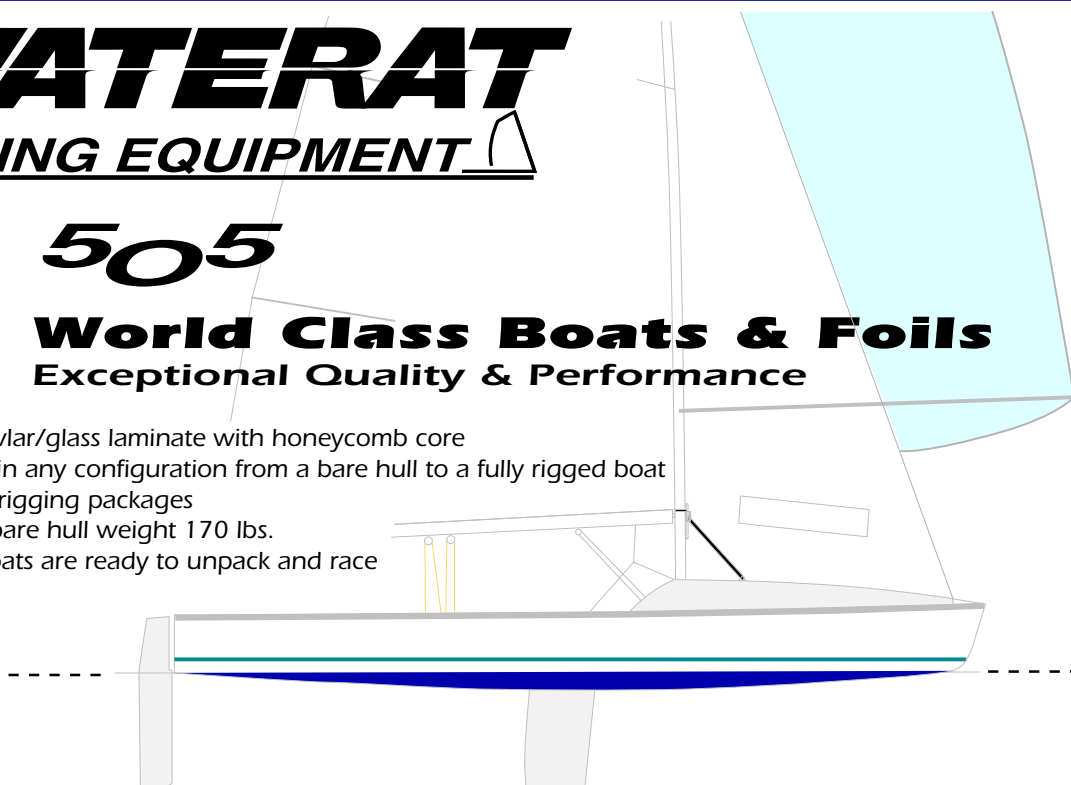
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Whip Your Off the Water Program in Shape

By Peter Alarie

We all know that good boat work can mean the difference between getting the boat around the course or a frustrating string of DNFs. In the last issue, I talked about a general approach to getting the yacht ready for the starting line. But it's time to get specific. Here are some of the day to day rules I try to live by. You'll find that sticking to the program may well improve your performance on—and off—the water.

BUY EXTRA: If you are replacing your spin sheets, buy another set to have on hand. If you drop that nut into the grass, you have another at the ready. Having spares is a big time saver.

DON'T MESS WITH PERFECTION: If it ain't broke...Once you have a system working perfectly, do not change it. ANY of it. Seems obvious, but... Changes include type of line, cleat and block, as well as placement of the components. Another good reason to have extras on hand: You may not be able to find your type of line when your sheet fails somewhere in the heart of Texas.

LINE CHOICE IS CRITICAL: This is huge and goes with the above. A line that works with one type and size of cleat may not work as well with another. Be careful with line changes, and if your refinement is worse, go back to the old line. Jib sheets, spin halyard and pole launcher lines are important examples of this. If you are having a problem uncleating the jib, find someone who has a good system and copy their line type, size and cleat selection exactly.

USE CASCADING SYSTEMS: This is a great refinement to any purchase system, and will allow you to use less hardware, fewer purchases and end up with a system that is easier to pull and ease. Use very small diameter, high tech lines in the early running parts of the system and easy to handle line only on the final purchase. Team Spot says you lose about 5 percent for every turn, so you can make some big gains here.

SMALLER LINE IS EASIER TO USE: Most boats that I look at have oversized lines on every system. Smaller line is cheaper, runs easier, soaks up less water and will make your "stiff" system work much

smoother. Modern line is so strong that there is no real concern with loads, so go as small as you dare.

MAKE RIGGING QUICK AND EASY: Look for ways to simplify your rigging, as this will save you time every time you go sailing, giving you more time to work on the boat!

GETTING IT RIGHT: "Never time to do it right, always time to do it twice." Stop wasting valuable time redoing jobs. Your list is long, but it doesn't get shorter when the same item appears at the bottom of the list again. This is my boat prep mantra.



Alarie's Tip: Smaller line is better.

MULTITASK: Do similar tasks at the same time. Sewing your new sheets? Cut and sew that extra set as well. Anything else on the list that requires the needle? Installing a new vang cleat? Check the other one, and tighten the ram cleat while you have the tools in your hand.

AVOID DISTRACTIONS: Turn off the phone and work through the job before stopping. It is too easy to lose track of what you are doing, leaving tasks unfinished. This is the big reason why it is impossible to be efficient in the dinghy park. A 5-minute job at home can easily take 25 at the regatta. My rule is avoid boatwork at regattas.

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Prep CONTINUED

DIVIDE AND CONQUER: Get your partner over and assign items off the list, working towards your strengths. Think about the next job while you are finishing the last, so you can move right to it.

DON'T GIVE UP: Your first shot at a refinement may not work. Think about why and try again. Seek advice on specific problems. There are lots of smart people out there making their boats work well. Understand the logic as well as the specifics to help you solve other problems.

OFF SEASON ONLY: Most major work to your program should be done in the off season. While boat work can be rewarding, going sailing is more fun and more productive. Don't waste even part of the season with jobs like this.

BUDGET: Do a written budget for large projects and include all items such as fasteners and chemicals. It will cost more than you think, so if you can just barely afford it, wait until next year or reduce the scope.

PHILOSOPHY TO LIVE BY: Projects will take longer than you think. I am not breaking

new ground here, but really. Estimate the time necessary and multiply by four, and then add a bit more. It will take even longer than that. I am not kidding. You'll see. Consider seeking professional help. This will add to the cost of your job, but many shops will do fixed quotes on large jobs, so you can accurately identify costs up front. The work will get done right, and you can schedule it into your sailing season and still have time to see your shrink! ☩



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PETER DANBURY

Sail Hotter Angles by the Numbers

By Neil Fowler

The 505 course features the hot reaches that keep us coming back. There is nothing like ripping around the windward mark, setting the kite and blasting towards the wing mark. But it's easy to forget that a little pre-race homework and attention to the compass can save us from some major headaches and provide a big tactical advantage off the wind.

Let's start with the basics. The course to the weather mark (W) is typically posted on the race signal boat. If it is not, try to spot the mark visually and point your boat at it to get your own heading from the starting line or leeward mark. Subtract 120 degrees from W to

edge of the breeze pattern you have the ingredients for some high level, high speed, tactical racing.

Going back to our numbers, you have just sailed the headings for R1, R2, and L; you note that R1 is a borderline three sail reach, R2 is not quite as tight, and L seems to be a long starboard, short port jibe. Take a quick wind shot to establish where you are in the oscillation. In this case, let's say it is all the way right in its 25 degree range. What does that indicate? It tells you that any shift left of max right, or any increase in velocity will turn R1 into a two sail reach. You better have a good reason to set immediately on R1! It also indicates that even with the wind at its max right you can use all three sails on R2, and that any shift left of max right may turn the run (L) into a starboard fetch.

HIGH OR LOW REACHES?

As you approach the windward mark you should now be able to determine, by reading the appropriate 45 degree line, or digital version, where the wind is. From your pre-race prep and continual observations, you should also have a good idea where it is going. If all this indicates there has been a progressive shift to the left, that is still growing, it will be necessary to sail high of the layline to ensure fetching the jibe mark without having to strip the spinnaker. If your research reveals a progressive shift to the right, it will pay to go low initially to gain the inside at the jibe mark, and avoid sailing dead downwind at the end of the reach.

In an oscillating breeze an "S" shaped course will be the fastest but it is necessary to know where you are in the oscillation as you start the reach. If, at the end of the beat, you have picked out a 10 degree starboard lift, and are confident that this is all the way right, it will be fast to start out sailing about 10 degrees high of the layline. Then you can bear off as the apparent wind comes forward and head up as it goes aft. By carefully maintaining this apparent wind angle it is possible to follow the oscillations down both reaches. Few sailors attempt this as it requires a little breathing room to sail your own course. Once you have established that room (it is less than you think) it is possible to open surprisingly large chunks of water in

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Fowler at the 2000 East Coast Championships.

get the heading for the first reach (R1), add 120 degrees to W to get the heading from the jibe mark to the leeward mark (R2), subtract 180 degrees from W to get the heading from the windward mark to the leeward mark (L). That's a lot to remember, so write the numbers down in a conspicuous place.

We have found it very helpful to set the spinnaker and sail each of these headings prior to the start. Doing this enables us to preset pole height, and stopper balls, as well as getting a look at how tight the reaches will be and how square the run is. If you can correlate this "feel" for how tight the reaches are with your knowl-

Numbers CONTINUED

a short amount of time. This method requires some practice to perfect but can be very effective. An added benefit is that you will find yourself approaching the leeward mark with a strong sense of where you are in the breeze pattern; a big edge over competitors who need to put their boats on the wind to figure out where they are.

DISPLACEMENT RUNNING

Running is similar to reaching in that it is aimed at keeping the apparent wind forward and boat speed up, while sailing the most direct line to the leeward mark. To accomplish this requires reversing the upwind approach and sailing the headed jibe. As you approach the weather mark, you need to make note of where the wind is and where you think it is going. Start out on the headed jibe and pick a course that has proven a good compromise between speed and heading for the mark. Make note of the heading and stick pretty close to it. When the wind moves aft, or you find yourself steering a higher course

to maintain your fast apparent wind angle, it is time to jibe. In this manner it is possible to sail the headed jibe all the way down the run, maximizing speed, and minimizing distance sailed while maintaining an awareness of the wind direction and shift pattern.

On wire running, I respectfully defer to Scott Ikle's clear description in the December 1999 / January 2000 *Sailing World*. I would add that it is possible to follow the shifts down a high speed run employing the same techniques as reaching; pick a fast apparent wind angle and make note of your compass heading. As you alter course to maintain that angle keep an eye on your compass headings, they will reveal any changes in wind direction. Mastering the compass takes time and concentration. But sailing by the numbers pays dividends on any leg of the course. ☩

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LESSONS *from Long Beach*

By Allan Freedman / Photographs by Scott Lechner

In 1979, Dan Thompson placed third at the Durban worlds. Two years later, he got out of the class entirely. There was the family to tend to, the demanding wife and two children in diapers. “It was a married with children type story,” he says. “With young children,

it was hard to make it work in the 505 fleet.” He raced keel boats for a while, even won the Etchells North Americans. He took up bicycle racing. Then in 1995, his kids all but grown and his marriage on the rocks, Thompson got a call from Howard Hamlin. “Howie calls me and says let’s go sailing,” says Thompson.

Thompson had always thought about sailing the 505 again, but did little about it. It was Hamlin who provided the spark. He hooked Thompson up with boats and crews. He followed up with phone calls and gentle prodding. This August, Thompson placed fourth at the ultra-competitive North Americans. He is gearing up to return to Durban for the worlds this November. He and crew Andy Zinn (another Hamlin recruit) have a strong shot at a top ten finish. Asked if he would have returned to the class without Hamlin’s intervention, Thompson says matter of factly, “Not a chance.”

With top recruits like Dan Thompson, Howard Hamlin has built his Long Beach-based fleet into the most competitive in North America. Team Hamlin counted three boats in the top five at this year’s North Americans, and could put as many in the top five at the Durban worlds. The pillars of the Hamlin program are super rigorous Tuesday night practice session and, most of all, a recruit-the-best philosophy. Given the success, we could all learn from Hamlin’s approach to fleet building. But the lesson



from Long Beach turns out to be more complicated than it might seem.

Hamlin at 2000 North Americans.

Trial and Error

About a year before he called Thompson, Hamlin had a conversation with his crew, Mike Martin. He told Martin that he wanted to win the worlds. Martin laughed and pointed out that Hamlin had some work to do. For one thing, he never practiced. And even if he decided to start, there was no one to practice against. The Long Beach fleet consisted of one team, Hamlin and Martin.

“The original goal was to win the worlds so we decided that we couldn’t do that without people to practice against,” said

Martin. "So we decided we needed a fleet in Long Beach to sail against."

That first year, the pair got busy. They took the round-up-the-cattle approach. They held regattas where they'd match up new recruits to skippers and crews. They'd look for anyone they could. But they found that after a year they were not getting results and were no closer to winning the worlds. In fact, Martin recalls, the recruitment drive netted few real prospects and proved such a distraction that it probably hurt their performance at the 1995 worlds. "We saw our performance actually go down," he says.

It was time for a new approach. And that meant targeting the boat to a different clientele, skilled sailors whose experience and build were suited to the class. Hamlin said he has learned an important lesson about fleet building. The less skilled sailors get in, get frustrated and drop out. That's a big time waster for all concerned. The ideal recruit sticks around and is good enough to push the old timers to get better. He doesn't mince words in criticizing those in the class who favor

talking up the boat to "every Tom, Dick and Harry."

"To spend your energy on them is foolish," he says. "Spend your time on people who have potential."

A case in point is the Long Beach team of Andy Beekman and Ben Benjamin. Martin and Hamlin pushed hard to get them in the class. Beekman

was a graduate of the super-competitive Longhorn Yacht Racing Association junior program in Texas. And Hamlin and Martin were particularly impressed with the 26-year-old Beekman's speed downwind, an area that the fleet leaders knew they wanted to work at improving. They sold Martin's boat to the team for "under market value." Said Beekman, "They basically brought me into the club. Howard's mentality about it is get someone in the fleet who is going to stay and push him."

Getting Results

Since their initial conversation back in 1994, Hamlin and Martin had seemed to be getting ever close to their goal of winning the worlds. They had a near miss in 1998, finishing second behind Mike Mills and Nick Trotman. The following year in France, they finally captured the top spot in a demonstration of superior speed and boat handling. Right behind them in second place was team Beekman and Benjamin.

So how'd they do it? Having built a small, stable fleet of expert sailors, Hamlin and Martin had put in place the second major element of their worlds program, a rigorous practice and tuning program. Before the 1997 North Americans, the Long Beach team began practicing regularly on Tuesday nights during daylight savings time and have kept at it. They'll go out at about 5 p.m. and compare straight line speed and work on technique on all legs of the course. They'll sail for three minutes on one tack, stop and talk over who was doing what.

Hamlin said there is no question that the practice sessions have made a big difference in his performance. By his count, he used to sail 25 to 30 days a year. Under his current regime, he sails on 75 days. Beekman said the program is probably one of the best in the world. "When you get off the line and two minutes later you are sailing against the same people you are sailing against every Tuesday night something is going on," says Beekman. "It is all about practice."

The key to the program is that Hamlin calibrates the boats so that they are exactly the same. All the boats are Waterats and Hamlins with launchers and Ullman sails. And each team sails with an identical set of numbers for such items as rig tension, board height and ram. That means, for example, that when Hamlin says that his board was set at two in 20 knots everyone in Long Beach knows exactly what he is talking about and can replicate the setting.

Each of the teams sails with a tuning grid developed by Howie for all the key settings for different wind speeds. Thompson said the tuning sheet provides



Team Tuesday: Hamlin, Waterman and Zimm.



Martin and Bourdow.

an important baseline. Whenever they are off the pace, they go back to the tuning sheet to make sure they're sailing with the right adjustments. A common calibration system is also a vital fleet building tool because it creates a system for everyone to follow, making it easier for middle to back of the fleet boats to get up the learning curve.

In addition, the Long Beach sailors hold to a team approach. That means that they try to share everything. They have frequent on the water conversations, spending a lot of phone time comparing notes and keep in close contact at regattas. At the North Americans, Hamlin and crew Peter Alarie noticed that Martin and crew Steve Bourdow (Martin is sailing his own boat this year) were sailing too low on the runs. They let Martin know, even though the two were battling it out for first place.

Rob Waterman is one member of Team Tuesday who has yet to be afforded rock star status. He placed a solid 12th at the NAs with a skipper who had sailed in the boat only a handful of times. He credits the Hamlin program with speed gains. He crews and can often hook up with a driver and, armed with tuning information from the Tuesday night sessions, push the boat around the race course with considerable success. "While I don't go to the worlds, I gain a hell of a lot out of the deal," he says.

Lessons Learned

The question is whether the rest of us can learn just as much from the boys from Long Beach. There is no doubt that Hamlin has constructed a world class program for developing world class champions. And he makes a point of noting that anyone is welcome on Tuesday nights. "We don't discourage anyone to come sail the 505," he says.

Beekman said the goal at Long Beach is for all of the teams to win the worlds. But how practical is the program for sailors who don't share the passion? The Hamlin program does not come without sacrifice. For Beekman, that has meant throttling back on his career goals and making sure that his boss knows that he's got to leave early on Tuesday afternoon to go sailing. "You can't do both," he says. "You can't

extend your professional career and sail as hard as we do."

Waterman agreed, "I think the Tuesday night thing is for people who are really gung ho, who have a fair amount of time in the boat or money. The rest of us poor slobs have kids and wives."

Martin argued that fleet building is about setting priorities. Every fleet needs to figure out what approach works best for them. The number of active boats at Long Beach, five, is close to ideal for a training program. But that hardly works for building strong numbers at regattas. If everyone had embraced Hamlin's approach, it seems likely that the turnout at this year's 45 boat NAs would have been considerable lower.

The answer is taking away the right lessons. For example, Hamlin's calibration system is an ideal tool for making any sailor better, no matter what his status. Martin says go out and set up a practice session that works for you. It doesn't necessarily have to be along the lines of Team Tuesday. "Everybody has got to target their fleet building to their fleet," says Martin. "If your driving force is not to win the worlds but to get 20 boats on the line then you are going to have a different fleet building approach."

No matter the limits of the approach, Thompson gives Howie plenty of credit for building a world class program that is an engine for fleet growth. "Howard has tried it all different ways. He has tried bringing the general masses in. He has tried bringing in the super sailor. I think what we have learned so far is that if you recruit the better sailors in the class the others will follow. But you have to make it fun for the other sailors. Howard does that. He goes around and calibrates everybody's boat. He does the debriefs after every race. He makes people feel like they're part of the community." ≡



"You can't extend your professional career and sail as hard as we do," Beekman says.

IN SEATTLE

A Different Lesson

By Sue Athmann

Why on earth did I buy this boat sight unseen? Yeah, the price was right. Cheaper than a half rotten Laser. But now I'm standing in this guy's garage, 1,200 miles from home, picking up something I've never even heard of. Am I nuts? With a sense of foreboding, I dragged the thing back to Seattle. My brother and I spent an entire week guessing. Then the downloading started. Every page from the website—printed, hole-punched, indexed and underlined—went into a green binder.

One boat and a lot of dreams jump started the Northwest Fleet in the fall of 1996. Long absent from the waters of Western Washington, the 505 had been nearly forgotten, replaced by the flash of the I-14 and 49er. Parker 6309, fueled by stories of enormous fleets and red hot racing, began to stumble around race courses. We got plenty of comments.

"I didn't think any of these were around anymore." "Sailed one in college." "There's one in my parents shed (barn, garage, carport...)."

So now the challenge begins. If all these people at the launch ramps either had one or used to sail one, how do you get 'em out so you're not the lone antique on the water. We began chasing a handful of rumors. We looked under suspicious blue tarps in back lots and backyards. We clutched crumbled pieces of paper with names and numbers.

Somehow, Paul VonGrey found himself in possession of an old Northwest roster. His phone bill became monumental. Slowly, quite literally one boat at a time, hulls got dusted off, repaired and put on

the race course. We mailed flyers before regattas to every address on our growing mailing list. "Wanted" posters asking for boats were mailed to Puget Sound yacht clubs.

We offered introductory rides and lots of undivided attention to newcomers and interested parties. Old boats were poured over and miscellaneous parts/sails given away.

Reading the classifieds, local nautical publications and chasing the boats-for-sale traffic became an obsession. Contacting the sellers and buyers offering encouragement along with whatever advice we could give helped immensely. Driving to homes, bending over hulls with spare parts and epoxy was a hobby.

Fairly early in the game, spurred on by the success of www.int505.org, we developed a web site solely to give presence to ourselves and as an aid to those looking for contacts locally. The logo was then used on tee shirts that were given as prizes at regattas and sold.

While high profile sailors, collegiate rockstars and a slick paint job can bring

any boat a lot of attention, the bulk of sailors are Joe Average. When we tried focusing on a specific group, the experiment backfired. We entrusted a boat free of charge to an accomplished high-schooler. The boat now sits under a blue tarp, rotting.

All the hard work is paying off. Twelve boats hit the line at the 2000 Seattle One-Design (SOCKS) regatta. There are now boats and regattas in Oregon and Washington and, of course, British Columbia.

Missing from our rise to success is a place to call home. We're convinced that boats in a dinghy park, be it a yacht club (private) or a public marina, would give us more exposure and credibility. The initial shock and surprise on the faces of notable sailors such as Allen Johnson, Chris Henderson, Carl Buchan (Olympian) and Brahm Daly (49er class president) indicates to us that local dinghy sailors had the boat nearly dead and buried. But their enthusiastic show of support for our presence at SOCKS tells of a strong belief in the benefits of 505 sailing. Can they be brought back from Tasars, Lasers and 49ers? Maybe, maybe not. But a constant presence might lead to a ride which might lead to...

Having been quiet for so long this fleet is full of energy yes, but experience no. Without a veteran to fill in the knowledge gaps, our learning curve is long. We suck what information we can from whomever will talk but could clearly use the guidance and expertise from a long time 505 sailor. Somebody to answer nagging questions. Someone to uncover the secrets and build our on the water arsenal. ☸

LONG BOARD Revolution

BY MACY NELSON / ILLUSTRATIONS BY LARRY TUTTLE

The 505 has changed a lot in two decades. Sails have gone high-tech. Launchers dominate where bag boats once ruled. Hull construction is stronger and more durable. Yet one vital part of the 505 has been

curiously overlooked. Since the late 1970s, the shape of the 505 centerboard has remained virtually unchanged. Until now.

505 foils are undergoing a long overdue rethinking. The focus is the long and narrow high-aspect centerboard. So far, the performance of the boards has been impressive. Seven of the top ten boats at this year's windy North Americans in Santa Cruz sailed with the Waterat-built boards. And the apparent success of the new board has touched off an important debate about the benefits of going high aspect.

To be sure, the boards, and their companion high-aspect rudder, have yet to make it into the mainstream. They are still only being used by the go-fast California teams and a few East Coasters such as myself. The standard foils are winning regattas and no blade can transform a mid-fleet sailor into a world champion. But one thing seems clear. The sheer dominance of the boards at the North Americans raised the question of whether a championship program can succeed without it. There are still plenty of doubters out there. But consider this: The ultra-competitive teams who have gone high aspect show no sign of turning back.

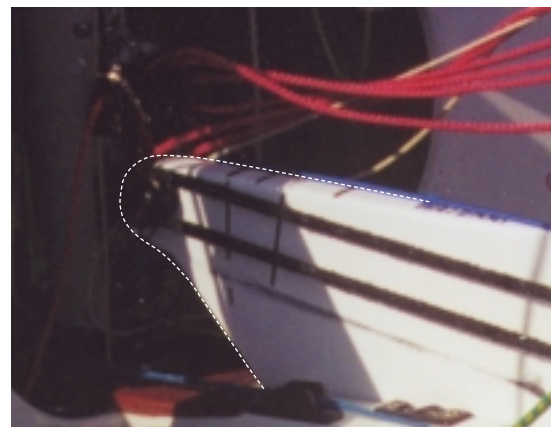
EVOLUTION

By my reckoning, the idea for the new board started at the 1995 worlds in Cornwall, England. Howard Hamlin

and I both heard Krister Bergstrom, the four time world champion, observe that no one was paying attention to centerboard design. I didn't realize it then, but Hamlin and I both concluded the same thing: Bergstrom was right.

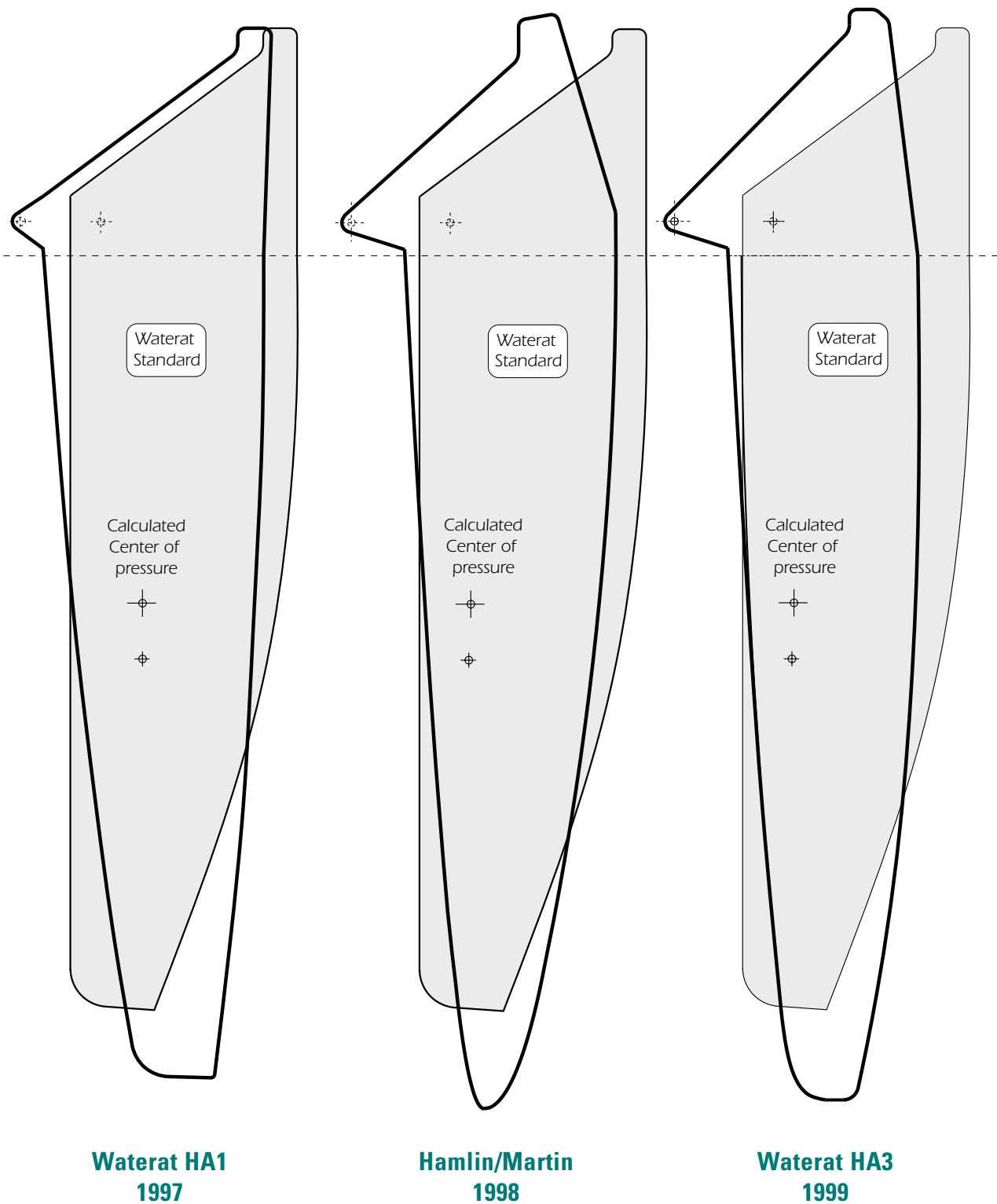
After Cornwall, I talked to Larry Tuttle at Waterat. The 505 board design had remained virtually unchanged since 1979, and he agreed it was probably time to rethink it. He immediately focused his attention on a higher aspect centerboard. Until then, Tuttle had little incentive to develop new foils. The old foils were working well and without someone to invest the money in foil development it made little sense to proceed.

While the 505 design had remained stagnant all those years, foil designers for other boats had increasingly turned to higher aspect blades. Their conclusion: A long board with a short chord generated more lift and less drag. In 1992, the ratio of length to chord for an America's Cup boat was 12 to 1. Waterat had followed the trend with its high-aspect sailboard fins and foils for other boats.



Two boards: standard Waterat board (top) sports snug fit. High-aspect board (bottom) sits taller above trunk.

505 centerboard evolution



BOARD REVOLUTION: Three high-aspect centerboards. Behind each, is a standard Waterat board (shown in gray). HA 1, left, has the same area as the standard board. Hamlin/Martin, center, and HA 3, right, have 7 percent less area to reduce power in the breeze. The calculated center of pressure is lower on the high-aspect boards. Boards are first editions of designs.

But there was a major hurdle to clear. Tuttle couldn't simply build a bigger board and put it in the trunk. Sure, class rules provide that the centerboard can be of any shape. But the rules also state that the board must fit in the trunk, and that the aft end of the trunk be no closer than 1200 mm from the transom. The problem for Tuttle was how to find a way to fit a blade that measured in at about 55 inches into a 50 inch space. And to add to the challenge, he had to do so without affecting the balance of the boat: He couldn't just move the board forward without the boat developing excessive weather helm.

By the summer of 1996, Tuttle had achieved a breakthrough. He designed a bracket on the front of the centerboard, just forward of the standard centerboard bolt hole. When you see it, you are not impressed with its complexity. But in the forty year history of the class no one else had thought of it. This bracket allowed the board to hang from a bolt more than 5 inches forward of the standard fitting. In the simplest terms, it allowed a board 55 inches long to fit in a 50 inch space. And most importantly, it did not affect the balance of the boat: The design of the bracket allowed the long board to be extended in the water in the same location as the standard Waterat foil.

With the major breakthrough achieved, Tuttle wanted a long and narrow board to create maximum lift and minimum drag. The area of the first long board was the same as the standard foil and 4.75 inches longer. By going to the maximum length, there was the risk of generating too much power. But in this first version, the only attempt to depower the board was to make it more flexible, much like our bendy masts.

SPEED TRIALS

Waterat shipped its first high aspect centerboard in June 1997. Tuttle sent me the mahogany pads and the necessary instructions to make a new bolt hole. The board fit, it jibed, and the boat was balanced. Mike Mills and I took it to the Denmark Worlds with some apprehension about its performance in the breeze. Although we did not sail the boat well in light to moderate conditions, we were faster in a straight line than boats that I could not

beat before. We also learned that the board was sensitive to rake in moderate conditions. In moderate conditions with chop, we did not have an advantage.

We had no windy races. I reported to Tuttle that in light air the board was a significant improvement. I knew that a well-prepared team using my board in Denmark would have won. At the time, I thought that every American would have the foils for the Hyannis Worlds. I was wrong with two exceptions. Mike Martin/Howard Hamlin and Scott Ikle/Tyler Moore also started sailing with them.

Then came the second chapter in the evolution of the foils. Tuttle and Mike Martin began to work on further refinements. After extensive consultations, Martin designed a set of foils for his program. Martin's design incorporated the pin bracket to create a higher aspect foil, but he wanted foils that he thought were better suited for the breeze. So he designed a board that was smaller overall and had less area at the tip.

Martin and Hamlin used a version of the new foils at the Hyannis Worlds. Although they were prepared and fast, they finished second to Nick Trotman and Mike Mills. The difference was probably more technique than equipment. But people began to notice the new foils, and Martin and Hamlin deserve credit for that. The evolution of the board accelerated after Hyannis, and the results were obvious at the worlds the following year in France. The high-aspect boards, refined after Hyannis, placed first, second and third at the regatta.

GETTING IN TUNE

The third chapter of this story concerns tuning the foils. The design of the high aspect foils contemplates that the board and the newly designed high aspect rudder will both act as a lifting surface. Tuttle suggested that this evolution might require you to rake the rig more to balance the boat. The boards used at the worlds in France had a longer horn so you could



Nelson off Santa Cruz.

rake it forward. The original concept was that the board should be raked forward until the crew went on the wire at which point it should be vertical.

I did not know it at the time, but Martin and Hamlin were figuring out that they could sail with the board raked further forward in more breeze than Tuttle had thought. We had a tuning session in June in Falmouth, Mass., where Peter Alarie coached us. We did a lot of sailing in about 18 knots and Alarie urged us to sail with the board raked forward. We did and it worked. Several weeks later in Kingston, we had similar wind and had similar results. I privately noted that after sailing a handful of regattas with the new foils, Alarie, initially a doubter, had become convinced that the new foils were far superior to the standard foils. Lars Guck, Alarie's boat-building partner, has produced two high-aspect boards.

Hamlin and Martin also changed their technique in light air and started sailing

with some heel and weather helm. Alarie thinks that technique works because the boat is easier to steer with some weather helm. I think it works because the rudder works as a lifting surface when it is loaded up.

As a general rule, the board is more difficult to tune, requires more practice to master and is less forgiving. That means the more time you put in the greater benefit you'll receive. With the crew on the wire, for example, the boat is more sensitive to board position. One inch of board movement is more significant than on the standard versions.

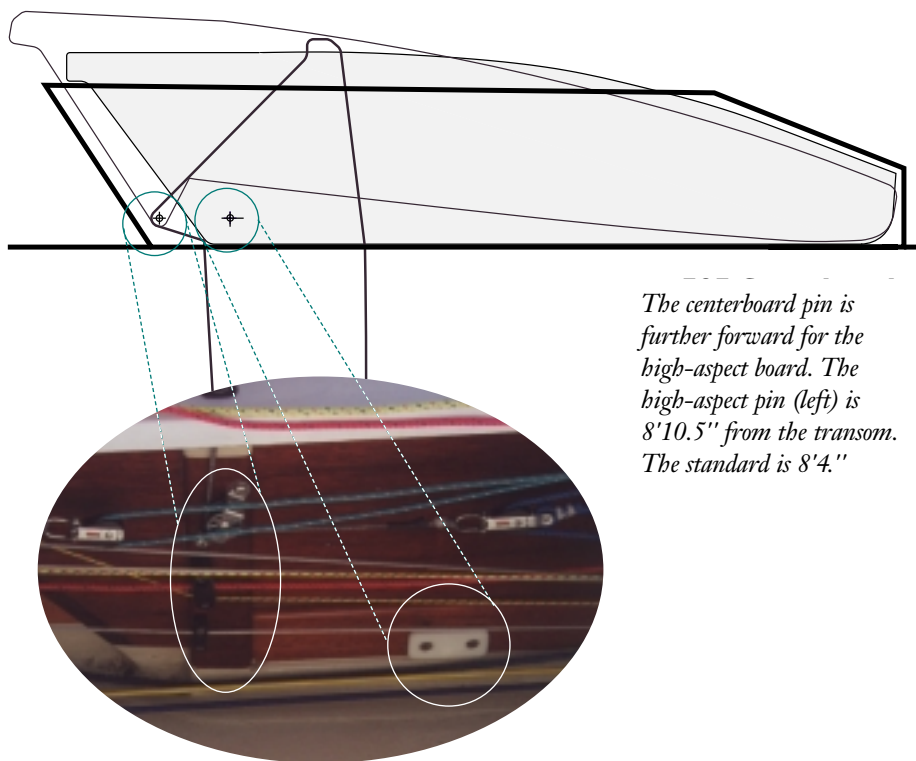
The current state of knowledge seems to be as follows:

- Light to moderate air: board raked all the way forward; intentionally develop weather helm to load up the rudder.
- Full power or slightly overpowered: consider bringing board up to vertical position.

There seems to be a disagreement about over-powered conditions. I understood Martin and Hamlin at the Santa Cruz North Americans debriefings to say that they rarely, if ever, raked the board back past vertical. They argue that the board should jibe in all wind conditions. Tuttle believes that in over-powered conditions you should continue raking the board until you prove it is raked too much. I know one thing. I sail with Mike Welch who is about 6 feet 2 inches and 200 pounds. In twenty-five knots, John Fry/Robin Brown, Andy Zinn/Danny Thompson and Steve Bourdow/Mike Martin are faster. Those crews have significantly more leverage than Welch. For the time being, if we cannot match their speed in 25 knots, we are going to rake the board more even if the board stops jibing.

It seems clear that more design refinements are in store. One idea is to make the boards narrower and create larger rudders to work as a lifting surface in tandem with the boards. Another idea is to make the boards twist and flex more so they can depower in the breeze. Whatever course the new boards take, they seem to have permanently altered the 505 speed equation. ≈

505 centerboard pivot



The centerboard pin is further forward for the high-aspect board. The high-aspect pin (left) is 8'10.5" from the transom. The standard is 8'4."

PETER ALARIE:

Sailing from Where You Are

INTERVIEW BY JESSE FALSONE

Peter Alarie is good. How good? He could be the most successful 505 crew of our generation. He's won eleven 505 championships in North America since 1988. And he has done so with seven different skippers. In short, he's been the common denominator in more than a half dozen winning 505 campaigns.

And he has built a career on more than speed. Few match Peter's expertise in boat work with skills acquired through careers in cabinetry and boatbuilding. On the water, Peter combines superb boat-handling skills, tactical mastery, and a winner's attitude. Howie Hamlin has described Peter's sailing mentality this way, "calm aggression."

At 33, Peter isn't a kid anymore, but he's still got a lot of the kid left in him. This was painfully obvious to me at a go-cart track in Falmouth during the 2000 New England Championships. With six of us revved up on the track, Peter suggested a team race with only one rule—no rules. While most kids are content to just smash into each other randomly, Peter's strategy included double teaming, side-swiping, and hat grabbing. After we were "asked to leave" the track by the teen-age employees, Peter showed quite a knack for arcade games, especially the ones that involved killing things. From there, it was off to the batting cage. Our particular pitching machine had run out of balls, so a few of us decided to speed things up by assisting an employee with loading the machine. Peter turned this exercise into a dodge ball game, thus precipitating our departure.

To the less acquainted, Peter might come off as a tad bit arrogant. As a coach, he'll flatly tell you why you're slow or why your crew work stinks, and he does so in a tone that makes you believe that his

observations should be obvious to the most casual observer. He just doesn't sugar coat anything, and sometimes the truth hurts. But Peter didn't get to be a champion by lying about his own performance, and if being brutally honest is a trademark of arrogance, I don't think Peter really minds that label.

Teamed with Howie Hamlin for the 2000 505 Worlds in Durban, this may be Peter's best chance to win a worlds, and he isn't taking this opportunity for granted. Peter is absorbing the best thinking and techniques developed by West Coast 505 sailors. Ironically, distance may also be working out to his advantage in that communication, planning, and time management all factor in heavily when you are separated from your partner by 3000 miles. In his relentless quest to improve his sailing skills, Peter seems to have realized that his greatest competition may be himself. I interviewed Peter by e-mail.

JESSE FALSONE: *With Cam Lewis busy with his syndicate for "The Race", you teamed up with Howard Hamlin for 2000. Is this serendipity for you and do you believe in fate? How long did it take for you to commit to the whole program with Howard?*

PETER ALARIE: I was pretty psyched when Howie called me about sailing the Worlds this year. How could you not be? I don't know about the fate issue. I think that is a bit of a stretch. It's more just being in the right place at the right time. I don't really believe in fate. But as a rule, I like to leave



Peter and Mike Zani at '98 Worlds in Hyannis.

THE COMMON DENOMINATOR

What do Macy Nelson, Mike Zani, Howard Hamlin, Tom Kinney, Zack Leonard, Karl Zeigler, and Neal Fowler have in common? All seven championship-winning 505 helmsmen have sailed with Peter Alarie—three for long-term campaigns.

Other skippers benefiting from Alarie's services: Dave Dyson (second at '91 NAs with Peter), Chuck Allan, and Allan Kruger.

505 CHAMPIONSHIP TITLES

North American Championships – '93, '94, & '97

East Coast Championships – '95

Pacific Coast Championships – '99, '00

Midwinter's (East Coast) Championships – '88, '89, '93, '98

New England Championships – '00

FAVORITE SAYINGS

"Fly a hull!", "She's luscious",
"It's like butta", "Spook the Heard",
"That's so East Coast"

my options open and I love to do things on a whim—to change plans if something cool comes along. My work has allowed me great flexibility with sailing plans and such, so people tend to call me at the last minute to fill in. Brad Read once remarked that he had more luck getting me to sail if he called me the day before an event, rather than two months ahead of time. Well, Howie did just that for last year's PCCs when Cam got caught doing some other deal at the last minute. We were both nervous about sailing with each other. There were lots of expectations, but we were immediately comfortable in the boat, and we sailed very well at the regatta, winning something like six of nine races! At that time I planted the bug in his ear about sailing the Worlds together, but he was still signed on with Cam. I just waited out the situation, and when Cam got his funding in line for *The Race*, Howie and I inked the deal.

JF: *Sailing with Howard on the West Coast has meant lots of travel. Other than sailing with the current world champion, is there an upside to this type of long-distance campaign?*

PA: I would say that one of the upsides to this type of campaign is that we are very focused when we do get together. We e-mail a lot about ideas, goals, things to work on, and feedback from the sessions. On a typical weekend, I fly out on Thursday morning, we sail Thursday afternoon, boat work on Friday morning, sail Friday afternoon, race Saturday and Sunday, then I fly home on the redeye. We have had at least one other boat out each sailing day and try to get a coach out as well. Knowing that we have limited days to train really forces us to have it together, establish clear goals and to push extra hard when we do get out on the water.

Also, by staying in touch between sailing sessions, we both find that when we do sail, it seems like we have improved in the time off. Howie sends me their weekly updates and training schedules (they sail every Tuesday evening in Long Beach with 3-6 boats), so I feel like I am part of the training, learning what they learn, even though I am not present. I also find that I am visualizing more than I have in recent years, something I used a lot sailing the Flying Dutchman and in college. When we talk

about things or techniques, I am going through it in my mind, and when we get in the boat three quarters of the work is done. This really works well for me, but I think that I needed the new challenge of sailing with Howie to get me back into it, to provide the inspiration to get better, to learn new techniques and a whole new sailing style.

JF: *With all the collective sailing experience between you and Howie, it's hard for new sailors to imagine what you would have to improve upon. What would a typical goal list look like for your team during a weekend practice session? How do these differ from goals you make for a regatta?*

PA: Once each team member gets to a certain level of sailing, then you can look at the improvements coming in the form of actual teamwork. While you can always get better at doing any one maneuver as individuals, the gains that you can make as a pair are where big gains can be realized. There are both types of improvements that we work on. Take tacking for example. We can each get better at our job, and we can also improve together the timing, the flow and the consistency. You can fine tune the movements as you get better, with the end goal being that each tack is very good, no matter what the conditions, how many boats are around, how much pressure is on making this one tack. You want to know that in 25 knots, with a boat tight on your hip, that you can tack and cross that guy no problem. That can sometimes be the difference between top five and top 25 in a big race. There is also a level of confidence that this type of preparation brings, and that cannot be underestimated. When you know that your tacks are the best, you know that is a weapon in your pocket. I guess what I am talking about here is being able to sail the race without ever considering what it is that you are doing in terms of boat handling. You are not afraid to gybe two times in 10 boat lengths in 25 knots if it means you have a chance to pass someone. You do not consider the moves. You just execute what it is that you think you need to do. Boat handling is an element of sailboat racing that you have total control over. Not many of the other elements of our sport are like that. If you want totally bad ass boat handling, then go out and get it! We work on it constantly, and our goal is to always be able to pass someone just by

doing a maneuver. That is a pretty big weapon-thinking or knowing that by simply gybing, you have a very good shot at passing the boat in front of you.

So, as far as goals go, when we are practicing by ourselves, we work relentlessly on boat handling, as this is the best use of our time. In between drills we will work on just sailing a point of sail, but the overall focus is on smoother handling. We also take notes on what our problem areas are and work on that. Always try to improve your biggest weakness first, then work on the stuff you can do okay. While practicing with other teams, we work on speed or racing, as this is best use of a group. We often find that we can combine boat handling in a group session by simply getting on the water 20 minutes early. You can do a lot of tacks and gybes in 20 minutes!

Goals at regattas are different. My goals usually revolve around trying to compete well. I like to finish a regatta and feel really good about how we sailed, regardless of the outcome. For example, we won a regatta in Santa Cruz, but neither of us was that psyched about it. We won because we did not make any mistakes and passed many boats with boat handling, but we were let down because we were not that fast and we were a bit asleep tactically. But we looked at what happened, and made a fair assessment of our performance. We won because other teams screwed up, not because we were the best team that weekend.

JF: *You mention a whole new sailing style. You've been sailing the 505 at the top of the fleet for a decade, so one would assume you're set in your ways. Can you offer us a specific example of a technique that you changed and how it had a positive effect on your sailing?*

PA: I have completely changed all of my crewing techniques in the 505. I now tack by hooking in on the tank before going out on the wire after years of going out on the handle. I am also a huge fan of the so called "skiff gybe", which is what Howie and I do now. Both of these changes are aimed at heavy air sailing. Tacking on the handle is still better in marginal trapping, as you have a better feel of how much weight to throw onto the wire, and you can swing in and out quickly.

The skiff gybe is awesome, and you really need to experience it to believe how easy it is. You must have a fork end and a smooth working pole launcher for this to work. Each element of the gybe has been worked out, and if you leave out a step, it will not work. Before a gybe, Howie cleats the windward jib sheet with no slack in it and throws the pole launcher line overboard in front of the trap shock cord. The end of the launcher line must be loose. When we go to gybe, I uncleat the leeward jib sheet, Howie then finds a good wave, I unhook from the wire, and say "ready!" Howie then turns on the wave at full speed, as you would gybe a Laser. I swing in and uncleat the pole line as if my life depended on it (and sometimes it does!). I have my launcher cleat on the mast, with the cleat facing down. The pole rockets back and we carve the turn on the wave. We turn so fast that the chute rotates itself, with Howie only grabbing the new sheet after the boom is over and he is hiking on the new side. As the boom comes over, I switch the twings with our two handle system, stand up and launch the pole. When done to perfection, you can get the pole out fully before the chute really loads up (you have slowed down the turn, but you are still turning up towards the reach), grab the new sheet from the skipper and over the side you go. Make sure to wave at the boat you just rolled!

JF: *I'm very interested in your visualization technique. Do you go through this exercise only in your mind, or is there a physical element?*

PA: Every male over the age of 12 already knows all about visualization. We do it all the time, and not just in the bathroom anymore! You simply imagine what it is that you are going to do, step by step, before you do it. You can work on your tacks during your lunch break by simply closing your eyes and going through the motions, breaking it down to the finest detail. I am told that this is not just a mental exercise, but that you are actually mapping the nerve firing patterns by doing this! What this means, and I have seen the results, is that if you spend a few minutes



Peter with Zack Leonard at his first 505 regatta, Hyannis, 1986.

IF YOU WANT
TOTALLY BAD ASS
BOAT HANDLING,
THEN GO OUT
AND GET IT!

THE ONLY REAL
NEGATIVE THAT
I CAN THINK OF
IS THAT I AM A
BIT COMPETITIVE
WITH EVERY-
THING I DO,
AND I EXPECT
TO DO WELL.



Worlds '98.

each day thinking about your tacks, the next time you get in the boat, it will be like you have done 50 extra tacks in the time off! I will often do this during a practice session, especially if I am having problems with some element of a maneuver. Before you do the maneuver the next time, run through it in your mind, step by step. It can help you find the problem area, and it will make the next one smoother. I figured out a foot placement problem mid session by going through all of the possible placings in my mind, between tacks. By the time we tacked again, I had found the best placement for my feet, and the tacks were much better.

JF: *What's the most important ingredient in the success of a 505 team, and how is this ingredient developed?*

PA: It's tough to say what the most important ingredient is. Desire is probably the most important factor. The will to improve can overcome all of the setbacks and disappointments that you experience on the way towards your goals. Howie has tremendous desire to do well, and this was certainly a factor in his 20 year quest to win the 505 Worlds. Desire keeps you focused when things are down, and

can give you the strength to persevere. How do you develop desire? I guess you just have to decide for yourself that you care enough about 505 sailing to give it your best all the time. Some people just do not have it, and that is totally fine. But these people will be saddened to learn that they will never win in

this class with a half-hearted effort; there are too many talented sailors that have a burning desire to kick ass.

JF: *How has your success in competitive sailing enriched other areas of your life? Has it had a negative impact on any areas?*

I made a choice a long time ago with my life. I decided that I would never have a job that would prohibit me from going sailing (or any other activity) as much as I wanted.

I have never regretted this choice, and in fact, I feel that it has made me generally more happy than I might be if I was working in some office with only 10 vacation days a year. This has enabled me to race and sail a ton, which has in turn led to competitive success. So it is a bit of a backwards relation, but I do feel that sailing has made me happier, especially being able to blow out of work on some ripping afternoon and fly a hull around the bay!

The only real negative that I can think of is that I am a bit competitive with everything that I do, and I expect to do well. I find that I really have to make a conscious effort to just chill out and enjoy things sometimes. What I do now is announce to myself that "this is just for fun, so ease up!" I did this 55 mile catamaran race around Narragansett Bay last weekend. Total hack event, but it was really fun! We showed up late, casually rigged up, and just went for a cruise. Blazing along, flipped with the kite up, whatever! Good stuff.

JF: *There have been a number of talented young sailors who have jumped into the class with unreasonable expectations. As a result, many have dropped out after a short time. In what ways does college sailing prepare you for a boat like the 505? In what ways are college sailors generally unprepared for the 505?*

PA: I think that college sailing is great for teaching you how to sail boat on boat and tactics on the short course. You also see some of the better college kids get pretty good at kinetics, which can translate to other boats like the 505. Other than that, it does not do as much for our young sailors as everyone thinks. College sailors learn nothing about boat preparation and maintenance. In fact, it often seems like these kids end up with absolutely no respect for boats and how to care for them. They also learn very little about sailboat tuning and the elements that make boats go fast. I think this is a huge problem with our junior/college sailing programs that have been set up in the US. These young sailors can race hard for 10-12 years, attending national level events, and never sail in a boat with a bendy mast that is capable of planing upwind! This type of sailing is fine for college and high school style racing, but when our juniors are sailing the same types of boats all summer

long as well, that is a problem. The whole Club 420 movement should be stopped right now. It is making our juniors suck. The boats are 50 pounds overweight with a totally unresponsive mast. There is no development or tuning to speak of. These boats are so bad that in moderate air, it is faster to hike than to put your crew on the wire! These same kids, now three time All Americans, then show up in a 505 and get just killed by people they have never heard of! No wonder they get frustrated. They have an idea that they are pretty good at sailing, when in fact they have just scratched the surface of what is out there. The ones with the desire, the real desire, not coach inspired confidence, dig in and figure it all out. The others go and sail keelboats, where their sailing knowledge translates (slow boats, unresponsive rigs), or they drop out altogether.

We really need to get the young sailors into boats that have a performance level that will challenge them and show them what makes a sailboat work. I started sailing 505s as a freshman in college, and it was the best thing I ever did for my sailing career. All of a sudden I had a clue about tuning, weight movement, and what it took to do well in this type of boat. It took a while to succeed in the class, but once you can make a 505 go fast, you can get onto any boat, anywhere and make it cook.

JF: *Like many people, some of your earliest sailing experiences were on a Sunfish. How did these experiences influence your path in sailing? What other early experiences drove you into competitive sailing?*

PA: I took to sailing very quickly when I was young. I did a bunch of reading before I went sailing for the first time, and as a result it all made perfect sense to me. I was moved into the advanced class after the first week and the advanced class was all about racing. I won the first regatta I entered, NBYA Junior Race Week, where I sailed Sunfish Doubles with my friend Chris Plant. I raced locally for several years, winning bay championships, and was then given the chance to sail in the Youth Nationals in 1983. I did not do that well, finishing 37th out of 50, but it was great exposure for me, and showed me that I was indeed a small fish in the big pond.

I think the period that I learned the most was during my college years, when I sailed

a ton in just about every boat I could get on or in. We didn't have a coach at Yale, so the team was self run. Basically a group of us decided that we wanted to get good, and we worked hard to achieve that. I started sailing 505s and FDs, which was a real eye opener! I give my good friend, Zack Leonard, a lot of credit for helping me refine my sailing during this time. We were fierce friends, competing against each other and working to improve.

JF: *I get the feeling that your campaign with Howie is much different than any other you've been involved with in the past. Is this a true statement? If so, what is different about the campaign and how you have personally approached it?*

PA: Howie is just very organized and driven. It was a very easy program to jump into, and I am very thankful for the chance to sail with him. We have a lot of fun. It is just so easy when you have your shit together, and you can focus on enjoying the time on the water. Howie has many years of experience, but I think that where he is the farthest ahead is in the shoreside logistics. There is a system for everything, and everything has been trimmed down to the bare minimum. He does not have a big tool box or a lot of extra stuff, but we always seem to have just what we need.

It is interesting to see the California side of the 505 scene. We sailed a lot with Nick and Mike leading up to the 1998 Worlds, but our approach was totally different. We were not as focused in our approach to anything, we just sailed together a lot. We developed speed, but it seems like it was more by chance. We always tuned by feel, while Howie tunes by the numbers. He keeps track of what has worked in the past, and goes back to it until it is proven wrong. We would change things around until they felt fast, and then check out how we were going. When we talked during a tuning session, we would be talking about this "feel". "Does the boat feel loose/bound up, main driven/jib driven, can you pull the



At Guck, Inc., with high-aspect 505 rudder.



2000 East Coast Championships.

bow down and accelerate, or do you tip over...” When I first started sailing with Howie, I would ask him how the boat “felt”, and he would say, “I don’t know...” It seemed like he had never really considered that as criteria for tuning. Interesting, I guess.

Personally, I am just psyched for the chance to learn even more about 505 sailing and sailing in general. I think that it is really great to get out and sail with as many people as you can. I always learn by getting in the boat with someone new, even if you do not think that they are very good. They may ask you a question, and in answering you may discover something about what you thought was true. In having to explain, it forces you to have a deeper understanding, and you may find that you really have no good reason for believing something that you have held true for years!

JF: *I've heard that you have threatened never to sail keelboats again. Would you consider sailing in an America's Cup campaign as a professional?*

PA: In fact I do not sail keelboats anymore. People call me, and I say that my day rate is \$400 plus expenses, and they tell me to get lost! No one really knows who I am outside of the dinghy world, so

they are not prepared to pay me to sail. I think keelboats all suck, so I will not go out with them unless I am paid. It all works out very nicely!

The AC thing is sort of interesting, but I do not think that I would thrive in that environment. I would have the same attitude that I have with other keelboat sailing, and I am sure that I would get the same reception. It is so political I am not sure I could handle it. I think I would have more fun running the logistics of a program like that and just stay out of the crying game on the boat. The sailing just does not look that fun. I would rather fly a hull.

JF: *When you say “fly a hull”, I assume you are referring to sailing you're single-handed A Class Catamaran. Is it more fun for you to sail alone or on a boat with a good team atmosphere?*

PA: “Fly a hull” is an all-purpose remark that we use in a lot of situations, much like the well known “forgetaboutit”. When you go smoking by a rail full of keel boaters you say “fly a hull!” Want to go sailing, “let’s go fly a hull!” Saying goodbye to a friend, “hey man, fly a hull.” It works in a lot of situations! Anyway, I do really love A Class sailing, although I have been without a boat for almost a year now. We have other cats at the shop that I sail quite a bit, and they are all very fun!

JF: *Describe your pre-race routine that helps you establish the best mood for competition? Do your target moods vary depending on the conditions?*

PA: This is a very interesting topic, one that most people do not have a clear understanding of. Your level of stimulation is very important to how you will perform in a competitive environment, and it is different for everyone. If you are too “excited” or “up” you will not perform well, you will have vague focus, and you will not be able to execute as smoothly as you are capable. You will also be prone to loose your shit if something goes wrong, missing other opportunities to gain. The opposite is true if you are under stimulated. You will not have the fire to roll over the guy to leeward, and you may miss a split second opportunity because you are not in the game. Everyone’s ideal level of stimulation is different, and you can only really tell where you should be by trial and error. When you have a good day, think back on your mood starting off, and try to get back to that place the next day. Once you find your zone, stick to the routine that got you there, including diet (food, coffee), timing (rushed or leisurely) and interaction with other people and boats.

For me, I like to be relaxed and focused before a race. The way I get this state varies, but in general I like to be early to the course, just sail around for awhile, do some tacks, set, a few gybes, takedown, and then talk about the conditions and what we see on the water. I do not like to tune before the race with other boats, as I feel this only distracts me from my job, which is to figure out the conditions and what we are going to do in the upcoming race. We will tune with others, but this is more for Howie, and I try not to get too involved with our setup. My feeling is that



Peter Alarie with Zack Leonard at the Coast Guard Academy.

we are not going to learn something new 10 minutes before the start, and we may well just get freaked out about our setup, thinking we are slow. The only thing I really care about is that we will be fast enough to race up the first beat. I know that in general we have this kind of speed, so I just do not want to think about it. Hitting the first shift or being on the correct side of the beat is much more important to me.

As far as different conditions, my moods do vary a bit. I used to really hate light air, but I got into it by changing my attitude, thinking of it more as a chess game, trying to out fox and out maneuver the other boats. I get into being really still and trying to really feel the boat and find ways that I can make it go faster, find more wind, or just figure out what may happen next. In heavy air, it is more of a thrill ride and you can let the adrenaline take over a bit (but not too much!). This is more of the gear jamming mentality, where you just try to grind down the opposition, or get past them with an explosively perfect gybe in that gnarly puff. But underneath, there is still that focused calm, where you just do not get rattled, you just keep doing your best. Jonathan McKee used to coach us in the FDs, and his mantra was always “no matter what happens, you’ve got to race from where you are.” Pretty sound advice, and it helped me control my temper and stay in the game, no matter how bad I may be doing.

JF: *Can the 505 continue its success well into the 21st Century? If so, how?*

PA: I think the 505 is a very balanced and exciting boat, and that is the reason that it has survived so well. I am not sure what will keep it going or kill it, but there sure seem to be a lot of opinions out there. The large spinnaker movement does not have me convinced, but I have not sailed with one. Tight reaching is certainly one of the features of the boat, and I would be wary of moving away from this. If we go with bigger kites, we will have to sail deeper reaches, and that just may not be as cool. My experiences with the A Class have shown me that lighter weight is a good thing, and the switch to carbon rigs needs to happen. Aluminum is a bad material for a mast, and we should all just suck it up and figure out how to make carbon masts work with our existing fleet structure. It

would also make sense to slowly take weight out of the boats. If we could be racing around in 220 pound boats with carbon masts, we would not need bigger kites! But who knows, changes like that could just kill the whole thing. It does not seem like there is much wrong with what we have now. Is change necessary for the future success, probably so. Looking ahead 50 years, the 505 will seem like a Snipe if it is totally stagnant. Make it lighter, and it will always seem modern.

JF: *Are you determined to sail the 505 until you win a World Championship?*

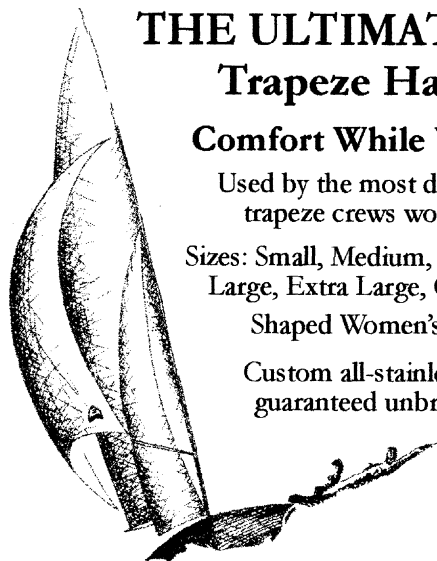
PA: I do not really feel any pressure to keep sailing 505s, or any other boat, for a goal like that. There is so much that goes into winning a regatta of that caliber, it all has to be right. Being the best team is not always enough, you have to catch some breaks and be fortunate to avoid the weirdness. As with any other type of sailing, I will keep doing it as long as it is fun. I no longer feel that I have anything to prove, so sailing is competing with other things for my free time. The thing that is the most fun wins out in the time lottery. I have been getting into cat sailing a lot. That has really inspired me on the sailing front. Probably the best race I did last year was a cat event that raced around Key Largo, 110 miles over two days. The second day we tight reached 44 miles up the bay side of the Key, following dodgy channel markers, weaving through reefs and over sandbars, paddling through mangroves. When we got the finish line, I could not believe it; I thought we had 20 miles to go! Average speed for the leg was over 20 knots, and we were literally paddling for about 12 minutes of the 2 hour 10 minute elapsed time! After a race like that, you realize that there are a lot of really fun things out there!

Will I continue to sail 505s? You bet. We are rigging up a new boat at the shop, and I am sure I will be sailing with someone next year. The boats are just too much fun! ≡



Peter in Bristol, 1998, racing on A-Cat.

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HIS MANTRA
WAS “NO MATTER
WHAT HAPPENS,
YOU’VE GOT
TO RACE FROM
WHERE YOU ARE”.



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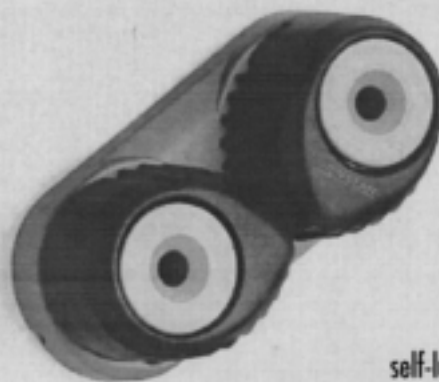


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Takin' for a Ride *By Walter Reiter*

I am a crisis looking for a mid-life so an office mate mentions that TESOD, our local Tuesday night one design series, is starting next week. This is a great activity organized by the Severn Sailing Association and Annapolis Fleet 19, a “run what you bring” event that mixes 505s, Lasers, Jets, Thistles, Lightnings, Solings, Bytes, Vanguards 15s and anything else that might show up. The 505s generally put more than a few boats on the line for as many short course races as fit between about 6 p.m. and twilight.

The committee boat sits just out of spitting range from the bulkhead at SSA. The action is close and furious with boat handling being even more critical. The rules apply but sort of like after work softball. There are no protests, but you can threaten to kill people who cheat and threaten to kill people who accuse you of cheating.

I show up at SSA on a Tuesday around 5 p.m., and it's like I walked in to donate blood. Everyone is real happy to see me. Instead of a chase lounge the attendants are trying to find me a spot in a feather-weight, wind-driven rocket ship laced with about five miles of impossibly thin, color-coded line.

“Sure,” I am thinking, “I have sailed my whole life, I can fake this.” My driver talks about rake and twings and rams and stuff luffs, and I feel my brain begin to pre-bend. The boat becomes rigged and we truck the dolly over to the launch ramp. My borrowed harness is missing a couple of inches of inseam, but other than that I am not too queasy.

I concentrate on guiding the boat down the ramp and step right into a gap between two sections of the ramp. It was like the hangman pulled the trap door on the gallows. My driver asks if

I'm all right then says, “I think I'll take out my contacts.” There's a vote of confidence.

We sail out in a 12-15 knot breeze and head up wind. I start to hike out. I hear, “Dude, go out.” He points to the trapeze ring. So I grab the ring, place it carefully under the harness hook, test the height, stand up, adjust the harness, re-check the hook, pull on the trap wire, swing out a little, squeeze a foot onto the rail and swing out. “No, dude, you just go out, hooking up before you go is for putzes.”

Ready to tack? There is a good deal of non-verbal 505 communication, like a game of bridge. I answer ready to tack by uncleating the jib and am promptly pinned by the boom against the former windward tank. I unhook before the boat flips and flail my way over the centerboard, under the boom, behind the vang and through the jib sheets that look like a perfect cat's cradle. I pop out the other side expecting a medal. “Dude, get trapped out.”

After a couple of tacks, we are a half-mile to windward of the start. “Ready to head back,” the driver says, “let's hoist.” I see no cooler in this boat, so I assume the driver does not mean beers. I ask before moving and somehow this guy talks me through a spinnaker set. The raw power is overwhelming and, for any adrenaline junkie, life altering.

The spinnaker sheet shreds my old cycling gloves and then my hands. I do not care. The chute starts to curl. I sheet

in and “pop” the boat jumps out of the water. Totally extended on the wire, the spray is like a fire hose against my legs.

We douse, head up to the start and spin in circles, on purpose, like the Whirling Teacup ride in Disneyland. We manage a decent start without any death threats, per se.

After what seems like five tacks in thirty seconds, we round and set the spinnaker. With six boats roaring towards



TESOD Action

the jibe mark about 100 feet away, “Glad I'm in a rental.”

Jib sheet, pre sheet, swing in, lose sheet, twing, blow pole, duck, throw, pole on, grab sheet, swing out, sheet in, hook up. Eight point five seconds plane to plane. Well, not quite.

Back at SSA after four or five races, I can barely stand. I am worthless putting the boat away. As my driver leaves he asks, “See you next Tuesday?” “For sure!” I say and stumble off to rehydrate.

I learned a lot that night, but I never did learn where all the bruises came from.



results

PACIFIC COAST CHAMPIONSHIP

Redwood City, CA / Aug. 5-7
Moderate-Heavy Winds

PLACE / TEAM	POINTS
1 8266 Howard Hamlin/Peter Alarie	11
2 8714 Mike Martin/Steve Bourdow	14
3 7201 Dan Thompson/Andy Zinn	24
4 7771 Andy Beeckman/Ben Benjamin	29
5 8680 Bruce Edwards/Dave Shelton	35
6 7873 Nick Adamson/Alan Norman	40
7 8627 Tim Collins/Bill Smith	43
8 7875 Jeff Miller/Paul Allen	49
9 8012 Henry Amthor/Mike Smith	66
10 8681 Robin Brown/John Fry	71
11 8084 Colin Campbell/Rob Waterman	75
12 8554 Douglas Hagan/Stuart Park	76
13 7773 Dalton Bergan/Jeff Nelson	97
14 8593 Evert Meyer/Chris Hanke	97
15 8024 David Chatham/Matt McQueen	102
16 7068 Ted Ferrarone/J.B. Ferrarone	109
17 7096 Bryan Largay/Matt Sanders	115
18 8085 Rene de la Rie/Allan Freedman	116
19 6991 Bill Jenkins/Dan Merino	134
20 7069 Patrick Whitmarsh/David Byron	135
21 7359 Gari Ruggles/Greg Gump	136
22 7095 Bailey White/Patrick Weaver	138
23 7610 Cynthia Des Brisay/Charles Hansen	139
24 8735 Dustin Romey/Karl Knauss	139
25 7349 Larry Tuttle/Jay Kuncel	145
26 7153 Carisa Harris/Alex Mehran	147
27 7156 Aaron Ross/Greg Sorrells	147
28 7886 Dan Strellis/Kristin Guinther	151
29 7876 Steven Lieberman/Joshua Lieberman	157

NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIP

Santa Cruz, CA / August 9-13
Moderate-Heavy Winds

PLACE / TEAM	POINTS
1 8714 Mike Martin/Steve Bourdow	11
2 8266 Howard Hamlin/Peter Alarie	11
3 8680 Bruce Edwards/David Shelton	17
4 7201 Dan Thompson/Andy Zinn	28
5 7349 Mike Holt/Jay Kuncel	29
6 7873 Nick Adamson/Alan Norman	38
7 7875 Jeff Miller/Paul Allen	42
8 8631 Ryan Cox /Carl Smit	45
9 8681 Robin Brown/John Fry	49
10 8627 Tim Collins/Bill Smith	60
11 8722 Macy Nelson/Michael Welch	69
12 8084 Colin Campbell/Rob Waterman	77
13 8554 Doug Hagan/Stuart Park	79
14 8734 Ethan Bixby/Ali Meller	85
15 8012 Henry Amthor/Douglas Amthor	92
16 8643 Barney Harris/Jesse Falsone	95
17 7153 Chuck Asper/Alex Mehran	96
18 8024 David Chatham/Matt McQueen	104
19 7096 Brian Largay/Matt Sanders	104
20 8013 Dave Smith/Rick Thompson	118
21 7771 Andy Beeckman/Ben Benjamin	120
22 8731 Thad Lieb/Paul Kerner	130
23 8192 John Hayley/Winson Cummin	131
24 8610 Ted Ferrarone/J.B. Ferrarone	137
25 7774 Paul Tara/Phil Vandenburg	138
26 8593 Evert Meyer/Chris Hanke	152
27 8081 Joey Pasquali/Rory Giffen	159
28 7353 Ian Plumbley/Tom Burnard	171
29 8085 Rene de la Rie/Allan Freedman	174
30 7877 Steve Anderes/Bruce Fleming	175
31 7610 Cynthia Des Brisay/Charles Hansen	176
32 7773 Charlie Boukather/Jeff Nelson	197
33 7095 Bailey White/Patrick Weaver	200
34 7613 Erik Cockburn/Phillip Ryan	212
35 8735 Dustin Romey/Karl Krauss	213
36 8559 Paul Von Grey/Peter Tuck	221
37 6983 Eric Willis/Wendy Herzberg	222
38 7156 Aaron Ross/Greg Sorrells	222
39 7876 Steven Lieberman/Joshua Lieberman	234
40 6991 Bill Jenkins/Dan Merino	237
41 8073 Catherine Viechnicki/Steven Long	239
42 7611 Craig Perez/Kevin Rey	244
43 7886 Dan Strellis/Kirstin Guinther	268
44 6227 Grant Murray/Ian West-Lewis	276
45 7318 Richard Peck/Allan C. Wilson	276

EAST COAST CHAMPIONSHIP

New Bedford, MA / August 25-27
Light-Moderate Winds

PLACE / TEAM	POINTS
1 CAN8264 Jeff Boyd/Martin ten Hove Kingston, ON	16
2 USA8083 Neal Fowler/Dave Dyson Dennis, MA/Westport, CT	17
3 USA8627 Tim Collins/Mike Mills Bristol/Portsmouth, RI	19
4 USA8754 Lars Guck/Peter Alarie Bristol, RI	20
5 USA8012 Henry Amthor/Jesse Falsone Hampton, VA/Annapolis, MD	22
6 USA8734 Ali Meller/Fiona Lockwood Annapolis, MD	23
7 USA8722 Macy Nelson/Mike Welch Baltimore, MD/Boston, MA	34
8 USA8085 Rene de la Rie/Allan Freedman Wash D.C./Silver Spring, MD	46
9 USA8194 Tom Kivney/Adam Schell Hingham, MA/Kingston, ON	48
10 USA8013 David Smith/Rick Thompson Southport, CT/Boston, MA	60
11 CAN194 Ian Torrie/Mairus Rzucidlo Ottawa, ON	74
12 USA8624 Dave Stetson/Andrew Fowler Columbus, OH/Kingston, ON	77
13 USA7068 Colin Merrick/Tal Ingram	78
14 USA8015 Latne Montague/Monte Schumpert Alexandria, VA/Vienna, VA	79
15 USA7148 Peter Mignerey/Bill Hientz College Park, MD	90
16 USA8311 Chris Yindra/Mark McCarthy Huntington, VT	91
17 USA6985 Mike Breton/Dylan Breton Columbia, MD	92
18 USA7771 Chad Atkins/Ed Petit de Mange Newport, RI	98
19 USA8689 Nick Grey/Jim Hannan/ Gerard Kivney Rochester, MA	112
20 USA7876 Steve Lieberman/Josh Lieberman Bethesda, MD	112
21 USA7839 Doug DeCouto/Frank Maldari Bermuda	123
22 USA8737 Peter Durant/Tom Hurwitch Falmouth, MA	138
23 USA7793 Geoff Schaefer/Dave Seiple Hilliard	141
24 USA3977 Hal Jordan/Jeff Wren Bow, NH/Bangor, ME	150

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It's Time to Ditch the Big Spinnaker *By Dave Eberhardt*

Class officers are putting on the big push for the bigger spinnaker. They claim that the big spinnaker—which I've dubbed the BS—will draw sailors who'd otherwise buy one of the myriad fad dinghies or skiffs. Embracing the BS is a matter of class evolution, or even mere survival, they argue. But, in fact, there is strong opposition to the BS among the rank and file. And for good reason. Our symmetric kite, single trapeze and all-around-easily-sailed boats are unlikely ever to attract the skiff crowd, even with the BS on board. So let's ditch the big spinnaker before it's too late. Here's why.

STRUCTURE: Many BS users report “alarming” or “frightening” distortion of unsupported upper masts in heavy air. No masts have broken—yet—but bent masts or fatigue failures are likely, especially with older masts. Even extra shrouds are suggested! We don't all have spare masts.

SIZE: Many older boats can't easily accommodate longer sails and shouldn't. With double patches, the fatter stowed sail won't fit in many older boats' smaller tubes. Replacing launcher and tube is a major and expensive rebuild.

A lower pole prevents current convenient pole stowage and dangerously limits its visibility. Spinnaker windows are impractical.

Don't be fooled, new sheave-boxes located higher on the mast will be required. A simple eye strap and block will not do the job, as BS proponents claim, since the spinnaker halyard would get fouled without a new sheave box.

MONEY: Most BS proponents now concede that we will have to buy new kites; modified won't do. To that \$500-\$700, add new halliard, pole fitting,

sheave box, modified pole and spinnaker stowage, possible launcher rebuilding, etc. That rings in for perhaps \$1000-\$2000. All existing spinnakers would become obsolete if performance claims prove true. Worse, optimizing new designs requires years of expensive trial and error.

The loudest advocates seem to be “top-tier” sailors with newer boats and deep pockets who buy new sails annually (and boats often) and think everyone does. Owners of older boats, and many 505 prospects, cannot afford to spend thousands of dollars to become or remain competitive.

PERFORMANCE: Yes, taller spinnakers can be faster on deeper reaches. (Duhhh.) Reports (anecdotal, not objective) generally agree that chief benefits are in heavier air. General benefits seem limited to dedicated triangles. Reduced close-reaching ability (and harder boat- and sail-handling) often is acknowledged. This means courses must be modified to make the BS worth using!

Indeed the BS may increase speed on some courses (so could other, cheaper changes) but that hardly justifies a major sail plan revision. Performance is NOT the issue; forced obsolescence is. We race other 505s, not other classes.

RECRUITING: Look around! Major regatta attendance is setting records! Changing our sail plan “to recruit new sailors” seems absurd. One change won't help buying patterns and may hurt them. Since the BS, if it helps performance, will make obsolete all existing spinnakers and many older boats, we'll lose valuable young or lower-income prospects. The pool of used boats, to which we point so proudly, would be sharply reduced.

DON'T MESS WITH PERFECTION

The 505's powerful sail plan rightly has remained unchanged since its introduction. Rule changes of any type have been rare. This is a primary reason for the 505's durability. Change should require powerful, compelling reasons, and the BS offers none. (Advances cited in the “cotton sails, wood masts” cliché all were made UNDER EXISTING RULES. The only major change, spinnaker launchers, left sail plan and boat speed unchanged and many sailors still choose bag boats 30 years later.) Once we abandon rule stability, other boon-doggles are inevitable. Already from Pandora's box comes the next, carbon-fiber masts—like the BS, large expense for questionable gain. Can new calls for asymmetrics, double traps and bowsprits be far behind?

Most winning sailors don't use max kites; so we need still bigger ones, invalidating existing sails and boats, to make us more like the come-and-go fad dinghies and nearly-unsailable skiffs? Since the BS won't help (and may hurt) on current courses, we must change courses to give the new sail an advantage, making obsolete existing sails bought in good faith? Everyone DOES NOT buy new sails yearly and hulls every couple of years! Adopting the BS would force large outlays, perhaps repeatedly over several years, and would make 505 sailing more inconvenient and difficult in many ways.

The BS either helps performance, leaves it unchanged, or hurts it. If the first, it makes obsolete hundreds of thousands (or millions) of dollars in existing sails and/or boats, and should be rejected. If the second, it offers nothing and must be rejected. And if the third, bury it forever. ☹

BackTime



Governor and His Cup, 1973

Governor Thomas J. Meskill (left) poses with the winners of both the Connecticut Governors Cup and the Northeastern Regional Championship at the Niantic Bay Yacht Club. Next to the governor is winning skipper Macy Nelson of the Black Rock Yacht Club of Bridgeport, and (from left) his crew Steve Benjamin and Neal Fowler, and Martin O'Meara, Commodore of the Niantic Bay Club.

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TANK TALK

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