

LEADING EDGE

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IN MEMORY

On May 12th of this year Jack Van Dyke passed away. As we all know, Jack was the principal organizer of the USSA and served as its president from 1969 to 1972. He was also president of the ISA from 1973 to 1975 where his steady hand on the helm guided the Class through some turbulent times.

Of course, Jack was an enthusiastic sailboat racer and participated successfully at local, national, and international levels. He won the 1954 Star North American Championship and for decades was the leading helmsman of one-design racing sailboats in Milwaukee. He won the McNulty Cup five times in three different classes: Stars, 210s, and Solings.

In memory of Jack the USSA is obtaining a permanent trophy to be awarded to the Red Division winner of the Soling North American Championship beginning this year. Those members of the Class who wish to donate to help see this effort through are asked to send their contributions to Shirley Klausner. Designate them to the Jack Van Dyke Trophy Fund.

NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIP

July 11-14, 1991
Chicago Yacht Club

Boat	Skipper	Race 1	Race 2	Race 3	Race 4	Race 5	Race 6	Race 7	Total Points
1	US 772 K. Mahaney*	2	1	7	1	1	1	DNC	13
2	US 787 J. Kostecki*	3	4	4	2	7	4	4	21
3	KC 182 P. Thompson*	4	6	6	6	3	3	3	25
4	US 769 G. Coleman*	6	2	1	11	4	6	32	30
5	US 801 L. Klein*	1	9	2	5	8	8	8	32
6	KC 181 H. Fogh*	8	5	31	3	5	11	1	33
7	US 786 D. Curtis*	7	3	12	14	2	5	5	34
8	KC 20 R. Coutts*	5	7	10	4	10	2	DSQ	38
9	US 779 M. Hallman*	10	11	13	7	6	DNC	9	56
10	US 807 J. Hoeksema	17	15	5	22	11	7	7	62
11	US 803 B. Wadsworth*	14	13	29	9	9	12	6	63
12	KC 194 E. Koppernaes	11	10	11	13	12	9	17	66
13	KC 196 T. Otton	15	22	3	10	19	17	13	77
14	US 808 C. Kamps	9	10	18	24	13	10	12	81
15	KC 197 P. Hall	19	14	8	17	20	13	11	82
16	US 809 P. Merrifield	12	8	20	8	18	19	21	85
17	KC 185 J. Beatty	16	17	16	21	14	15	14	92
18	US 614 M. Hughes*	13	DSQ	15	15	15	14	24	96
19	US 726 J. Castle	18	21	27	16	16	16	18	105
20	US 759 F. Joosten	20	DSQ	21	12	17	20	22	112
21	US 796 B. Chandler	22	12	26	25	DNF	18	16	119
22	US 785 K. Heitzinger	37	18	14	18	21	DNC	15	123
23	US 431 J. Johnson	26	25	22	23	22	22	19	133
24	US 794 B. Gondran	13	16	23	19	26	27	DNF	134
25	US 677 W. Tone	30	26	17	30	23	25	20	141
26	US 790 M. Tennity	27	30	25	20	25	21	23	141
27	US 731 R. Draftz	21	28	34	27	24	24	28	152
28	US 541 G. Winters	29	33	19	34	33	29	25	168
29	US 785 D. Crysedale	38	31	24	28	35	30	27	175
30	US 700 K. Kondo	35	34	30	32	27	31	29	183
31	US 682 M. Slater	34	27	DSQ	31	28	DNC	26	191
32	US 718 C. January	31	35	37	39	32	26	36	197
33	US 605 S. Bobo	DNC	40	28	36	31	28	35	198
34	US 645 B. Baldino	33	37	DNF	40	29	23	37	199
35	US 628 W. Slaght	45	38	38	38	34	32	31	211
36	US 776 R. Strilky	36	29	33	26	DNF	DNC	DNC	214
37	US 689 S. Tripas	32	42	31	41	36	DNF	34	216
38	KC 171 D. Walters	39	39	39	33	30	DNC	38	218
39	US 758 D. Williams	28	32	31	37	DNC	DNC	DNC	228
40	US 646 J. Lane	24	24	DNC	DNC	DNC	DNC	DNC	228
41	US 750 J. Warren	41	36	32	RET	DNF	DNC	30	229
42	US 631 T. Herr	40	41	41	35	DNF	DNF	33	235
43	KC 193 J. McCully	42	43	40	42	DNF	DNC	DNC	257
44	US 737 R. Zieserl	DNC	DNC	DNC	DNC	DNC	DNC	32	257

*Blue Fleet



CHICAGO HOSTS 1991 NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIP

THE 1991 SOLING NORTH AMERICAN Championship was held at the Belmont station of the Chicago Yacht Club July 11-14. Forty-four boats showed up from three countries making this one of the largest North Americans of recent years. The weather, sometimes fickle in July, couldn't have behaved better, serving up a variety of steady sailing conditions for the entire week. Prior to the racing the U.S. Olympic Yachting Committee sponsored a match racing clinic for the Soling members of the U.S. Sailing Team. The clinic was organized to give our potential Olympic representatives match racing experience and to give the competitors and umpires another opportunity prior to the Trials for each one to see how the other reacts in the numerous encounters of match racing. Dave Perry was guest expert which was the main reason (in addition to lots of advance work by Rose Hoeksema) why it was such a great success.

The Blue Fleet was selected from the members of the U.S. and Canadian Soling Teams plus John Kostecki, the Colemans, and Russell Coutts. The rest of us (the Red Fleet) had a great time watching these top sailors go at it and occasionally (9 times) cracking the top ten ourselves.

The short-course, windward-leeward format finally came into its own with the introduction of the leeward gate. This simple solution to the jam-up at the bottom mark really works and along with the offset weather mark allows a big fleet to have close racing with lots of turning marks on a compact course. After six races a straw poll was taken of the 176 competitors, 20 race officers and eight jury members—the vote was unanimous in favor of the gate!

Kevin Mahaney, with Jim Brady and Doug Kern, ran away with first place winning four of the six races in which they sailed. John Kostecki and Paul Thomsen showed their past Olympic speed finishing second and third respectively.

The Chicago Yacht Club needs to be congratulated, not only for its excellent on-the-water work, but also for organizing great parties and a fine match racing clinic. Special thanks to Adrienne Levatino (regatta chairperson), Dick Schweers (chief race officer) and the entire CYC Soling Fleet. Well done!

WILMETTE RACE WEEKEND

August 2, 3, 4, 1991
Wilmette, Illinois

	Boat	Skipper	Race 1	Race 2	Race 3	Race 4	Race 5	Total Points
1	US 811	Coleman	1	1	1	1	1	5
2	US 807	Hoeksema	5	2	2	3	2	14
3	US 796	Chandler	3	6	3	5	3	20
4	US 785	Heitzinger	2	5	7	4	5	23
5	US 802	Kamps	6	4	5	7	6	28
6	US 759	Joosten	7	7	4	8	8	34
7	KC 196	Otton	4	21	6	2	4	37
8	US 677	Tone	8	10	9	15	7	49
9	US 740	Warner	14	9	11	12	12	58
10	US 718	January	20	8	8	10	14	60
11	US 720	Kennedy	13	12	18	14	11	68
12	US 431	Johnson	10	3	16	11	DNF	69
13	US 808	Murphy	15	11	19	23	9	77
14	US 541	Williams	16	16	15	13	18	78
15	US 731	Draftz	9	DNF	14	6	20	78
16	US 763	Crysdale	12	17	13	18	19	79
17	US 601	Schemel	21	14	12	17	16	80
18	US 628	Slaght	11	13	17	22	17	80
19	US 737	Zieserl	18	15	23	19	10	85
20	US 700	Kondo	19	DNF	10	16	13	87
21	US 605	Bobo	17	18	22	24	15	96
22	US 646	Lane	DNC	DNC	20	9	DNC	116
23	US 779	Burns	22	19	DSQ	25	21	116
24	US 689	Higgins	DNC	DNC	21	20	22	121
25	US 803	Ahn	DNS	20	25	26	23	123
26	US 639	O'Reilly	23	DNF	24	21	DNC	126
27	US 692	Muir	24	DNF	26	27	DNC	135
28	KC 112	Shipley	DNF	DNC	27	28	24	137



1991 WILMETTE RACE WEEKEND

by Craig Warner

DATELINE WILMETTE — WE WON THE war, the economy is on the upswing, and it looks like Bush is a shoe-in for another four years. What could top that? You guessed right—the fleet at Wilmette completed another highly successful RACE WEEKEND. Twenty eight boats competed from all over the U.S. and Canada. Gerard Coleman, bolstered by brothers Peter and Paul, swept the event with five victories. Even though the rest of the fleet never got a chance to rip their knickers, there was still plenty of competition left for trophies in the A and B fleets.

Racing conditions were great. We had good winds for the entire event. Normally these articles go into too great detail on how the races were won by the big guys. There were a lot of people in the middle who got just as much fun out of the event. The trophy winners are only a part of the story. Tom O'Reilly (US 639) from Milwaukee traveled to his first away Soling event.

Welcome to the circuit Tom! Bob Ziserl in his second year as a Soling skipper took a 10th in race 5. Good job Bob, feels a lot better than last fall, doesn't it? His ----eating grin at the club just about summed up why we participate in this sport. Don Crysdale took third in the B fleet. Don has been making trophies for so long it is about time we gave him one. Finally, a job well done by Craig January who took top honors in the B Fleet. Nice try on the close cover you threw on me Craig. Maybe next year.

The racing fun was complimented by the annual Soling dinner at Tom and Jane Murphy's house. It was a great opportunity for everyone to soak up some of that famous Soling comradeship. The only real let-down occurred when the annual J-24 gate-crashing crew failed to show. I guess the "J" program is in such a state of decline that they couldn't even muster up someone to crash our party!

Folks, we at Wilmette loved having you come race with us. We try to make Race Weekend something special. Thanks again for joining us. We look forward to seeing you next year!

III FIRECRACKER 1991

by John Odenbach

WITH THE STRONG LEADERSHIP OF THE Coleman brothers the U.S. sailors took back the top finish positions after the Canadians dominated last year's results. With the arrival of twelve Canadian boats the Fleet was one of the largest in years at 31. Jim Beatty has done a great job rejuvenating the Canadian Fleet which now boasts 50 members.

Day one gave everyone a taste of the Colemans' speed as they finished 1-2-1 in a choppy easterly breeze at 15 knots. Only Eric Koppernaes from Nova Scotia was able to stay close at 2-1-8 followed closely by Britt Wadsworth sailing US 803. The first two races were Olympic courses which separated the Fleet and revealed some rusty tactics and crew work by those of us used to windward/leeward.

On Day two the wind died after a breezy night, leaving large swells and 5-10 knot winds with 30 degree shifts. Again the Colemans made some great recoveries to finish near the top but the first race was won by (US 809) Pete Merrifield. Winner of the day with a 5-1 and sixth in the regatta was North salesman Dave Starck sailing 20-year-old US 637 proving again that old boats are competitive. The wind continued to fade and the race committee was forced to abandon the third race before the first mark.

Day 3 continued light air and leftover seas but the Colemans got away at the start and never looked back except to observe their lead of a half a leg over most of the Fleet. With only eleven points in Olympic scoring, no one else was close. Denis Doyle sailed to victory after the fleet was split and beat out Mike Tennity and Marc Fischer of Rochester.

As a warm-up to the Soling Worlds in August, the Rochester Yacht Club had all the committees practicing for the big event and everything went off great. With over 20 countries, 85 boats and lots of donations, it looks like the Worlds will be an event not to miss.

1991 SANTA CRUZ INVITATIONAL

THIS POPULAR ANNUAL EVENT TURNED out eleven boats for the weekend. Included

1991 FIRECRACKER June 29, 30, July 1, 1991 Rochester Yacht Club

	Boat	Skipper	Race	Race	Race	Race	Race	Race	Total
			1	2	3	4	5	6	
1	US 769	G. Coleman	1	2	1	6	4	1	11.0
2	KC 194	E. Koppernaes	2	1	8	8	2	5	30.0
3	US 803	B. Wadsworth	5	3	2	11	3	4	32.4
4	KC 1	B. Abbott	3	4	3	4	16	16	49.4
5	US 809	P. Merrifield	DNF	11	6	1	8	6	54.4
6	US 637	D. Starck	16	20	PMS	5	1	2	61.0
7	US 767	B. Palm	11	5	11	3	20	8	63.7
8	US 804	F. Odenbach	4	6	5	14	9	13	63.7
9	KC 197	P. Hall	19	13	7	9	7	3	65.7
10	US 688	J. Odenbach	10	17	13	2	6	11	66.7
11	KC 196	T. Otton	7	9	4	13	10	15	71.0
12	US 802	C. Kamps	6	8	9	27	5	22	78.7
13	KC 185	J. Beatty	8	7	25	12	11	17	85.0
14	US 726	J. Castle	12	12	15	10	15	9	88.0
15	US 714	D. Doyle*	13	16	12	15	13	10	93.0
16	US 761	B. Cameron	15	19	19	7	12	14	97.0
17	US 790	M. Tennity*	9	22	14	17	21	12	103.0
18	US 739	M. Fischer*	17	10	18	21	18	18	111.0
19	US 799	T. Polidor*	PMS	24	10	20	14	21	119.0
20	KC 171	D. Walters*	25	26	17	DSQ	19	7	124.0
21	KC 198	B. Clifford*	14	18	20	19	23	25	124.0
22	KC 129	B. Sims*	18	14	21	DNF	DNF	23	138.0
23	KC 188	P. Bissell*	21	29	26	16	26	20	139.0
24	US 756	P. Wilson*	24	15	PMS	18	24	29	140.0
25	KC 189	K. Clarke*	22	23	16	23	27	30	141.0
26	US 607	W. Lawless*	23	21	24	22	25	27	145.0
27	US 792	E. Buerger*	20	27	DNF	25	22	26	150.0
28	US 742	M. Quintana*	26	25	22	24	28	24	151.0
29	KC 146	J. Lucki*	27	30	DNF	DNS	17	19	155.0
30	KC 193	J. McCully	28	28	23	26	29	28	163.0
31	US 685	A. Schuster Jr.	DNS	DNS	DNS	DNS	DNS	DNS	190.0

*B Fleet — determined after five race standings

1991 MC NULTY CUP June 15-16, 1991 Milwaukee, Wisconsin

	Boat	Skipper	Race	Race	Race	Race	Race	Total
			1	2	3	4	5	
1	Us 807	Hoeksema	1	2	1	1	5	5
2	US 759	Joosten	9	5	3	2	1	11
3	US 431	Johnsson	15	3	4	3	2	12
4	US 802	Kamps	7	1	2	9	9	19
5	US 731	Draftz	5	7	7	6	3	21
6	US 763	Crysdale	10	6	6	5	4	21
7	US 682	Slater	1	9	12	7	6	24
8	US 808	Murphy	8	4	5	12	8	25
9	US 541	Williams	4	14	8	4	11	27
10	US 755	Eagan	3	8	13	19	7	31
11	US 700	Kondo	6	10	9	14	13	38
12	US 605	Bobo	14	11	10	10	12	43
13	US 711	Lindermann	13	17	15	8	10	46
14	US 737	Ziserel	DNF	12	11	11	14	48
15	US 639	O'Reilly	12	15	17	16	15	58
16	US 792	Buerger	16	18	14	13	16	59
17	US 694	Brillmyer	17	13	16	17	17	63
18	US 601	Sterns	11	16	19	DNF	DNF	65
19	US 545	Schroeder	DNF	DNF	DNF	15	18	71

were two hopeful Adams Cup Soling contenders: Marcia Mahoney (US 686) and Melinda Erbelens (US 743).

We had the usual sunny days with 8-15 knot winds. Five races were planned, but during the last race the reach mark drifted away. Some competitors pursued it for miles but it was a lost cause.

Mark Hughes, with crew Ezra Culver and Bill Edwards in US 614, did a stellar job with two firsts and two seconds. They were particularly hyped as they had just qualified for the U.S. Olympic hopeful list.

Our boardwalk roller coaster produced some winners Saturday night and overall it was a great regatta.

SANTA CRUZ INVITATIONAL

June 8-9, 1991

	Boat	Skipper	Race 1	Race 2	Race 3	Race 4	Total Points
1	US 614	M. Hughes	2	.75	.75	2	5.50
2	US 687	G. Smith	3	2	3	.75	8.75
3	US 702	A. Carson	.75	4	7	5	16.75
4	US 686	M. Mahoney	8	3	5	4	20.0
4	US 743	M. Erbelens	4	5	2	9	20.0
6	US 699	W. Marting	5	6	4	6	21.0
7	K 63	W. Partridge	10	7	6	3	26.0
8	US 645	R. Baldino	7	9	10	7	33.0
9	US 595	R. Cantlay	9	8	9	8	34.0
10	US 224	C. Luhn	6	10	8	11	35.0
11	US 498	B. Keane	11	11	11	10	43.0

LA BAULE — 1991 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

by Sam Merrick

AFTER AN UNSTEADY START (MORE below), the 1991 European Championship, staged magnificently and lavishly in La Baule, France, with 83 competitors, spun off seven races in as many days in the long

swells of the Atlantic Ocean. Traditional U.S. proficiency among Soling sailors was demonstrated anew by a convincing display of talent by Dave Curtis in the top spot, and Kevin Mahaney not far behind on points, fourth overall. Curtis, with help from crew members Brad Dellenbaugh and Paul Murphy, made it look easy by winning the final race on top of a solid seven-point lead over his nearest pursuers.

Curtis won by having good starts, despite the huge fleet, then regularly rounding the first windward mark among the top five. He did so even in Race Four in which he mysteriously lost his golden touch by gradually dropping to a "worst race" twenty-ninth. Only in Race Three did Curtis find himself at the first mark as far back as tenth, but then recovered to third by the end of the second beat. Those early first mark

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roundings translated into distance ahead of the pack, increased by avoiding the vast crush and calm that surrounded the jibe mark. Apart from his early positioning, Curtis' 5-2-2-6-4-1 owed plenty to splendid tactics to stay ahead of the many speedy rivals snapping at his heels right up to the finish line—a virtuoso performance indeed.

For other North American entries (three Canadians and a total of five US), results were mixed. The Mahaney team (Brady, Kern, and the bossman), won two races—the first in comfort, the second a horizon job. They went into the final contest 1.3 points out of second, an even eight below Curtis. But three finishes (including Race 7) due to heavy traffic and wrong side choices were three too many to stay in front of the likes of Holmberg, Schumann and Bouet. Larry Klein, winner of the 1991 Pre-Trials, seemed unable to get enough boat speed to break into tough competition. The Kamps-Hoeksema-Hoeksema combination had a great time, but got stuck too often in the starting traffic; and Stu Walker was not helped by a last minute crew loss. On the Canadian side, Paul Thomson was often in the 10-20 group, but a PMS and a DSQ hurt badly. The usually reliable Hans Fogh and Billy Abbott simply seemed lost in the crowd—not what one expects of either.

A preliminary match racing series con-

sisted of a one-day round-robin and then a run-off for the top four on points. The round-robin consisted of an invited two per country, each of whom sailed four races. With this format, four emerged with most points: Schumann, Mahaney, Heiner, and Bank. In the final match, following a semi-final round, Schumann defeated Mahaney for the top prize.

A continuous problem faced by the Class these past ten years as it grows in Europe has been the increasing number of boats trying to enter both the World and European Championships. The publicity value of a 100-boat regatta for demonstrating class health and world-wide support conflicts with the importance of having good racing. The universal use of the Black Flag for starts at La Baule makes the point. To avoid such unwieldy fleets, the ISA Committee at its November 1990 meeting constructed a split fleet procedure for the purpose of a Championship division racing separately in the final three. In the formal Notice of Regatta for the Europeans, this was the mandated procedure. Unfortunately, a group of prominent sailors petitioned ISA for a change; when the change was made, the International Jury concluded that the Regatta could not depart from the arrangement set forth in the Notice. On the morning of the first race, the race committee reported it was barricaded across the

harbor entrance by a dozen or so Solings. It was in this context that the traditional one fleet, seven race series was reinstated. From then onward, the Regatta was a total success on the sea and on shore. La Baule knows how to run a great show.

A complete chart of all finishes appeared in the last *Soling Sailing*.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

(Published in the last issue of Leading Edge was an exchange between Sam Merrick and Buddy Melges concerning Buddy's opinion of the inclusion of Solings in the Olympic Games. Following are additional responses to Buddy's letter.)

August 14, 1991

Dear Rose,

I was surprised by the tone of Buddy Melges' comments regarding the state of the Soling class in the last issue of the *Leading Edge*. One might think after reading his letter that the class is doomed because of its association with the Olympics. I don't think this is the case, or at least I hope not. Melges makes the point that the weekend racers (like me) get discouraged when competing against the pros, and then leave the class. True, this is what seems to have happened in the Flying Dutchman, Finn, and 470 classes. However, the Soling class is in a different

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If you want a new Soling bad enough, you'll come up with a good answer.

Since old Solings never die, (they just keep on sailing...) the question that begs to be answered is "What do you do with your old Soling?"

Here's a few suggestions.

1. Move it to your crew. After all they've worked long and hard to help you. Besides, they might just beat you and make you feel good because you now can take credit for their success.
2. How about donating your old boat to your club! This is a great way of establishing or revitalizing the club's racing program and introducing new sailors to the Class. Just think, your

generosity might be instrumental in helping a future World and Olympic Soling Champion soar on the wings on his or her dreams.

3. You can call us. We get a lot of inquiries from people who want to get into the Class and are looking for a used boat to start. No matter what condition your old Soling is in, we can service and up-grade it for re-sale and a new life of competition on the circuit.

No matter what, getting a new Soling starts with feeling good about finding a good home for the old one. Call us.

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situation, because it was created specifically for the Olympic competition. Anyone buying a Soling knows *a priori* about the level of competition. I admit that I had some apprehension about becoming involved in such a competitive class, but at the same time the opportunity of competing against the best was very attractive. You can see how good you are on an absolute scale.

In reality, about 90% of my racing is at the club level, and I am not getting pounded every weekend (except by Joe and Fred). The competition is manageable, and occasionally I win a race. But I have learned in the last couple of years that the most rewarding aspect of racing comes from seeing personal improvement. This can only be measured by my performance at regattas and in local fleet racing. Frustration comes about when I do not see the improvement I expected.

The willingness of the people at the top of the Soling class to help the slower boats come up to speed has been especially rewarding. Charlie Kamps and Rose taught me about jibing in heavy air. Joe has spent hours with us on the boat discussing sail trim, tracks, jibing, etc. Fred Joosten is always helping with equipment, tuning and tactics. The type of support insures my own improvement, and is essential to maintaining an active fleet. Without it the frustration level would be quite high.

Melges is correct that the Midwest fleets have not shown growth. In Chicago we are staying even with the same number leaving as joining. The reasons that people leave are varied, but have more to do with marriage and career changes than with getting pounded by Olympic-class sailors.

I also agree with Melges that the Olympic status does not keep people racing one-designs. There are certainly fewer people racing in most one-design classes in the Chicago area than ten years ago. Perhaps more media coverage will help increase the interest in the sport. But in my opinion the best way for the class to grow is by support at the local level. Simply inviting people out to experience the excitement of close racing in a spectacular boat will do the most for fleet development.

David Williams
Chicago Yacht Club Soling Fleet

July 28, 1991

Dear Rose,

I feel compelled to respond to Buddy Melges' letter in the last *Leading Edge*. The

first thing that caught my attention was Sam Merrick's comment on reactionary Republicans. Sam, I hope this doesn't mean that you are one of those East Coast liberal Democrats? If you are, no doubt we will be reading an article by you talking about your sail with Ted Kennedy and his all-girl crew at Chappaquiddick.

But now to the serious side of the letter. It's Buddy's contention that our Olympic status works to the detriment of our class. Well, I suppose that when someone takes their first look at a Soling they might be intimidated. But on closer inspection, that initial panic is not warranted. It is an easy boat to sail. A novice can have just as much of a thrill as a pro. Our real assets are the members of the class. The best part of sailing these boats is the friendships I have made. It's my impression that this class has a great bunch of people who very much enjoy racing Solings and are very interested in making this a long-term, successful program. As for the hot-shots going for the gold, I think that this aspect of our class is a great advantage. I don't get tired of racing with these people. I've learned a great deal from them. I know that I speak for a lot of other people when I say that we common club racers are very proud to provide a competitive network to help our fellow sailors achieve the highest goal that our sport can offer. In his letter, Buddy said that we were just hanging on. Bull ----! No, we are not the biggest class in the world. Big is not better. Look at the J-24 program. There hasn't been a bigger boom-bust cycle since the California gold rush. Our class is growing. In my neck of the woods interest and participation are way up.

So let me summarize why we are a great class. We are an Olympic class. Some of the greatest sailors in the world sail Solings and we get to race with them and share their excitement. We have a great boat. It does what it is supposed to do and it does it well. Such a solid performer will convert many to our fold and we will be in business for years to come. Our class provides a great competitive structure. So far this year we have averaged over 30 boats per event. Our people are the best and they are interested in keeping the Soling class a high quality operation. All this means that the Soling class is alive and kicking.

So if Buddy's letter got you depressed, don't get down in the dumps. We are doing just fine. Buddy, it's time you got off those big boats and come back to the one that got

you the gold. You'll be surprised at how we have grown and you'll be mad at yourself for missing sailboat racing at its best, racing a Soling.

Craig Warner
Wilmette

August 22, 1991

Dear Rose,

Eight years this issue and (at least) a million words later about jibing and tacking, match racing, ought-knot winds, wins and losses of the best, the near best, vicarious pleasure derived from the thrills and chills in regattas (damn those summer regattas, however) all over the world, the go-to-hell-in-a-hand-basket enthusiasm of the Class supporters in this on-going exchange initiated in the last issue, prompts me to wonder why I've never walked to our beautiful harbor and called out to hitch a ride!

I continue to enjoy the Class.

The Production Company

July 2, 1991

Dear Rose,

I write relating to the Atlantic Coast Championship trophy. Joe was kind enough to retire it in my favor since I had won it nine times (the last seven years in a row). I have purchased an even nicer trophy and am having it engraved with all the past winners with lots of room for future winners. I have dedicated the trophy in honor of Samuel V. Merrick. The trophy will have a Soling symbol on it and engraved indicating that it

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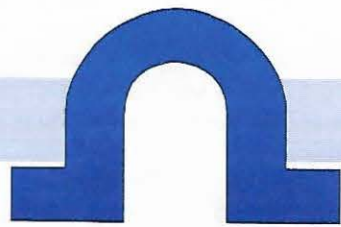
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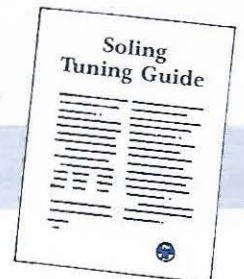
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The Winners Have North



is the Atlantic Coast Championship and is known as the "Samuel V. Merrick Bowl." I know of few people who have put more back into the sport than Sam and he has been a pillar of strength, not only to the total Class, but the Atlantic Coast contingent. I would appreciate it if you would duly note this and state that it was presented at the Atlantic Coast Championship in August at Martha's Vineyard.

Sincerely,

Donald S. Cohan

(The Class deeply appreciates, not only Don's competition on the water, but his continued support of Soling sailing during these difficult times. We are all looking forward to racing against Don in the near future and expect him to again beat us all at future Atlantic Coast Championships.)

≡ EFFECTIVE CREWING: HOW TO AVOID COLLISIONS

by Wayne Hicks
(as published in Performance Sailor)

IT IS A LAW OF PHYSICS THAT NO TWO things can occupy the same point at the same time. That especially holds true for sailboats. Although some are built tougher than others, there will likely be some type of damage when cats hit. Crews can help skippers avoid collisions by knowing how to detect when one "is in the works."

Obviously, a skipper will have no problems with seeing boats that are out in front. But what about the boats to leeward, windward, and behind? When the skipper is concentrating on sail trim and boat handling, you must become the eyes of the boat.

Range and Bearing

The first thing you'll need to develop is an effective way of communicating to your skipper where boats are relative to yours. I always have my crew tell me boat positions in terms of range and bearing. How far away are they away from us? In what direction are they?

Because it is often difficult to distinguish distances on the water, my crew gives distance in boat lengths. Twenty boat-lengths is far away; 10 boat-lengths is closer; five boat-lengths is cause for concern; two boat-lengths and it's time to get out of the way!

The easiest way to express bearing, or the direction the other boat is coming from,

is to simply place a "clock" over the top of the boat. Anything that is dead ahead is "at 12 o'clock;" anything dead astern is at 6 o'clock. Dead abeam on starboard tack is 3 o'clock and dead abeam on port tack is 9 o'clock. Some skippers prefer you use degrees as in a compass rose.

When relaying boat information, always give the skipper those two pieces of information, giving distance first—"The boat's 10 boatlengths away at 3 o'clock." It may sound like a John Wayne movie or something out of *Star Trek*, but with two simple commands, you've told the skipper the exact coordinates of where the other boat is. And the skipper can mentally keep track of this without having to look away from the sails.

Never, never say something like this—"The other boat's off to leeward a ways over there." Where to leeward? How far away? This will surely unnerve most skippers. If you convey to them ambiguous information, they will often take a look for themselves, thus destroying their concentration on keeping the boat going fast.

Determining Collision Courses

The second thing to know is how to determine when a boat is on a collision course with you. The worst collisions occur when a port tack boat and a starboard tack boat meet while crossing the course toward the A-mark. Usually, both boats are obstructed from each other by their jibs and mains, and the skippers and crews are busy looking up the course and not across.

A note here. Being on a collision course does not necessarily mean that the two boats are close to each other. It means that if neither boat changes heading or speed, your paths will eventually meet and a collision will occur.

The easiest way to determine if you're on a collision course with another boat is to determine if the bearing (direction angle) between the two boats is changing or remaining constant. This sounds complicated, but it's really not.

As you look across your boat, try and line up the other boat with a reference point on your boat, like the mast, forestay bridle or shroud. A few seconds later, sight across the same reference point. Is the other boat now behind, ahead, or at the same place?

If the other boat is behind your reference point, then the other boat is going higher and faster, and you will probably cross behind. In both of these cases, the bearing between the two boats is changing and a collision is unlikely to occur.

But if the other boat consistently remains at the same reference point, then you are on a definite collision course. However, there is no need to panic! Calmly inform the skipper that you are on a collision course and keep the skipper informed of how far away the other boat is.

If you are on starboard tack and on collision course with a port tack boat, you will want to remind the skipper that you have right-of-way and not to alter course and when the boats get close. Also, you may want to give the other boat a loud, but courteous, starboard hail.

If you are on port tack, you will want to remind the skipper that you don't have rights. Since it will be up to the skipper to decide to tack or bear away under the sterns, it's at that time that you should ask the skipper about strategy: "will we tack or will we duck?" You will need to know so that you can be prepared ahead of time. In either case, you may want to give a "hold your course" hail to let the other guy know you see them.

As a crew, you should never take for granted that your skipper sees the other boat. If you don't think they do, you are within your rights to ask, "There's a boat at 10 o'clock; five boatlengths. Do you see them?" That could mean the difference between continuing to sail or settling insurance claims on the beach.

Remember: you're the eyes for the boat, keep the skipper informed of range and bearing, know how to determine collision courses, and stay alert!

■ IMPROVE YOUR SAILING

by Randy Oates
(as published in The Mainsheet)

Introductory note: This is the first of a five-part series on how you can improve your performance in racing sailboats. This series is written primarily from the viewpoint of racing centerboard boats but I believe keelboat skippers could also gain new insights from this information.

Part 1 — It All Starts In Your Mind

In sailboat racing, as in any sport, the difference between success and failure is very narrow and usually is a series of very small things that you do better than your competition. The difference between doing the small things right and almost right starts out in your mind.

Doctors who have studied sports

psychology have discovered that the difference between the great athletes and ordinary athletes is rarely a physical difference. It is mental preparation, confidence, and attitude that makes the difference. This is even more so the case in sailing, which is a much more mentally demanding sport than physically demanding.

In sailing you are competing in atmospheric conditions that are never the same, on an irregularly shaped course that is rarely the same, on a surface that is constantly moving. If you add all this to the many variables of how to change your sail plan and your rig, you have a combination of conditions that offer an infinite number of solutions. To have the exactly right solution for every situation is impossible. That is one of the beauties of this sport. There are so many mistakes made on the race course by the competition that you never have to be exactly right 100% of the time. You do, however, have to learn to eliminate the big mistakes and concentrate on what's ahead and not what's behind.

That brings up the first very important point: you must learn to forget your mistakes. This is particularly true of anyone who decides to race sailboats on an inland lake. The chances are so good that you will be screwed by a wind shift sometime on the windward leg that you have to forget that problem and look ahead to the next opportunity to gain boats on the next wind shift.

Alexander Graham Bell once said, "When one door closes another one opens; but we often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us." This is particularly true in sailing. Whether you made a poor start, hit a mark, or went the wrong way on the weather leg, you must learn to forget your mistake and look ahead. Now, don't misunderstand. It is important to learn from your mistakes, but after you have committed an error you must put it out of your mind and look for your next opportunity. Feeling guilty or mentally punishing yourself for an error doesn't work. It only takes your concentration away from the business at hand, and that business is getting to the next mark as soon as possible. No one can be expected to sail a race error-free. Even Dennis Conner and John Bertram made many errors in sailing for the America's Cup after years of practice. The key thing is the skipper that wins is the one who concentrates on what is ahead and not what is behind.

The second key point to put in your mind is that you must be open to learn new things. Winning skippers are generally the ones that you find are the most open to learn new techniques and new rigging. They like to sail other types of boats and talk to other sailors. They also are the ones that know you learn more from a loss than you do from a win.

If you're open to learn, you will never get carried away with your own brilliance in a race. Instead, you will realize that you made fewer mistakes than the opposition. And when you get beat, you will learn even more because that is when your mistakes show up the most. The top skippers always get much more knowledge out of a race in which they finished second than in a race they won. So always be open to learn new things, particularly from your fellow competitors when they beat you. (Part 4 of this series, entitled "Accelerating the Learning Curve," will cover this topic in more depth.)

The next thing to remember in achieving a proper mental attitude is you must make a commitment. Making a firm mental promise to yourself to improve your sailing next season is the most important step you can take to winning more races. You must also realize that this commitment also takes a great deal of dedication. It doesn't come easily.

Making a commitment to improve your sailing also involves gaining experience on the boat and learning the difference in having three years of experience and having one year of experience three times. Some people continue to repeat the same mistakes race after race, year after year. That's because they are not consciously trying to learn from their mistakes. Others gain what seems to be years of experience in one season because they are constantly striving to learn and improve. The difference between these two types is just an attitude of commitment to improving their abilities in the boat.

The last point I want to make that is essential to proper mental preparation is you must learn to relax and have fun. Sure, racing sailboats is tense, exciting, and demanding. Sometimes it's even frightening. That's part of the lure of the sport. The better sailors develop within themselves the ability to relax and concentrate on the job at hand. They don't dwell on mistakes that are behind them and they don't fret over the tremendous job that is ahead of them. They concentrate on getting the most they can

out of the present moment, because that is all any of us have. The future is just a whole string of "nows." So good sailors relax and concentrate on the now.

Several things will help you relax when you're in your boat. One is to practice in all conditions and get familiar with your boat. Other things you can do include concentrating before the race on relaxing your mind at the sound of the starting gun. Seriously, you can practice through a mental image; hearing and visualizing the sound of the preparatory signal and then imagine your body and mind relaxing on that signal. Once that happens, you can concentrate on the business at hand. When

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September 5, 6, 7	Pacific Coast Championship	San Francisco
September 28, 29	Ontario Championship	Etobicoke Yacht Club
October 5, 6	O'Day Regatta	Chicago
October 4, 5, 6	Persephone Plate Regatta	Oyster Bay, NY
October 25, 26, 27	Fall Soling Bowl	Annapolis, MD

1992 SOLING SCHEDULE

January/February	U.S. Championship	Miami, FL
March	World Championship	Cadiz, Spain
April 27-May 9	U.S. Olympic Trials	Punta Gorda, FL
June 20, 21	McNulty Regatta	Milwaukee
October 3, 4	O'Day Regatta	Chicago
October	North Americans	Houston, TX

you make a mistake on the race course, take a deep breath, relax, and put the mistake behind you. Remember, you can't correct what has happened in the moment just past, you can only concentrate and enjoy the present moment.

The last thing you need to develop to

help improve your mental ability to relax is a sense of humor. A lot of things that happen on the race course are really pretty amusing. If you were watching the race from a spectator's viewpoint you would be surprised how often you see something funny out there. If you can develop the ability to

laugh at your own situations once in a while it will certainly help you relax and improve your overall mental attitude.

In summary, your efforts to improve your sailboat racing must start in your own mind. You must learn to forget your mistakes. Learn from them, yes, but don't dwell on them because that takes concentration away from the present moment and what is ahead. Both mentally and physically, you must learn to look ahead and not behind. Next, you must learn to be open to new things. The most successful sailors in the world never quit learning. The next step involves making a commitment and dedicating yourself to learning and improving. Finally, you must learn to relax and have fun. It's that last attribute that keeps you in the game when everything seems to go wrong at once. When you learn to laugh at those things that frustrate you, you gain mastery over your boat and the race. The end result is you then control yourself, rather than letting events control you.

THE LEADING EDGE

Rose Hoeksema, Editor

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312 787-9616

312 787-0970 (FAX)