

August 14, Races 1 & 2

By Kim Pandapas

I know I sound like a broken record talking about current all the time. But sailing in an underpowered boat, especially in a light but fairly steady breeze, current becomes a key consideration. In Saturday's racing, the tide was going out all day, so we had a current ripping from Boston to Cape Ann. And with a course of about 200, that presented an adverse current on the left (port tack on the nose) that got stronger the further left you went. So to me, the primary strategic consideration of the day was to avoid the left going up and use it going down.

In the first race, with the boat slightly favored, we started near the weather end and tacked within a minute to try to work right - even ducking a couple of boats to get there. The boats with us that came out of the right generally faired better than those that trended middle or left. Jibe setting at the top mark was a mistake, as we should have worked right (as you look down) to stay in the current. But we thought that that we were on a righty at the time, and it proved not to be a great idea. Still we managed to jibe, hold our lead on Steve and Heather and go on to win. We did bear-aways for the rest of the day.

In race two, the only difference was that the pin was favored. So we started near that end, though hedging our bet a bit as we wanted to go right. A combination of a good start and 1-2 boatlength line advantage helped us to cross all the guys on our right within a couple minutes of starting, and we just did a repeat of race one - working up the right. We were fortunate to just slip by Jack Day, who must have tacked immediately after the gun and banged the right hard.

The only other thought is that good boat speed makes anyone look like a genius. In this light condition, we were constantly shifting gears - sails in, sails out, playing with luff tension, moving our weight up and down, etc. As my buddy Jeremy use to say, the primary focus in these boats is not to sail them fast (because they don't), but to avoid sailing them slow.

August 7

By Kim Pandapas

There were two key factors in this one; current and weed. The forecast northerly never materialized, but thankfully, the sun was hot enough to crank up a gentle seabreeze. So with a southeasterly course (155 I think), we started just above Steve at the favored pin, with the intent of working out to the left. The hope was that the farther out we went, the more likely we'd get into the incoming flow from Cape Ann towards Boston, which in that wind direction, would be on the transom after tacking onto port. The wind oscillated right several degrees after the start, and then thankfully back left again. We tacked onto port on the lefty when we could cross all boats (the book says cross 'em when you can), and then back onto starboard again a couple minutes later to cover the boats continuing out left. We took that to the layline, tacked and then just motored into

the mark with the current behind us, burying all boats coming out of the right. We rounded 1st a few lengths in front of Steve and Hutchie, who had also gone left, and did a bear-away.

It's probably worth mentioning that when approaching on port, we hoist the chute without the pole in order to get it up quicker. I've observed a lot of folks round, put of the pole and then hoist, which delays the set by at least 20-30 seconds. It's also harder to get it flying when the boom is already out, as it can get hung up between the main and port spreader. On the run in that light condition, we were constantly playing with pole height, mostly lowering it in the light air, finally dropping the inboard end onto the lower bale. We also worked to heat it up through every series of sloppy waves, just to keep the boat moving. We extended a bit on run and continued to extend on the next beat, and went on to get the gun.

As to the weed, it was everywhere and impossible to avoid, requiring constant vigilance. Our approach is to check the rudder every couple of minutes, and if there is weed there, assume there is also weed on the keel, which you can check by simply hiking out and looking. We remove weed from the keel using a weed stick, which is nothing more than an old fishing rod with the eyes removed and a wrist strap lashed to the handle. The technique involves putting the tip on the bow and letting the water flow carry it aft and down along the leading edge of the keel. Two or three swipes and you're clean. It's not particularly fast but it beats the frustration of sailing around the course with weed on the keel.

July 31, Race 1

By Andy Savage

It was a beautiful day to be on the water, sunny, moderate seas and a consistent 12-15 knot breeze out of the SSW. The course was 205 with a boat favored start. On the first leg, the breeze was fairly steady and neither side paid big dividends. **Kim and Christina Pandapas** lead the majority of the fleet out to the right and had a good lead at the weather mark. The offset mark was dark green (very difficult to see) and a greater than usual distance from the weather mark and they failed to round it, opening the door for **Nick Cann** and **Andrew Savage/Paul Zymba** who rounded in second and third, respectively. We had a strong run and rounded the leeward mark just in front of Nick Cann only to give the lead back when they got inside of us at the next weather mark. Problems with Jouster's spinnaker set allowed us to get over the top of them and to separate with clean air. **Mike Lane**, who rounded third, gybe set, separated, and gave us a scare as he came screaming in from the right hand side of the course. To compound the anxiety of a boat looking for its first bullet, the race committee did not have the pin end of the finish line set until we were within about 4 boat lengths of the finish. We just managed to hold off Mike Lane, with the finish order of Savage/Zymba, Lane and Pandapas.

July 31, Race 2

By Kim Pandapas

To me, this day was a clinic in the dramatic effects of an outgoing tide. The wind was fairly steady, oscillating between about 200 and 210. But the right was hugely favored as there was simply less adverse current on the right than farther out on the left. Boats going left, after tacking onto port, had to take it full force on the nose.

For us, the first leg was not that eventful. Most everyone started near the favored boat and worked up the right side. We rounded 4th, jibe set (this time, there really was no offset!) and held that position going down. You would think that a bear-away might have paid, as the current was running stronger further out. But there was sufficient pressure to let you sail deep, and on port, you could point right at that mark. So straying too far from the rhumb line didn't have much upside.

We observed the most dramatic example of the current on the second beat. We were forced to head left to clear our air after rounding behind Karl, Nick and Mike. All three tacked to cover, forcing us further out to the left than we wanted to go. We managed to work up a bit on Mike, which may or may not have resulted in his tacking. Fortunately for us, Nick tacked on him, giving us our opening to get back to the right with clear air. Mike tacked backed out, crossing behind us, and then back onto port a few lanes up. I kind of lost sight of Karl, and don't know what happened to him. But Nick was to leeward (our right) and in front, we were in the middle, and Mike was a few lanes farther out to our left in deeper water. The result was dramatic. Nick fast forwarded on us, and we did the same to Mike, suggesting that we were on the edge of the big adverse current that got stronger the further out you went. In any event, we managed to sneak by Nick right at the mark by tacking onto starboard a few lengths below the layline. Nick continued on out to the layline, probably overstanding a small amount to account for the current, and that provided us the few boat lengths we needed to round just in front of him.

July 17, Race 1

By Steve Uhl

Bill & Renee Heffernan jumped out with some excellent boat speed, followed closely by **Kim & Christina Pandapas** and **Doug Trees/Shan McAdoo**. That group had a great tactical battle up the first beat and down the first run. They continued their close battle up the second beat, as the group went far to the left. A few boats went far right on the second beat, however, including **Steve Braese** and Steve Uhl. With a favorable shift and good pressure, they caught up to the leading group. Braese, Heffernan and Uhl battled down the final run with Heffernan taking the gun, followed by Uhl and Braese.

July 17, Race 2

By Kim Pandapas

For us, this race was all about the start. The course was 180, the line was square at about 185, and the 'current wind' at the start was blowing out of about 150. So we started at the pin, tacked onto port at the gun and crossed all boats. That gave us the flexibility to sail our own race, which in that first leg was essentially to lead everyone out to the right side (long tack) closer in, minimizing the effects of the outgoing current running from Boston to Cape Ann. A few boats, not content to follow the leader out to the right, went left and were rewarded handsomely, picking up more pressure and a port tack lift. Fortunately for us, we saw that happening with sufficient time to go cover it, and managed to round first. From that point on, for us it was cover, cover, cover, with the closest threat being Steve Uhl, who won the day for the second consecutive week with his pair of twos.

July 3rd

By Kim Pandapas

Not sure I have much to offer in the way of insights on this race. The breeze was a relatively steady 4-6 knots out of about 160 degrees, with small oscillations, but trending right - a classic dying sea breeze. And by this time, the tide was going back out, with varying effects across the course. There was an interesting current effect running across the course (looked like a slick spot with lots of weed in it). I never did figure out what was going on with that, but assume it was some kind of convergence between local flow out of Beverly/Salem and the bigger flow coming out of Boston. In any event, the effects were more pronounced in the light air, although the direction seemed to vary depending on where you were. I never did figure out what the current play should be, but conventional wisdom suggested it was to go right.

So given the current and assuming a dying seabreeze, right was the plan, although the pin was favored. So we started near the pin and tacked within 90 seconds, ahead of most boats to our right who had the same idea and who tacked beneath us. Unfortunately, prior to our tacking, we were crossed by a couple of other boats who started to our left and beat us to the punch, forcing us to hold on starboard until safely over their line before we could tack, thereby allowing them to get well right of us. Once on port, it was a drag race out to the right. The boats that went up the right generally fared better than those that went left.

Our major gain took place on that first port tack. The boats to leeward seemed to be favoring speed over point (what Jud Smith calls "rumble mode"), which in that condition was smart (foot to the header). With the wind trending right, our only chance was try to increase the separation between us by working up on them. So we trimmed for point mode and worked up on every small puff. That gained us the gauge we needed to get ahead of the two boats to our right that had crossed us, and who we then covered for the rest of the beat. Downwind, we jibed immediately onto port and stayed high and fast in the light air. Fortunately for us, the rest of the fleet did the same thing, allowing us to keep ourselves between most of the competition and the mark. Thanks to the RC for the S flag. Another 1.3 mile beat in that dying breeze would have been torturous.

June 19, Race 2

By Doug Trees

The first race had been a contest at finding wind pressure, keeping the boat moving and not getting trapped in the lulls. The wind direction for race one was reasonably constant, but that disappeared totally for race two. The committee set the line at 170 and started the sequence but the wind promptly went to 190 or 195 and they cancelled the start. 15 minutes or so later, with the wind back to 170, they did get us started. Shan and I got a reach along the line just before the start and started in the middle of the line. Under us nearer the pin were Pandapas, Savage and Wheeler and just above us was Nick Cann, we were all going left off the line while a group of boats including Warrick/Cormier went right immediately. There were clearly areas of no air and then lines of wind. We got into a patch of dead air but saw wind to the right so we tacked for the right and crossed the middle of the course where we spotted Warrick/Cormier near the right hand lay line with a massive lead (we could hardly read their sail numbers). They had sailed towards a big black bank of clouds moving down from the Boston direction and had wind, a lift and a giant lead. We decided to cross them and go further right of their track before we tacked back for the mark. Being on this far right side paid for us as it had for Warrick/Cormier because when we got to the mark they rounded first but we were just a few boat lengths behind. At this point the wind had swung to 190 or higher and the leg was not a run but a beam reach parade back to the bottom mark where the committee signaled a course change to 190. After rounding the bottom mark we were in a windward drag race with Warrick/Cormier where half way up the beat we ducked their stern and went to the outside toward where we guessed the starboard layline would be. Yes, it was a guess because the committee boat at the windward mark had not set the new mark to 190 yet as they still had Etchells rounding the old 170 mark. Warrick/Cormier headed for the old mark and got caught inside when the wind shifted again towards the Southwest and the committee finally set the new mark well to the right. We too were still enough below the mark that we got passed by Nick Cann just before the rounding. After rounding we started to set the chute and realized that the wind was so far West that this was now a beat to windward. When we looked over at the boats on the former windward leg they were now under chutes. We tacked for the wind lines for more pressure and kept on the lifted tack and crossed Nick about half way up the leg and went on to finish whereupon immediately the wind died for about 5 minutes causing Warrick/Cormier (second) and Nick Cann (third) work very hard to finish and the Fleet was spread out behind them as far you could see. Welcome to summer in Marblehead (on the way into the harbor the wind blew at a solid 15-20 knots from the West).

June 12, Race 1

By Ken Cormier

The wind had been moderating and clocking from the evening's Northeasterly and the whitecaps were disappearing as we approached start time.. We started near the boat above McAdoo/Trees and heard but did not see a recall, (Pandapas Team). There was plenty of lump left over especially on the starboard tack. Fortunately we had competitive

speed, despite this being our first start this season. I worked the tiller a bit and rapped off when bad wave sequences came our way, otherwise we would get thrown back for a loss. I felt it was too early and the wind direction too far east to simply go right. We just read the compass (sporadically) and looked at the relative fleet position on what is a short beat. The fleet mixed it up pretty evenly on the beat and stayed reasonably close, with three boats rounding the weather mark overlapped, **Andy Savage**, Steve Uhl and Us. With the wind now clocking we would jibe on to port tack immediately after rounding for the faster more direct jibe. The downwind legs were interesting with an occasional wave to ride. We managed to position ourselves inside for the leeward rounding with McAdoo and Savage. We protected the right as the mark was moved from 120 degrees to 150 degrees. We let McAdoo breathe when trying to shake the cover that a Nonesuch 30 kept on us for 3 tacks and we paid the price. But we were once again quick to jibe around the second weather mark and got our nose back out in front and stayed in clear air 60 yards to weather of McAdoo. The Pandapas team did their usual top 3 recovery from a recall.

June 12, Race 2

By Kim Pandapas

Race 2 conditions saw less pressure than race 1 as well as a bit of flood current flowing from Cape Ann to Boston. Both the first race and the forecast suggested right was the way to go, and everyone knew it, which caused quite a pile up at the boat despite the fact that the pin was favored by a lot. We started at the pin uncontested and at full speed, went off to the left for about 2-3 minutes and then tacked for the right, never getting the opportunity to cross anyone as everyone tacked below us. We were able to capitalize on that early advantage, playing the shifts up the beat and rounding first, and held on to win.

I thought there were three keys to the race. First was knowing that the line was pin biased, even though the signal boat was hanging in such a way as to suggest it was favored. My favorite approach to checking the line is a windshot at the boat, lining up the right side of my traveler with the line flag. At head to wind, if the left side of the traveler points below the pin, the pin is favored. If it points above it, the boat is favored. The second key was having a firm grasp on the numbers. Although the wind was trending right, it was also oscillating, so average course on each board kept getting a bit higher through the afternoon. Christina had an awesome day managing the compass. We always knew whether we up or down on any given tack, allowing us take full advantage of the oscillations. And third was sail trim. Those conditions are a challenge - lots of puffs, light spots, velocity headers, lumpy seas and so on - and I was in constant fear of stopping the boat, either on a wave or a tack or whatever. So we trimmed the sails continuously through the constantly changing conditions, favoring speed over point.