

August 13

By Doug Trees

While sailing to the starting area we had three distinct winds and noted to ourselves that this was likely to be a classic Marblehead brain fryer.

The race was postponed at 12:30 and while waiting for an hour and a half we had wind from 70 degrees, 255 degrees and 305 degrees then about 2:00 the race committee moved to the line about a half mile to the southwest and set a course at 160 degrees and started the J 105's. They had the Etchell's in start sequence when the wind went to 305 degrees so they cancelled both the Etchells start and the J 105 race and called them back. After resetting the course to 300 degrees and with a good hot breeze blowing from the Beverly/Salem harbor direction they got all classes off and sailing. Cann's, Heffernan's and ourselves headed left toward shore on starboard following the rule that the offshore winds are stronger near shore. The rest of the fleet went right as the wind did look good there and that was the last we saw of them. As we approached the windward mark the wind shifted way right and there was a two or three minute lull with the new wind arriving on the left and shifted left. Of the three leading boats we were first to tack left and get into this new wind and tack back for the mark and that got us around the mark first with Heffernan's and Cann's right behind. That was the turning point in the race as in the spinnaker reach to the leeward mark and the windward beat back to the shortened finish at Marblehead bell we were able to hold off Heffernan's to the finish, the Cann's had taken a bit of a tack to the right on the last beat that proved as problematic as the right side was on the first leg. It was 3:30 by the time we finished and thus this was the only race of this very hot day.

August 6 (Race 1)

by Stephen Uhl

Before recapping our race, special recognition goes out to **Paul Zymba**, who earned a very respectable 5th place in his first race helming. Congratulations!

Though advertised at 0.8 miles, the first beat seemed to be more like 0.5 miles. Also complicating things were weird rip tides, that made the water surface look like a fish feeding frenzy. In any case, we couldn't figure the tide out, but we did just ignore the tide and get in phase with the shifts which were pretty regular 5-10 degrees up the first beat. Despite a lackluster start, we inched out a small lead over **Doug Trees, Kim Adam** and **David Rubin** by the 1st mark, due entirely to tacking on every shift and also trying to keep our tacks smooth. On such a short beat, we didn't worry about the left vs. the right....the beat wasn't long enough for that to matter.

Also on this first beat, our traveler broke --- due entirely to a neglected pin ring-ding...Although we were able to tack and get it fixed while the problem was to leeward, it illustrated yet again the importance of making sure everything on the boat is up to snuff...

After rounding the first mark, we quickly jibed to port which was the favored jibe all the way down. In retrospect, we should have jibed more quickly, and it reinforced in my mind the importance of quickly getting on the correct jibe for the downwind. In Race Week we had a big disaster when I decided to do a jibe-set, but I decided at the last minute when my crew was up putting the pole up. Bad idea. So make your decision and then stick with it, just be prepared to jibe quickly after the chute is flying.

On the second beat we just covered and went back up the middle. Fortunately the beat was again short enough to make it difficult for anyone behind to develop any separation...the best was **David Rubin**, who did gain some ground back by going off to the right. . But the one-sided (port tack) reach back to the finish did not give him any opportunities to pass us downwind.

August 6, Race 2

By Charlie Pendleton & Paul Zymba

After the first race the wind began to lighten up a bit so we changed gears slightly, trying to power-up for the lighter wind with slop/waves. We loosened our jib halyard tension slightly and also eased the main's outhaul a tiny bit. In hindsight we probably should have moved the jib leads forward a touch as well – in some of the slop and waves we really could have used more drive from the jib.

After seeing a lot of traffic at the committee boat in the prior fleets' starts, we decided to approach the race committee boat on port tack and then tack onto starboard under the bunch/group that was likely to form at the committee boat. This worked well - with about 15 seconds left to go we had a nice hole below us and we bore off and trimmed for speed. We made a fairly aggressive start (we were very relieved to hear the race committee call "all clear" over the radio), and ended up being slightly poked out and ahead of the pack that started to windward of us at the boat. With the wind shifting right consistently, we were eager to tack over to the right and were able to pinch off the boat that was slightly behind and to windward - but we couldn't shake Woodstock and waited for them to tack (rather than tack/duck them). We dueled with **Woodstock** and **Adam's Rib** up-wind, getting ahead at one point only to lose them both after we stayed to the left for a little too long. When we came back to the right side of the course, we were knocked and watched Woodstock and Adam's rib cross us as they sailed lifted on the starboard lay line. With the wind swinging to the right constantly, we came into the windward mark planning on gibing immediately. By gibing before Steve and Adam's rib (both rounded ahead of us), we ended up inside and ahead on a "downwind" leg that was really a broad port reach. The quick gibe proved to be a critical move in the race.

We lead at the leeward mark and our upwind tactic was simple – protect the right side. Due to the continued oscillation of the breeze to the right, the race committee was signaling for a new windward mark/course. We headed over to the right for a few hundred yards and then tacked back to the left to cover the fleet. We tacked back to the

right again whenever the nearest competitor made a move to the right side. We continued this cycle for most of the windward leg and it paid off well.... until we got about 150 yards from the windward mark. For the first time all day there was a meaningful shift to the left. Many of the boats coming into the weather mark on port closed a lot of distance on the boats that had played the right side. We were able to hang onto our lead and rounded the mark for our first true downwind run of the day (nice job race committee for setting up a new second windward leg).

The wind was very light for the last downwind leg. We communicated back and forth constantly to try and keep the boat moving. If the spinnaker felt too light, we sailed a little higher to get some pressure in the chute. If the spinnaker felt good, we tried to ease down a little and sail more towards the finish line. We spent the majority of the time sailing a relatively high course and gibing to cover the fleet – a lot of zig zagging for a downwind leg, but necessary in the light/sloppy conditions.

Steve Braese mentioned a few weeks ago “Every skipper should be a crew for 1 Saturday each year to appreciate the bruises they get just to get the perfect spinny set or perfect tack.” I’d like to congratulate **Paul Zymba** for skippering his first race ever (Race 1)! Despite some very conservative tactics (We over-stood at both windward marks to keep the mark rounding simple), Paul finished 5th in the race. To Steve B’s point, my shins have a few cuts and bruises as does my ego after a few botched spinnaker gibes – nice work Paul!

July 23, Race 1

By Jim Taylor

Given the opportunity by our win in Race 1 (and 3rd in Race 2), I offer one over-arching thought about R-19ing:

A lot of us get caught up in sweating the small stuff and miss the big picture. A professionally prepped bottom and keel and brand new sails can help, (especially the sails) but I would not know. We have never paid anyone a nickel to work on our boat (backyard sweat equity only), and our current sails are all in their second year. A fancy bottom and keel are relatively small stuff, worth a few lengths around a typical race course. Getting right (north) on all legs of both races on Saturday was the big picture, and we think it was worth dozens of lengths.

We did get out on the course early (for once!) and we saw more breeze and a consistent header on the right in our pre-race tune up. The line was square to the 350 degree course axis, which was about the average of the oscillating shifts. The pin was very favored in a 20 degree oscillation to the left just before the gun, but we knew we wanted to go right, and we also knew we wanted no part of the mayhem that was developing down at the pin. We got an average but clear air start in the pin third of the line, we tacked immediately onto the lifted (relative to the base 350 wind direction) port tack, and footed for what we were pretty sure would be a return to that 350 (or higher) wind on the right. It did just that soon enough, and we simply played the shifts from there, never letting anyone get to the

right of us. We missed the last shift just short of the mark and rounded about 4th (I am always too busy to count!). We jibed immediately after the top mark to stay in the 'Baker's Is. Breeze' and fetched without jibing again, showing that this breeze was still in a clocked phase. I think we rounded 2nd behind **Bill and Renee** in 'Sweep'. We again dug well right, played the shifts, and gained enough to round the second top mark first. We managed to work our way through a mine-field of IOD's ("we will take you to Halfway Rock if you try to go over us!") to finish a few lengths ahead of 'Sweep' (2nd) and 'Mo Hotta.'

Ken and Sandy will no doubt have plenty of wisdom to share about 'Brass Rat's win in Race 2, but to us it was very much the same movie. The right was heavily favored, and the 'Baker's Is.' 350-ish breeze on the right was more in play than the 'Cat Is.' 330-ish breeze on the left (of the beats). So much so that although we were called over early and started deeply DFL in Race 2, we went hard right and climbed all the way back to about 6th at the top mark, just behind **Henry Peper**, who had a great race. We would have rounded even higher than that had we not lost sight of the mark (from DEEP in the right corner) and overstood by many lengths. We got a few boats on the run, and dug right yet again on the last beat, to get a close third behind 'Brass Rat' and 'Mo Hotta'. It was not blazing speed, it was go for the bigger, clocked 'Baker's Is. Breeze' to the right. The Big Picture.

Saturday's racing also required constant gear shifting, all day long, no matter where you were on the course. The breeze varied from about 6-7 kts in the light and lumpy lulls (traveler up to the seat, mainsheet eased, upper main leach open, jib sheet and halyard eased) to maybe 13-15 kts in the puffs, (traveler centered, mainsheet in hard, jib sheet and halyard both taken in). We find that the jib halyard tension is astonishingly critical, no doubt partly because our jib has some serious miles on it. We like significant puckers in the jib luff at the snaps when it is light, and we tension the jib halyard until the puckers are just barely gone in more breeze. This is only a total range of maybe 1/2" of 1:1 halyard, with most of the adjustment within 1/4". Pretty amazing.

July 23, Race 2

By Ken Cormier

Wind direction 345 to 000 degrees, Full Moon. Beaucoup Tide and the mark near Cat Island and Satan Rock. After 2 false starts and a postponement, the committee began a new sequence. There had been a serious tidal current pushing boats over the line during the first race and then causing 2 recalls. One could barely cross the line on starboard except for the tide which then made everyone over early. Since it was now approaching 3:00, it was unclear as to why this was still flowing so strong in towards Salem Harbor. The First race saw lead boats from both sides converge at the weather mark with the nod going to the right (Manchester) side. (We had gone left and got there fourth.) During the long delay, the committee changed the course from 0 degrees to 345 degrees. This would seem to favor the left, plus it was late in the day. While running down the line I told Sandy that I was uncomfortable with choosing a side, and only a side would work in a Northwester. The IOD's had favored the left side as we watched them sail 2 upwind legs

before we got off the line. The wind was up and down in velocity all day and during our waiting period, and the only thing that I could find to recommend a side was that when the wind came in, I felt it came in strongest from Manchester and not from the Neck. When the fleet was setting up, the preferred side was the pin again, and that clinched it for me, because clearing the line with very little angle on starboard was causing some real log-jams at the pin, and I wanted to keep the boat moving in what was occasionally a lumpy sea, as long as I wasn't forced up the middle by the usual suspects. (*You know who you are*).

So we started under two boats at the committee boat, and again boats were pushed over by the tide, spun onto port and watched our relative progress as well as our compass. No-one really came with us, but I liked our relative progress and comparative pressure. Thankfully, there was no big lefty on our side and we got our leverage and tacked onto starboard shy of layline. We lost 15 plus degrees momentarily, within 600 yards of the mark but kept seeing starboard lifts ahead in the IOD's, and our original heading returned along with enough pressure to continue to cross the fleet by a comfortable margin.

We defended downwind by sailing the good pressure side that got us the lead, but lower than the fleet, and more directly to the mark since we had plenty of pressure and did not feel that they were going to end run us.

We rounded the bottom mark onto the third and final leg of this WLW course, and split some of our lead to keep to weather and our nose out in front of **Team Pandapas** who were heading for the right layline. A boat or two shot the far left layline, but the headings remained similar to the first beat and they did not find any great leverage.

A beautiful day, even if it was from the Northwest.

July 16 (Race 1)

By Steve Braese

One the way out to the start my son Jon who has been racing Opti's at Pleon and feeling pretty good about himself was asking if he could take a race today. One of my dreams has been to crew for my own kid so I indulged. I told him the first race was his and the second was mine. He asked me to start the boat then give him the helm.

We started over by the pin and the plan was to go left as the wind looked a bit fresher on that side. While I didnt quite get the start Jon wanted for his race we found ourselves alone after about 5 minutes and going left as we planned. I turned the helm over to Jon at that time. Once a crew, I was able to get a good look at the sail trim, jib car adjustments, traveler adjustments and realized I've had things a bit over trimmed all these years. The old adage "when in doubt let it out" really applied. So I tweaked the sails by getting the boom as high and centerline as possible and over trimming my jib a bit for pointing ability. Boy did we find a new gear on the boat. She took off.

As we were coming to the windward mark I realized it was Bill and Renee and us with a sizable lead. Bill tacked on us and my son Jon said "now that wasn't nice dad, he's taking our air". Boy did that fire him up, he wanted Bill in a bad way. I was getting chuckles during this whole time. So we rounded in second and I said "shoot, I have to go on deck and do the crew stuff". Its not as easy as it looks and all crews should be commended for their hard work. Every skipper should be a crew for 1 Saturday each year to appreciate the bruises they get just to get the perfect spinny set or perfect tack.

As we went downwind I noticed more breeze on the starboard tack and decided to ride it a bit. Jon was getting frustrated with my spinny flying so he asked if he could fly the chute downwind and steer upwind. What am I to argue with the pro? I do what my 12 year old skippahhh says. When we got down to the leeward mark we had a 9 or 10 boat length lead. From there on we loosely covered the fleet, Jon sang Spongebob songs and my son won his first Sat. MRA race. I was a happy dad!

July 16 (Race 2)

By Kim Pandapas

Pin starts were a challenge Saturday with the strong current sweeping you both towards the pin as well as across the line. And the I-flag made it that much riskier. Yet with a heavily pin biased line and the knowledge from race 1 that the pressure was out to the left, it was the only reasonable decision. We got off cleanly with only Bill & Renee below us, but unlike Race 1, we managed to lift off of them and stay with the plan. We essentially worked our way up the left side, tacking back right only after the boats to our right did. We thought we'd carry a healthy lead into the top mark, only to discover the speedy Jon (and dad Steve) Braese screaming in from the right. Our strategy for the day had been to favor the right on a current play, but found that wasn't a great idea in the first leg of Race 1, as the pressure on the left trumped any current advantage on the right, but Jon made it work for him here. We managed to squeak around the top mark with an uncomfortably small lead over Jon and Bill.

We favored the right going down, jibing to port shy of the lay line and being handsomely rewarded by a 10 degree righty which eased us right down to the mark. Bill went with us out to the right while Jon went the other way, and seemed to jibe back just as the righty set in. In any event, we extended a bit on that leg and rounded the leeward mark with a nine or ten boat length lead.

We stayed on port out of the bottom mark, which was a mistake. And as you'd expect, Bill and Jon split tacks, forcing us to choose between covering one or the other. And despite my better judgment, we tried to cover both, first by heading right for a bit to stay with Jon, and then tacking to check back in with Bill. This uncomfortable routine evolved into a three boat tacking duel, which eroded our lead down to just a few boat lengths at the top mark (which couldn't come fast enough!). In retrospect, we probably should have tacked onto starboard out of the mark in order to keep both competitors to our right, as the left had provided some advantage in prior beats. Lesson learned!

Luckily however, we ran out of runway and managed to hold the lead despite our flawed approach.

At the mark, we bore off and headed right, and again Bill followed us while Jon went left. We managed to extend a bit on the run and finished with a comfortable lead, but this was one of those races that could have gone to any of the three of us.

July 9, Race 1

By Kim Pandapas

The northwesterly was forecast to back, which is exactly what it did, both prior to our delayed start and just after it. The pin was so favored that it wasn't clear boats would be able to lay it on starboard. So we just hung around the pin hoping for an opening to start on port. That opportunity afforded itself, and we got off moderately cleanly, though needed to take a clearing tack to get out from under the Daltons. We wish we had gone farther! Several boats, including Charlie Pendleton (racing Jumbly with Paul Zymba) took a good hitch out to the left and were handsomely rewarded by more pressure and healthy left shift. I ignored Christina's pleadings to get over there on the basis of the apparent righty farther up the course, which seemed to rope-a-dope several of us. As a result, we found ourselves trailing at the top mark in about 6th place.

We picked up a boat on the run despite rounding in a gaggle of J105s. After rounding, we noted that we were lifted on port so decided to head off to the right for a while rather than follow the leaders back out to the left. That paid, as the wind oscillated back right, allowing us to tack and cross all of the previous leaders except Charlie, who maintained about a 10 length lead. We followed Charlie off to the right downwind until the wind shifted back left again, at which point we jibed and headed straight for the mark. For some reason, Charlie let us go, and when we converged again at the mark, he was only a boat length in front. He had a tough rounding, which afforded us an opportunity to slip by, and then we managed to get in phase and build a healthy lead heading up to the finish.

We felt like we had to work for this one, and several factors contributed to our success. One was keeping our heads out of the boat and thinking about tactics constantly. Another was not losing our cool after starting out on the wrong side of that first big shift. And perhaps the most significant was our weed stick, which we used continuously. There was a ton of weed out there, and it didn't take much to kill your speed. We felt at times like we were motoring past people because they were dragging around weed that we were not. In any event, it was a fun race. Five bucks to anyone who can get Charlie Pendleton to buy a boat!!

June 25, Race 1

By Bill Heffernan

We were really lucky to have the pin become so favored as we set up to start. We got such a great start, it gave us the opportunity to see the race course. From this position it's easier to see what's paying off, right or left. From there we kept a close eye on both sides

and played a loose cover on both. We had a twisted sister when we rounded the top mark, so our lead was shortened. For the final upwind leg we played a tighter cover on the top fleet to the left. Things just went our way the second upwind leg and we extended our lead again. The final set was perfect, and it was a great start to our season. Probably the biggest improvement in our boat speed came from the re-installation of our mid-boom traveler. We struggled with boat speed the last three seasons trying to figure out the aft traveler. I re-installed it for the Labor day regatta and immediately felt like I had my steering wheel back. It's nice to feel fast again. Thanks for reading,

June 25, Race 2

By Kim Pandapas

After a second sub-par start in a row, we were forced to tack away within the first minute of the race (word to the wise – don't set up to close to weather of Hef!) We took a couple of sterns and tacked back onto port to follow the pack out to the left for a bit. Anyone paying attention during the first race noted that there was a small stationary left out near Halfway Rock, so we all seemed to be drag racing for that. Once we saw a small header, we tacked back for the favored right, which the first race had shown to have a bit more pressure and again, a stationary righty up near the top mark. If there was a current play, we couldn't figure it out. Anyway, we rounded right behind Greg Dolan (sailing with Doug Trees) and barely (and uncomfortably) clear ahead of a very quick Heffernan team. We wanted to jibe set (remember the righty), but since there was an offset, we did a bear away and then immediately jibed. That got us past Greg and Doug, who delayed their jibe. Despite the constant nipping at our heels on the part of the red boat, we managed to hold the lead into the leeward mark, which we rounded and headed back out to the right. The warmer air at the mark was a tip off that the land breeze was starting to dominate, so right really was the play. Despite that, we still felt obliged to cover the rest of the fleet, who had tacked for the left, which proved to be a mistake as it let Hef slip in front of us. He then had a similar lapse in concentration as he let us get back to the right of him, where we regained the lead. A long starboard lay line afforded us the opportunity to deprive Bill of some clear air, which gave us some much needed separation going into the mark. This was a fun race, and probably the best day of racing so far (wish Steve Braese had been there!!). I can only imagine how much fun it will be when we all get out there together.

June 11, Race 1

By Stephen Braese

After ghosting out with **Kim Pandapas** to the start area I was preparing for dead wind and weather and boy was it cold. My son **Jonathan** ditched me to play in a double header for his baseball team and with it being fathers day my wife came out of retirement and volunteered. It's been a long time since we raced together but she proved it was like riding a bike, she did a terrific job.

As the breeze filled in, the starting line was a bit favored to the pin end and there was a current pushing us upwind and potentially over the line.

So I played it safe and started at the pin.

Karl Renney and **Pete Kaznoski** were wrestling with Kim Pandapas on the line and eventually pushed Kim over. It was a short course, .80 miles to the windward mark then finish downwind. With the pin end in our favor, we tacked within 3-4 minutes and crossed the fleet on port then just covered the fleet to the first mark and went downwind to our first win of the year with **Hallawell/Beckett** in second and Renney/Kazoski in third.

June 11, Race 2

By Stephen Braese

The wind had picked up to the 11-13 kt range with slightly higher puffs and the current remained outgoing or up wind for the second race. The chop was getting larger and we didn't want the current to push us over. Our strategy was the same, win the pin and go left. The waves were starting to build and were tougher to sail on the starboard tack so we wanted to pay early and get to the left side to sail into the "easier waves" on port by Halfway Rock. Half way up the leg, we pulled ahead of the fleet with Kim Pandapas and pursued him with a tacking dual. We were having a ball and also tacking an awful lot. Kim was up for the challenge as he kept his lead by 3-4 boat lengths and rounded ahead of us at the windward mark. Going downwind I wanted to get separation from Kim so we could come a bit "hotter" into the leeward mark and try to sneak ahead of Kim. So right after the mark we bore off a bit for about 1/3 of the leg and got the separation we needed. It paid off because we surfed the waves at a better angle than Kim and at the leeward mark we had a two boat length lead on Kim. At this point, I wanted Kim to be breathing my dirty air the entire leg up to the windward mark. We stayed on him the entire way up and extended our lead to 5-6 boat lengths. Its not often we are ahead of Kim so we enjoyed the moment and went on to win the second race by about the same distance. Second was Kim Pandapas and third was **Nicholas Cann** on Jouster.

June 4, Race 1

By Christina Pandapas

The wind and tide gods made for tough game planning before Race One on Saturday. The outgoing tide said go right, the wind forecast said go left. Some days we feel like we should just bring a coin out.

Going up the breeze before the race, we looked at the lobster pots which confirmed that the outgoing tide would be pushing us right to left on starboard tack and be right on the nose on port tack. The wind shifts were five to ten degrees back and forth, and we debated as to whether there was more pressure on the right or left. In the end, with the breeze fairly light, and no persistent shift in evidence, we went with the tide call and decided to go right after the start.

We started close to the boat and tacked within two minutes to get over to the right. Port tack felt horrible with the current on the nose, so we were constantly tweaking trim to get every little bit of speed. The fleet split left and right, and we led the boats that had tacked with us off the start. We decided to gybe set because left would be favored with the current downwind. That gained us on **Steve Uhl**, the second boat to round, because they did a bear away. We made out going left, but made a slight mistake at the bottom, gybing too early for the leeward mark as we had misjudged just how much the current would push us. That forced us to gybe again. Luckily, we didn't lose much and managed to stay in front of Steve. The rest of the way, it was cover, cover, cover, and we held on to the lead to the finish.

June 4, Race 2

By Christina Pandapas

The wind shots we did between races showed that the wind had gone a bit right, and with the tide still going out, we decided that right was still the play, but when we shot the line, we saw the pin was favored. So, we set up for the pin, as did **Mike Lane**. Mike won the pin a couple of lanes below us, but we had a lot of runway and were going full speed at the gun. That gave us what we needed to get a nose out and tack with room to cross the boats to weather. Mike stayed on starboard for a minute or so after we tacked, and then he tacked. Mike was going fast, so we constantly compared our speed to keep an advantage. In the end, it was close racing up the leg with Mike, **Steve Braese** and Steve Uhl.

With the tide pushing us down on starboard, we decided to tack early and go for a close port layline. It was a risk as Mike was staying right and would have starboard advantage, but we were gambling on the current pushing him below the mark. We came in on port just inside two boat lengths of the mark and we crossed approximately a boat length in front of Mike who was on starboard and making the mark. We rounded neck and neck with Mike inside. We stuck to our gybe-set plan, but in order to execute, we had to slow down to let Mike by on starboard inside us. As soon as he crossed, we set on port. It was a key move. We stayed to the left of Mike downwind and did a late gybe for the leeward mark because of the current (we learned our lesson from the first race.) We rounded a little more than a boat length in front of Mike at the leeward mark with both Steves coming after the two of us.

Mike was below us at the rounding and had some good speed coming out of mark. He got his nose out below us, so we worked hard to stay up for a while, which gave us enough separation to come down for speed and get our nose out over him. Steve Uhl and Steve Braese tacked first, and Mike tacked and took our stern to cover them. We tacked to cover them all. We played the shifts while covering, and two or three tacks later, we found ourselves heading toward the port-tack layline, with Mike and Steve Uhl below us. They both tacked and gave us the opportunity to create a Mike Lane sandwich going into the mark, which gave us a lot of extra breathing room coming into the mark. It also helped Braese, who was coming in on starboard in clear air.

We rounded first, gybe set, and kept an eye on the guys behind us, at times going up with them to defend. They gybed first, we waited, gybed to the finish while Mike and Steve duked it out behind us.