

The SJRYC Windward Sheet, vol. 2016, issue #1

Welcome back on the water for the 2016 SJRYC Spring Series.

It was a gorgeous spring day for our first race of the year but the wind blew harder and longer than expected. Winds were 10 – 14 knots, out of the NNE, with 1 – 2 footers on the lake. Even though the RC boat had been fully serviced by the marina, it refused to start. So we had fourteen boats out in the lake, most with just mains up, zipping around at high speed, listening intently to the radio. Ken Z tried everything, even asking for someone to bring an extra battery for a jump start, but nothing worked. Of course, if it won't start in the hoist, you have to worry if it will start back out in the lake to get the boat back in after the race.

On *Carrera*, we wondered if there would be a race. What to do when the RC boat won't start? But Ken Z and Patrick Nelson had an idea, a Jackrabbit Start. To make this happen, Patrick got on the radio and explained how it works, with a start projected for 7:10 PM, quite close to our regular starting time. We decided on a single start for both sections with a triangle course and a finish through the pierheads. Patrick then noted two rules for the start 1) Don't pass the Jackrabbit boat before the start time, and 2) Don't hit the Jackrabbit boat! Patrick graciously agreed to volunteer to be the Jackrabbit.

The start would be off the southern tip of the South Pier, with an imaginary line extending at 90 degrees off the pierhead. One good thing about this plan was we had a very long starting line—for a change. It worked out quite well with only the most brave skippers going in near the pier and most other boats spreading out watching the clock and *Captain Blood*.

Patrick had another trick up his sleeve that was really a smart idea. He decided to set himself inside the channel, just North of the South pier, for his run to the starting line. This gave him a clear shot at starting the fleet right at 7:10 and having a much needed bit of separation between his boat and the rest of the fleet.

It all worked and a few boats were tightly packed near the pier with most spread out further South, with their own clear air lanes to start in.

Two new boats were out with us on this blustery day. The new Far 395, *Imagine*, had an excellent start. Gint Kiraitis and his crew from the Schock 41 (SJRYC 2013 BotY), got another excellent start as they are used to, and began to power away. Close behind was *Wellenreiter*, Far 395 sistership and frequent SJRYC BotY. Bill Born's *Distraction* and *Captain Blood* were also in the mix and stayed close to these fast moving freight trains.

Over in JaM, *Carrera* and Gordon Dill's *Silver Arrow* were in different lanes, but both moving at about the same speed. Our new "100 rater" in JaM, Jim Grant onboard his beautifully restored Islander 37 *Infinity*, was in the middle of the line but making good speed. As we neared the layline for the first leg, the big boys in Spinn tacked first, as

most tried to make the first mark on the beat leg with just one tack. Many of us followed them and at the mark, we got a chance to see who had done well. No surprise for us on *Carrera* that Gordon Dill had held his own, but rather that *Infinity* had found a very fast path to the first mark. Although we were too busy to time them as they rounded, our guess is they actually won the beat leg. Not bad for a new boat, in their first race of the year.

Rounding the mark we all headed into the setting sun looking for the next mark. The two big Farr 395s, with Bill Born's Farr designed Mumm 36 right in the mix, had to decide if it made sense to fly a chute or not. *Imagine* did, and had some trouble with it placing them well South of the mark. *Welly* set off in hot pursuit and also steered their Farr way too far South (sorry folks, couldn't resist that one). Bill Born thought better of that and went straight for the mark. Everyone behind these leaders had to decide if they wanted to go South or North of the projected spot for the mark.

When we got there, it was exactly where it was supposed to be. Special thanks go to Bill Born and his crew on *Distraction* for building the marks and getting them in this season in what was not the best of conditions.

The second leg found *Welly* and *Imagine* actually turning around and heading back out to the mark, after going too far South. We on *Carrera* have been there and done that as well, and in our fleet it is very hard to win a race when you've missed a mark by that much. As the fleet reached to the second mark, there was one boat on the move, Dr Stuart's J-105 *Attitude*. The J-105s love to reach in a breeze, and Dr Stuart did a masterful job of making that boat fly.

After the second mark, we all headed for the pierheads to finish. This might seem like a parade, but there are important tactics to be played when keeping your air clean. We on *Carrera* were inching by *Captain Blood* as we rounded the mark close to them but a bit out to windward. Patrick saw this, picked a spot he liked, and quickly ducked our stern to place himself in clean air. The same thing went on all through the pack, as boats fought for lanes where they could sail unimpeded.

In the end, the tough sailors on *Cynthia* were the fastest boat in the lake, with Dr Stuart's J-105 just behind them in second place. Third was *Distraction*, first among the Farr boats. The battle for fourth in Spinn had five of the nine boats racing correct within about a minute of each other, topped by *Captain Blood*, then *Elixir*, *Silk*, *Imagine*, and *Zot*. Back in JaM, *Carrera* saved their time over *Silver Arrow*, with *Water Blue* finishing ahead of *Infinity*.

Some lessons we took away from this opening race: 1) Have a dedicated crew member act as radio operator during the starting procedure. This should not be the person driving the boat, this needs to be someone able to be down below in rough weather (my crew yells at me if I try to listen to the radio when I should be driving). The SJRYC sail program makes extensive use of radio communications, so find a crew member to specialize in this function. 2) Have that person write down the course and special instructions, not try to remember them. 3) This is especially important in heavy air,

where the wind is noisy and there are lots of boats sailing fast nearby. Everyone sailing the boat needs to have all eyes on the other boats.

It was a wild and woolly opening race, but a good way to start the season realizing that expecting the unexpected is a part of every outing. We began to see who looks fast as we all try to remember everything we forgot from last year. A special welcome to our two new boats that raced with us, *Imagine* and *Infinity*, both of which showed lots of promise in their maiden outings.

We'll see you all next Wednesday night on the water.

Ken Zimmerman & Jim Schragger

The Windward Sheet follows the SJRYC racing program and is published at irregular intervals throughout the season