

Wednesday Night Spring Series Race. There is a great scene in the movie *American Sailors* about the 100th running of the Mac race, where Brian Torresen comments, "You can never be far enough ahead in a Mac race. You can sail into a hole and sit there while everyone catches you and slides on by." We all know this happens, although in our early evening races in St Joe, we often have delightful conditions when the wind holds steady or declines slowly. Last Wednesday wasn't one of those nights.

We had medium to light air that pushed most boats nicely until the final leg, where the opposite of what Brian described in the film happened to a number of our boats. Rather than having the leaders sail into a hole, Wednesday when the wind cut-off, the wind gods simply frowned on anyone left on the course. Of course, this is why we have throw-outs, and the situation can also be reversed as we saw in last year's Rhumbline, where the leaders, Blood and Welly, fell into a hole and all the Spinn boats behind them simply sailed by. It works both ways, but is never much fun when it happens to you. It does come with the territory, and reminds us that sailing is a sport where we pit ourselves against the elements.

Wednesday was a hot and humid day. The wind was projected to be almost nothing at start time yet was surprisingly strong as we headed out to the lake. We saw apparent winds when beating as high as 15 knots on Carrera. JaM went first, and both sections sailed the same triangle course without extra legs for Spinn to try to beat the projected wind changes.

The Jammers blasted off and as expected by the ratings, the 100 raters, which now make up over half the JaM section (including Fuzzy Logic, Silver Arrow, Chateau, Infinity, Little Beauty and Carrera) began to slide away from the smaller boats as they headed out to sea on the first tack. The Spinn section had a different idea, and, led by our ferocious and famous wind-finder Andy Grootendorst on Cynthia, headed in shore where they felt the breeze was better. Back in JaM, Gordon Dill had the same idea and tacked inshore as well, with Carrera covering them. Fuzzy had by then committed to finding a sea breeze but finally tacked back to shore to catch the other Jammers.

The first mark rounding saw the top-rated two boats in Spinn sneak by most of the fleet except for a few Jammers, with Gordon Dill's move inshore on the first leg paying off nicely. Both Farr 395's were in close company with Welly holding a small advantage. These two big, fast boats with their lightweight assy spinnakers hoisted, took the entire 2nd leg to catch most of the Jammers, and what Welly couldn't get done on the second leg was accomplished on the third leg to be first boat to finish. Imagine was close behind.

Gordon Dill somehow sailed the second half of the last leg so fast you'd have thought he had a secret underwater tow line. But actually, his idea was quite simple. He chose to stay very high on the last leg so he could avoid pinching as he got close in case the wind clocked--which it did. As a result, he was flying at the end of the last leg when most boats were crawling.

When the dust cleared, Welly held on to win in Spinn by about two minutes over Captain Blood, with Blood continuing their string of strong finishes. Imagine was about a half-minute back in third, with Zot and Silk in 4th and 5th. Over in JaM Carrera barely held on to save their time on the "mystery ship" (Silver Arrow) by just 23 seconds, with Fuzzy Logic in third and Kelley Kerns doing a great job to finish in the light airs with a4th.

Standings for the season show Blood a single point ahead of Distraction, who took a throw out this week, and just 2 points back is team Wellenreiter in third, with Cynthia in 4th. Anyone of these top four boats can win the Spring Series. In JaM, Carrera is ahead of Silver Arrow with Dan Emery on Fuzzy with his newly enlarged crew tied for third with newcomer Jim Grant on Infinity. Chateau is just one point back in fifth with Waterblue one more point back in sixth.

The Spring Series will soon be history, with just two races left. Racing could not be much closer, with a one point margin in Spinn between first and second, and a two point margin in JaM. The JaM leader has burned one throw out while the second place Jammer has not; in Spinn the throw-out status is reversed, with leader Blood not having used a throw out yet while the next three boats have. As we have seen in past Series, anything can, and often does when the margins are this tight with just a few races left.

Rhumblin Regatta, Saturday June 18. It was a hot, humid day with projections of zero wind all morning, and nice, cool Northerly settling in over a calm lake at about 2PM. The air filled in earlier than predicted and although Principal Race Officer Ken Zimmerman called a short delay, in no time we were off and racing in absolutely lovely light air, flat water conditions. Ken and Patrick Nelson developed three different, and for some sections, complex courses as is common for this event, which is part speed test, part navigational puzzle, and often, part endurance contest.

Two Spinn sections started together, while a good-sized JaM fleet was second over the line. Ken Z gave us a short leg to get everyone started before swinging around our regular buoys in various directions prior to finishing off the end of the Northern Pier. The wind was about 4 - 6 knots out of the NNE, with some patches of calmer air randomly scattered around here and there.

We were delighted to welcome back Tom Jacobs and his good ship Dandelion, which had been undergoing a refit in the early weeks of the season. His first start of the year found him bounced off the line and he ended up starting about four minutes late, just ahead of the Jammers. When asked about his start he replied, in the way only Tom can get away with, "Yes, that's the way we do starts." Once he got himself started, he took off after Cynthia in a big hurry.

Carrera was early when approaching the starting line, so we attempted to fall down to kill some time but a savvy move by Infinity blanketed us for a good part of the first leg. We gently worked our way to windward of Infinity, while going slower and slower to do it. Toward the end of the short first leg most of the other JaM boats needed to tack to make the first mark, but we tip-toed around the first mark without a tack. This

seemed like one of the few times when pinching may have been the fast way around the race course.

Jeff Mitchell on Little Beauty was moving well and Gordon Dill led most of this first leg. On the second leg Gordon Dill caught Carrera from behind and steamed by, with Carrera returning the favor further down the leg. It was that kind of afternoon, with variable winds requiring vigilance on trim and tactics. Oh, and by the way, did I mention that Gordon on Silver Arrow decided to sail this race double handed, just to make it fair for the rest of us?

The back story on this event is that the decision was made last year not to have a Rhumbline this year, due to the Queen's Cup in two weeks and the tremendous amount of work that requires. But VC Fleet Louie Tremblay felt we could still have a race, although we wouldn't be able to have the giant party just two week prior to the giant party for the QC.

We knew it would be smaller than last year, but believed it was worth a try, as this is our only race of the year offering "take-home" trophies and enabling us to spar against boats from other harbors. Although many of our skippers and crew members have other activities on the week-ends, we found good support for the race from our own racers. Last year, 21 boats started and 13 finished. This year, 17 boats came and 17 boats finished. We can all now see that Louie was right, and that the event was clearly worth hosting.

Anyone who says the same boats keep winning all the time clearly hasn't read the results over the past few years. In fact, winning the Rhumbline has been an elusive target for most of us. Over the previous three years (2013, 2014, 2015), only one section had a consistent winner, and that was Quicksilver, skippered by Gint. Of course, that boat is now gone. Andy G won twice on Cynthia, but in all the other sections, in each of those years, no winner repeated. This is partly because of all the skills needed to win this race, including boat speed, tactics, navigation, and of course, endurance. It is also partly because of the different boats that find their way into the event in different years and shake things up.

Patrick Nelson presented the awards, with some of the usual suspects doing well and, as is usual for the Rhumbline, some surprises. JaM had those two friendly rivals, Carrera and the Silver Arrow first and second by the closest margin of the afternoon, of just over 90 seconds. Little Beauty was third and a first-time winner at the Rhumbline. Keep an eye on them as they continue to learn more about their new sails. Spinn 2 was won by Cynthia--no surprise there--but second place, back by just 2:16 was Tom Jacobs on Dandelion in light and shifty air which is often not their sweet spot. Third place in Spinn 2 was captured by Peter Cooper on Tenacity, an Olson 34 that spent the entire night on the lake, much of it towing another sailboat that forgot to fill their fuel tank before departing. You have to give this crew lots of credit for carrying on after their long evening passage, as they pulled into the Club dock just as we were getting ready to head out to the course. Spin 1 was a win for a new boat but with a familiar skipper, Gint Karaitis' new Farr 395 Imagine making this a rare fourth win in a

row in the Rhumblines for Gint and his crew. Patrick Nelson continued his winning ways this season with a second place, with Jud Brown on Silk a close third.

It was a lovely day ending with an afternoon on the back lawn of the Club after the race. With so many Rhumblines sailed in either lots of wind or no wind, this was a delightful spot in the middle that reminds us all why we love this sport.

Special

Note for Jammers: Anyone wanting to opt-into the Commodore's Cup needs to do so by midnight on the day of the last Spring Series race which is coming at us very quickly on

Wednesday 29 June by sending an email to me at: jimschrager@gmail.com. Jammers have the option this season of racing for the BotY or the CC and by opting in, they compete for the CC., which is a "take-home" special trophy.

We'll see you Wednesday night on the water,
Ken Z. and Jim S.

The Windward Sheet follows the SJRYC Racing Fleet and is published at irregular intervals throughout the sailing season.