

OTB Race report Sunday August 28 2022.

By Valerie from the start boat !

Our first race day of the season started on the Sunday combined with our Audits. Special thanks goes to Warren for giving up his time to conduct audits of OTB boats even though he wasn't sailing – something about getting ready for a 2 week cruise of the Whitsundays on his Macgregor trailer sailer 😊



Well, what a way to start our first race day of the OTB season on Sunday 28th August in glorious sunshine and a touch of sunburn. Winds were fickle to start with however race 2 and 3 were a great way to shake out a few cobwebs and rusty boat handling.

Sunday was filled with excitement and a bit of drama- especially for the first race. It wasn't only the sailors who were shaking out cobwebs! A great reminder of why we sail/race together as a group of friends and not for sheep stations 😊

I, Valerie, run the start/finish boat for OTB. I also double up as the support boat – basically if anyone needs a tow or assistance. The following is a bit of a summary of the first race from where I sit – on the start boat 😊

The start boat anchors across the wind at the bottom mark to form the start/ finish line (yes we sail through the finish line on each leg and we only have 3 marks). The course is to port, sailing a triangle- sausage (windward return) -triangle course. To finish we sail from the wing mark straight to the bottom- finishing between the bottom mark and the start boat on your port (no need to round the bottom mark) – generally, this is a downwind finish. This is our usual racing, does not change and by not rounding the bottom mark to finish it is obvious you are intending to finish and not sail another leg.

On Sunday, the wind was all over the place, which was nothing unusual. However this race day the wind was not settling more so than usual and there was a prediction for the westerly to do a 180 and turn easterly. I was tempted to set a more easterly course in anticipation but decided not to as that would have just been way too confusing.

By the time the course was being set, the breeze was already turning and was a lot more north. This made for a very short upwind leg (across the bay) and at last, I had room to stretch the wing mark out. By the time I had set anchor though, (I was 15 minutes late trying to determine what the wind was doing) the top mark was pretty right. Then all of a sudden, NO wind at race start but there was promise as out in the lake proper I could see wind coming.

Hmm, did I say see wind coming !! from the lake? That meant a significant wind change was approaching.. but at least there was some breeze. As we have done in the past, I did

not postpone to reset the course – same course for everyone theory. In hindsight I really should have reset the course as drama unfolded after the first triangle !!

Now consider the following; our start boat (ALWAYS in our racing) anchors at the 'Bottom' end of the course and marks don't change their status during a race- the top mark stays the top mark and the wing mark stays the wing mark etc- NO MATTER what the wind does. Further, there is something to be said about old salted sailors and their muscle memory.

In this case, one particular Maricat was filled with 'Adrenaline' and let their muscle memory take over when they rounded the bottom mark, after the first triangle, and decided to head to the wing mark instead of back to the top to start their sausage leg. Oh dear, the wind had changed >90 degrees so effectively the bottom mark was now sitting upwind. Of course, a sailor goes around a windward mark and heads downwind, don't they? So due to muscle memory and "Adrenaline" this Maricat heads 'downwind' to what was set as the wing mark instead of going to the set top mark AND everyone followed – except Brian and John.

- *Later John (on the Laser) explained that he was very nervous going alone to the 'set top mark' as he looked over and everyone was heading 'downwind' to the wing mark (Brian had already rounded the top and was heading back). This time John's reasoning and decision to back himself paid off! It was a weird vision to see this lonely laser heading to the correct mark whilst the rest of the fleet headed away to another.*

Eventually everyone worked out their misstep and headed to the correct mark however, this was short lived. Damm that muscle memory ! Only a few- Brian and Andrew- sailed correctly through the finish line the first time! To finish you need to sail straight from the wing to the finish – finishing with the start boat on port and not rounding the bottom mark. Everyone else had to re-sail back through the finish in the correct direction.

Needless to say, for the second race I upped anchor and reset the start boat off the old wing mark. This turned the bottom mark into the now top mark which by now was well and truly upwind. Time was against us so I didn't move any marks- just the start boat. Made for a shy reach to the now wing mark but the race made a lot more sense and sailors could again rely on muscle memory.



*Race two and three were exciting and close. There are lots of photos and a couple of *videos on the NHTYA OTB Facebook page;*

- *Drama on the start line with Doug getting Chris on starboard.*



*-A mightily close encounter at the bottom mark between Andrew, Chris and Dave. I could hear the language ! LOL.. *video on the website*



- A sterling battle between Tom (modified Sundancer), Brian (Weta) and Andrew (Maricat) for the entire second race culminating in a very close finish only 3 seconds separating the three boats. Tom pipped Brian by 2 seconds and Brian pipped Andrew by only 1 second!



- *John and Christopher held the battle of the monohulls with the lead continuously changing. * video on the web site.*

***A little bird called Jamie told me there might soon be three of you!*

Thanks for everyone sailing, having fun and being patient with the start boat.

