

Some observations below have been compiled from the training sessions that we have had at Pittwater.

- I cannot stress enough the importance of starting. It sets the foundation for your performance. Good starts make good races a lot easier.
- You do not need to win races to be a world champion. Consistent 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> heat placing will often suffice and making decisions that get you into 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> are infinitely easier and less risky than thinking you need to win heats. If you can be consistent in your results you can afford to take more/ less risk as the event unfolds and the need arises.
- Understanding the above makes you realise you need consistent starts BUT you do not need to win the starts. The objective is to hold a lane and tack on your terms, crossing everyone to the windward side of you prior to anyone crossing you from the left. If you can do this consistently you will be a player at the international level. I usually measure a good start in Hobbies by the lane you manage to obtain on PORT tack.
- You cannot tack your way out of trouble on a H16 like you can in other classes so starting is even more important.
- The further you start towards the pin, the more boats you need to cross prior to reaching the layline and the layline will be reached sooner. Hence there has to be a really good reason for being at the pin, especially on a short course like Sat. Furthermore if you make a mess of a pin start there are way more sterns to duck by tacking out than mucking up a boat end start and tacking out. On the weekend I did not see anyone succeed by mucking up the pin. On the other hand Jeremy and Bridget had a poor boat end start, tacked clear and lead at the top mark. I am not saying start towards the boat, I am saying the further you start down the line the more you must get it right and cross before the layline.
- Starting at the pin often means you are going left. Starting at the boat does not always mean you are going right up the beat. A really good plan is to start at the boat on an even line and hold the fleet left towards the layline. Remember no one wants to tack and duck so they usually wait for boats on the windward side to tack first. If a windward boat can hold the fleet to the layline they are winning the race without having to make a decision or take a risk. Taylor did a good job of this on the weekend.
- If a start is biased to the pin the line is often hard to cross on starboard tack and you need to get quite close to the line at 15 seconds to go. If you are 1 boat length behind the line it can sometimes require you to sail 3 boatlengths to reach the line meaning you must pull the trigger and go earlier than you think.
- If a start line is biased to the boat end you will converge with the line quickly if you sheet on. Try and do nothing that makes the boats around you approach the line too quickly as once you arrive at the line early your only option is to reach and this is fraught with danger.
- The boats around you are your friends not your enemies. Work together to ensure you all have a chance. Start assertively not aggressively if you want to be consistent. Back your speed training and remember you have the whole race to burn these guys off.
- Try and deal with the boat BELOW you prior to the boat above you when coming off the line. If you pinch early to squeeze someone off then you are sailing slower than others somewhere else on the line. If you can blast over the boat below quickly your lane becomes a lot wider, you launch into the lead pack in the race and you can then commence climbing into the boats above. This is plan A. Plan B is high mode off the line, usually required when a boat below has its bow out in front, you are knocking or wanting to tack early.
- Avoid approaching the line from above the layline to the start boat (barging). It is a dangerous practice. Do not travel far from the line ever in case there is a late wind shift or velocity change. Sail along the boat layline on port and tack ahead of the approaching pack well under the line, allow front row to form around you and move into the line with front row. Blasting ahead of front row only makes everyone else rush

in and more often than not you end up starting in high density as front row finally reaches you.

- Recognise the importance and practice building speed close hauled rather than reaching. Occasionally reaching down the line works but the opportunity to do so is too infrequent to be a regatta winning plan. Starting in amongst boats requires you to be able to sheet on and go close hauled. Remember H16's lose a lot of speed turning so any speed gained from reaching is lost in turning up plus reaching closes the gap below you very quickly. I am not a fan of line reaching unless you are in a huge hole in the line.
- Make sure the crew clearly calls the time to start. Do not have skippers looking at watches. This will cause a stall or you will miss an opportunity. I recommend every 20 seconds from 4 mins to 2 mins, every 10 seconds from 2 mins to 1 min, every 5 seconds 1 min till 30 seconds and every second for the final 30.
- Remember there is little point in practicing anything else in sailing until you have mastered the ability to come off the line, go left in a clear lane and tack on your terms.
- Position of first tack in a Hobie race has a big influence in race outcome.

Good luck with your winter sailing,

Traks