

# Spindrift

Houston Sailing Association's Race Report



At left, Callie Miller, a MU sailing club member, jumped aboard with Kevin DeArmon on Labor Day as crew. Good team.

## Labor Day Weekend Race Results

### Hobies

- |                    |                 |                     |
|--------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Charlie Buchert | 1 1 1 1         | 4                   |
| 2. Ryan Servizzi   | DNS DNS 2 2     | 12                  |
| 3. Don Fecher      | DNS DNS DNS DNS | 16 (broken halyard) |

### Y-Flyers

- |  |             |    |
|--|-------------|----|
| 1. Mike Stratton/Kofi                            | 1 2 1 1     | 5  |
| 2. Roger Henthorn/Bobbie Bode                    | 3 1 2 2     | 8  |
| 3. Kevin DeArmon/Charlie DeArmon/Callie Miller   | 2 3 3 3     | 11 |
| 4. Scott Eversole/Makenna Eversole/Paul Eversole | 4 4 4 DNF   | 20 |
| 5. Brett Hart/Nathan Hart                        | 5 5 DNS DNS | 22 |

### Handicap

- |                     |               |    |
|---------------------|---------------|----|
| 1. Laura Beebe      | 1 1 1 1       | 4  |
| 2. Ken Wright       | DNS 2 2 2     | 10 |
| 3. Diane Pierok/Ken | DNS 2 DNS DNS | 14 |

## Labor Day Series Survives Heat; Sweat Equity Earned

Perhaps the summer's heat days will soon come to an end on Thursday this week as the temperature dips below 80 for a high. The end of the heat wave, when it comes, will not have been soon enough to have rescued the Labor Day Series from its torrid grip. Still, sixteen hail and hardy ventured out to the lake and thumbed their sunburned noses at the heat and humidity, perhaps thinking that the best way to combat heat is to build tolerance.

Our lake admits its inclination to wind shifts, but it doesn't take credit or blame for the lack of consistent pressure. That comes from bad luck alone for we have seen so many days this summer where the wind blew strong and steady all day. It was our misfortune that those days were not Sundays.

If anything, the racing that took place is testimony to the unflinching support our racing sailors give to the racing schedule and to the sport itself. Even if one of us occasionally says in moments of quiet desperation, "I hate this lake."





## Beebe Talks Light Air

**Timing on the starts, getting head out of boat to find pressure are key, says Sunfish champion.**

Labor Day Weekend Series racing was difficult to say the least...whether it be because of the lack of wind, the changing wind direction, or the sweat that was constantly dripping into my eyes. My only strategy for the weekend was to have good starts and to be looking for wind on the water.

I did decent on the starts but was a bit behind on one because I didn't time the wind right - just ran out of wind.

**"I didn't see him do it, but he swears he did." Laura Beebe**

On light air days, my only hope is that I pick the right side of the course for where the shifts are going to come from and hope that I have my sail trimmed properly to take advantage.

In the first race Monday, I was not guessing correctly and Ken Wright was able to read the shifts better. He led the entire two laps but I was able to keep close and take advantage of him hitting the last mark before the finish. I didn't see him do it, but he swears he did. On weekends like this, a little luck is always a good thing.

**Lifejacket Rule? There's a rule about lifejackets? Yes. RSS 40**

When the Y flag is displayed with one sound before or with the warning signal, competitors shall wear personal floatation devices, except briefly while changing or adjusting clothing or personal equipment. When flag Y is displayed ashore, this rule applies at all times while afloat. Wet suits or dry suits are not personal floatation devices.

**What is the penalty for violation of RSS 40?**

Rule 60 says that anyone can protest someone who violates rule 40 - another boat, the race committee, the technical committee, the protest committee. (That's a lot of committees.) The penalty? DSQ. No exoneration if you put it back on. You can't unbreak a rule.



**"I did it. I hit the mark. I led until a mark got in his way on Monday."**



## Y-Flyer Competition Heating Up as Fall Approaches

Good start, good finish. In between? Neither.  
The Course: Figure eight; buoys 2,3,4, and 1 with 3 1/4 laps.

Strategy. This means get out to the course early and sail at least the windward leg to see what the wind is doing. I was monkeying around and failed to do this. It would soon cost me. If I had been out early and paying attention, I would have noticed that it was a persistent shift to the left. Strategic rule: Get to the favored side of the course even if you have to take a knock to get there. (Knock: sailing away from the mark on the headed tack.) Translation: get to the left side, Mike.

Let's get down to brass tacks. It was not the tacking at all. Rule #1, get a good start. I had hung around the pin end during the Hobie start and at their gun, I noticed that the flag was favoring a port start, big time. (What I didn't notice is that the shifts were **ALL** to the left.) At the gun I was there while the other Y's were near the committee boat. I was in the lead at the first mark. Even though I was headed to the right side of the course on that first windward leg (as opposed to left), I was on top of the rest of the fleet and covering them (staying to their windward side).

That lead lasted till mark 3 on the figure eight course where I made the first mistake. Instead of thinking ahead about where the next mark, 4, would be and about where the shifts were that got me such a good start, I rounded mark 3, tacked, and went right on port tack. Wrong! Both of the next two boats stayed on starboard (therefore getting to the left side of the course) after rounding and then tacked inside of me. I'm going right in different air. They are also going right but both much higher in lifting wind. (Lifting wind is one that lifts you toward the mark.) In one bad move, I had not only dropped two boats but was way behind. (Video of this on Facebook)

Tactics: I stayed a distant third for the next two laps. Then, I got lucky or I persevered. Or both. I didn't stop racing. (Besides, Makenna and Scott Eversole and Brett and Nathan Hart were coming up behind me.) On the next to last leg before the finish, downwind from 4 to 1, I got a nice shaft of wind. Up ahead, Roger/Bobbie and Kevin/Charlie had sailed outside of the rhumb line (rhumb line: a straight line between two marks) on starboard runs toward the east shore as Roger was taking Kevin up. Kevin was trying to go to windward of him and pass him and Roger kept responding by using his right of way to force Kevin to turn up to the right and away.

There is always the risk when two boats get in a luffing match. (Luffing match: a tactical situation where the leeward boat of two boats overlapped decides to force the windward boat to turn up toward the wind, which they have a right to do all the way to head to wind.) The boats behind can capitalize by staying near the rhumb line and heading for the mark. I did. Then I pulled up right along side of them, and, since I was now leeward boat, I could force them both up to the right.

Eventually Roger got tired of that and gybed over to port tack and went behind me. I gybed also and once he was on my windward side, I could now force him up to the left to protect my position, another luffing match. The result was that his boom hit my side stays and he was forced to do a 720. Meanwhile, the third place boat, Kevin and Charlie, had taken advantage of this new luffing match and got around mark 1 in first place. I had kept Roger from getting inside position at the mark but I had to let Kevin go to do it. (continued next page)

## Y-Flyer Competition Heating Up (cont. from previous page)

Now it was a straight shot to the finish line. I was below (to leeward) of Kevin by quite a bit for he had headed up close hauled toward the pin end of the finish line right after rounding mark 1. I had footed off (sailed a close reach) after rounding to get speed. Going faster than Kevin now, I then headed up to try and close him off by putting my boat on his lee bow (just ahead and to the leeward side of him). That position would put the windward boat, in this case Kevin, in bad air. The result was a come from behind win.

Later, Jerry Callahan, who was watching from the beach, said that Kevin was trimmed too tight and that's what cost him the foot race to the finish.

Moral of the story: Get out early, get a plan, follow the plan, and persevere if you get behind.

**Monday - Day Two** On Monday, the wind was very much like Sunday's - periods of calm interrupted by good breezes that had some staying power. The biggest difference was that the calm periods were a bit longer. Despite that, the committee made the fleet sail 3 1/4 laps before dropping it to 2 laps for race 2. Mercy killing.

Unlike Sunday, the right side of the first beat seemed to be better, but the shifts were not favoring one side or the other. The line was fairly square. I went right in race one of a figure eight and managed to stay close even though I did not get to the windward mark first. On days where the wind can absolutely disappear, it pays to hang out near the starting line. Sometimes even that plan is not enough as we saw Charlie Buchert inches below the line and unable to move due to a sudden disappearance of even a breath of wind.

Once again it was cat and mouse between the lead Y's with that lead changing hands often. Again the best strategy was to get your head out of the boat and look for pressure. And try and stay close to the others. Sometimes I would see wind and take a chance by tacking toward it. It is a risk, though, since by the time you get there it may be gone or it may not be moving toward you at all. That happened in race two's start Monday when the wind came up from the left and seemed to hit a wall somewhere halfway the line. Ryan Servizzi was stalled just feet from the wind wall after his Hobie start, while Roger Henthorn was buzzing back and forth near the pin in anticipation of a great port tack start in his Y. He got it.

Once again the best plan was to persevere and try to stay close to the leaders. Both of Sunday's Y races were won by someone gaining the lead at or near the end of race. Moral of the story: stay close to the line at the start and to the lead boats. Then, wait for your opportunity. Amen.



### "Coming Up!"

The luffing matches changed the game. Roger was leading but having to fend off Kevin by luffing him up. That allowed the third place boat, the blue and purple one, to come up on both and take part in the fun.

Top photo: Brett and Nathan Hart flying in a breeze. The Y Fleet is closing the competitive gap.



## ASA Interview with Peter Isler

We had the privilege of catching up with world-renowned sailor Peter Isler to get his thoughts on the state of sailing and racing today:

**ASA:** When it comes to local club racing, how does the future look from where you sit?

**Isler:** My opinion has always been that [club racing] is certainly a foundation of sailboat racing and the way to keep it healthy is to emphasize the social aspects of the sport. I think the reason people get into sailing and stay in sailing is more than just getting out on the water, being one with nature and doing all the fun things on the boat – it's also the people.

Part of the changes in sailing are due to the changes in our society and how people choose to allot their free time. In my mind, I think part of it is, that there's been more separation within youth sailing and adult sailing – meaning there's fewer times when the kids and adults sail with each other and against each other. Something in my gut says that's not a good thing.

**ASA:** Do you think the type of boat kids sail is important to keeping them hooked?

**Isler:** I'm not sure what the ultimate entry-level boat is but I don't think it really matters. Bic verses Sabot may be less important than the next level up where kids know how to trim a sail and move their weight around from whatever

they learned on. When they move on they'll get on a boat that challenges them. It's good to have the opportunity to learn and socialize with a broader base.



**ASA:** What about the drop-off of kids as they get older? Do you think sailing is losing more troops these days?

**Isler:** There was always the challenge of the drop-off of kids as they hit their later teens. They're getting pulled in a lot of different directions, and certainly the directions they're getting pulled in are different now than 30 years ago. So, if more kids get pulled away, does that mean sailing or youth-sailing has somehow failed, or is it just a change in society and it would happen anyway? It's a complicated question.

**ASA:** What other components do you think are important for sailboat racing to thrive?

**Isler:** I think it's important to feel like you have a chance. If you're a competitive person and you go out and get pounded all the time, then realize you have to spend way way way more time and money to win in this thing – a lot of people are going to go away.

**ASA:** Do you feel responsibility, as a person prominent in the sport, to promote and protect sailing or do you prefer to allow things to take their own course?

**Isler:** I've always felt the compulsion to share my joy of sailing to anyone who wants to listen. I'm very interested in the health of the sport and keeping kids and everyone else in it because the sport's been so good to me.

# The Committee Weighs In

*Pete Peters, who was on committee, was watching the racing unfold. Here is his view from both the pontoon and the rescue boat:*

Both days of the Labor Day Series presented unique challenges for the Committee. With the conditions that existed, I like to create a race course where the competitors are close together and there is not a situation where one boat has a tremendous lead. I believe we all want to be racing and not waiting for the perfect course which will most of the time not come to fruition.

Most of the starts this weekend were not perfect beats to the windward mark. All the boats are sailing the same course in the same conditions. Each boat may experience different conditions at different times which makes for an exhilarating time or a complete let down for the skippers. We saw many changes in position when we thought that it was not possible.

With the wind as it was, the boats should have been moving all the time. Looking for wind is important but keeping your competition close is extremely valuable. It's a race changer if one boat gets some wind that the others don't.

From a tactical standpoint, I think the boats that sailed relatively close together fared better than a boat that "did its own thing". There were lots of opportunities to pass a boat based on the crazy wind. We saw it happen quite a few times. You had to be close to take advantage should it present itself.

As we watched from the Boat, I thought about what strategy would be appropriate for the conditions. We saw boats moving faster than others due sail trim. A first place finish was given away when the leader's sails were trimmed too tight. We saw boats sailing in a direction that made us question, "What are they thinking?" A lot of distance was given up from the pack and it is hard to make that up with the wind conditions that existed on Labor Day.

We know what a good race course should be and be assured that the committee tried to emulate that course. It's frustrating to work with the wind conditions but as it is said, "It is what it is". My frame of mind is that it is better any day being on the water than on land no matter what the wind conditions.



Above are Pete and Rose Schultz. Also serving on committee were Chuck and Helen Smith