

Acton Action february

Hello February! So many exciting things happening for Hueston Sailing Association!

Our next Racing Techniques class is Saturday Feb.15th at Hueston Woods Lodge starting with lunch at 12 noon!!

A blast from the past!

Tips From The Coach at Sailweb.net

As seen in Lighting Flashes

Cross 'Em When You Can -

This is a classic rule of thumb offered many years ago by Stuart Walter in his book *Advanced Racing Tactics*. When sailing upwind in an oscillating breeze and the opportunity presents itself such that the boat on your stern quarter is pointing down enough that you can tack and get across their bows . . . do it. Seizing the opportunity sets you up for the next shift. To defend, the other boats' only option is to tack in front and to leeward of your bow and wait for the next shift that will cause you to point down at them. However, if the group you are crossing sticks it out and allows you to cross, the gain you realize will be even greater when that next shift arrives and you are lifted inside. Note, the same principle applies when jibing downwind in an oscillating breeze.

Owning your starting Line Real Estate -

Practice, practice, practice. The caveat is making your practice effective. Here is a drill that will give you boat handling skills and confidently and get you off the line consistently. Find or place a buoy in an open, safe area and approach the buoy from leeward side, then stop with your bow right on the buoy, luffing close-hauled. Now the tricky part - stay there. If your bow drifts down, sheet the main in and leave the jib out, steer up slightly (scull if your boat is accommodating); if you accelerate too much, put the bow head to wind and backwind the main; if you drift too far to leeward, back the jib and tack back toward the buoy.

Experiment with backing the jib and main, steering techniques like sculling and body weight. The more low speed control you master the more confident you will be in tight quarters on the line. From this you will learn when to control other boats immediately around you.

The next time you're on the line with 20 seconds to go your crew with thank you for the added skills found on the practice field. Remember, the only two boats on the line that counts are the one to windward and the one immediately to leeward. Control them and you win every time.

Commodore's Corner

HSA's Hobie Fleet



Houston Sailing Association has a long tradition of catamaran sailboat sailing. These high-performance boats weigh only a few hundred pounds and rely on their widely-spaced twin hulls and “skipper-as-moveable-ballast” for stability as they fly around Acton Lake. The Hobie 16 for example has a sail area/displacement (SA/D) ratio of 74.6. To give you a sense of what that means, these much loved “beach cats” carry roughly twice the amount of sail for their displacement compared to our club’s other sporty boats. As a quick comparison of two Acton Lake sailboats with “flying” implied in their names, HSA’s very sporty Y-Flyers have an SA/D ratio of just 41 and the Flying Scot is down in the 34 range. With this kind of performance, you can see why there are over 135,000 of these out on the water across the globe! They are exciting to sail, require very little water depth, and are easily towed by almost any vehicle. Serviceable used catamarans are available for under \$1,000. What’s not to like!?

Our very own Harbor Master, Don Fecher, has long sailed a Hobie 16 on Acton Lake and is the club’s Catamaran Fleet Captain. He is usually challenged on Sundays by a handful of other cat enthusiasts but in recent years these challengers have dwindled for one reason or another. A fleet at HSA, like at many clubs, is defined as a collection of at least three boats that regularly race and show up for most competitions (i.e Spring, Fall, and Holiday Series). Details are on page 32 of your Directory but in a nutshell, this fleet needs more participants. We will reach out on FB and emails to encourage the usual catamaran sailors to fill out the first start each weekend but if you are reading this, please consider joining the catamaran fleet. And, if you are one of our seasoned catamaran sailors, make a call, send a text, or reach out via social media to those you know. It doesn’t take much to keep this fleet viable and it is much more fun to have competitors out there with you. A little bit of outreach can go a long way in preserving our flying cat fleet.

Our beautiful race area in February 2025!



A few of us arrived early for Jan. class and were treated to a fun educational class by the one the Park's Rangers before our lunch began!



Everyone visiting and reminiscing about last summers races!





Now
that is a
bunch of
hungry
sailors!

class begins!



26 sailors came for lunch and class!
Class began at 2pm in the Counsel Fire room
at the lodge

Class taught by our own Mike Stratton
New or fairly members were introduced
Guy Hemmer was introduced sails a Prindle 16
Steve Lyons sails a Mac Gregor

David M sails a sunfish
Mike started his class with a video about
gybing!

Beginning with accidental gybing



- The roll of each person, captain and crew, is to be aware of what is going to happen before the gybe. Each person needs to know their job. The following is a list of things to be aware of:
- Look before you gybe
- Make sure you have communicated to the crew what they are to do.
- Job of skipper is to steer the boat
- Identify landmark so you know when to stop turning
- Trim sail once boom is across
- Skipper handles the main sheet
- Sailing on broad reach before gybe
- Sailing dead down wind is dangerous

Penalty turns

Foul someone upwind who is around you?
You must wait for open water to do your
penalty turn, however, penalty turn must
happen for the next mark.

Rule says to make a turn as soon as
possible within reason.

When making turns, always turn towards
the mark.

Must trim sheets quickly for faster penalty
turns

- Some signs a gybe could occur:
- Telltales change
- Boat loses power
- Jib collapses
- Turn upwind
- Leech on the main begins to twist/ flutter
- Main sheet loses tension
- If you need to head up push tiller away from your body
- (push tiller towards boom
- Stay in a broad reach
- Communication with crew about their job
- Jib on pole is first for Rose/Pete
- Chicken gybe is slower
- Get out and practise your gybing
- Crash gybe/ death roll
- When sailing downwind use your vang
- Boom will rise without vang

In other news:

On launch day, we need helpers to volunteer to mount new rubber around concrete docks.

A HUGE SHOUT OUT AND THANK YOU TO STEPHEN COOK

For the work already started on flower beds and the new tree plantings around our park office!!

Launch day, April 12th, in addition to new rubber on our concrete docks we will be looking for volunteers to help with rack landscape weeding and beautification!!
See you all there!!