

The MORC Internationals

by Scott Graham and Eric Schlageter

The MORC Internationals were held August 9-14th, at North Cape Yacht Club, located about 10 miles north of Toledo on Lake Erie. This year's turnout was exceptional. Over eighty boats made the pilgrimage to NCYC to compete in this series. There were boats from the East Coast, California, Canada, and a large contingent from Florida as well as quite a few from around Lake Erie. Not only did NCYC run an exceptional regatta they were also kind enough to provide the fleet with clear skies, warm weather, and fantastic winds every day.

The format for this series, like previous MORC Championships included two course races the first day, a long distance race the second, followed by a lay day, a middle distance race, and a finale of a course race. The course races were 10 mile Gold Cup courses (triangle, windward, leeward). I sailed on "BEEP, BEEP", a S-2 7.9 that was skippered by Dave Slikkers. Also on the crew were Scott Smith, who did most of the steering, and Buck DeWilde our foredeck man.



The first race of the series was a course race held in about 12-15 knots of air. The wind was shiftly both back and forth which made tacking on headers very important and also in the morning race there was a

persistent shift to the left. Skip Boston, sailing near his home waters had this figured out right after the start and grabbed a large lead which he never relinquished. Second in section D went to "Sea Dream" a very well sailed Merit 25 with her designer Paul Yates on board. Third was "Prophet Sharing" another S-2 7.9 being sailed by Perry Lewis. Our section had probably the tightest racing of any of the other sections, as everyone basically rated the same. Along with 3 S-2 7.9's, there were 6 Merit 25's, two J-24's, one with a tall rig, two Rogers 26, and a Redwing 30 in our section.

The afternoon course race had a little bit more wind, about 15-18 knots. Again the wind shifts were extremely important to play. The right side of the course was favored in the afternoon race as the prevailing westerly breeze started to overpower the lake breeze. On "BEEP, BEEP" we had a fine weather leg to lead the section around the first mark with "Prophet Sharing" hot on our tails. The second beat we were able to put more time on "Prophet Sharing" as they had trouble selecting a sail for this

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Extended Cruising On Our S-2 9.2A

by Steve Wolff

The sail Sunday afternoon from Holland to Saugatuck took less than two hours. It was a memorable sail as it marked the transition from months of preparation to the start of a 6,000 mile cruise. Our boat "Mystic Traveler" was an S-2 9.2A (Aft cockpit) set up for a voyage down the Mississippi River to the Bahamas and back up the east coast as far as Annapolis, Maryland. As I had made this trip only two years earlier in a smaller S-2, I had a good idea of the type of boat and the preparations necessary to make this voyage.

"Mystic Traveler" proved itself very well as a safe and efficient cruiser, both under power and sail. As we had left late in the season, we navigated the length of the Mississippi under power with masts on deck. The 10 h.p. Yanmar proved very effective and we managed to negotiate the entire length of the river on only five tanks of fuel.

In New Orleans we once again had the joy of sailing in saltwater. We proceeded

east on the intercoastal, sailing in the numerous inland bays of Mississippi and Florida. Upon reaching Apalachicola, Florida we were confronted with our first major crossing. It was on this crossing from Apalachicola to Tampa that the 9.2 finally gained our confidence. Her ability to go to weather in heavy air with helm lapse allowed us the much needed shelter of the cabin.

Having only three head sails and no spinnaker, our sail changes were made mostly on the basis of our heel angle, trying to reef or change to a smaller head sail whenever the angle of heel went over 20°. Using this philosophy we managed to cruise the entire trip without a knock down.

As our knowledge of the boat's sailing qualities and our ability to control it increased, so did our confidence. This allowed us to take advantage of the boat's seaworthiness. The ability to set off on the first favorable wind, even if the forecast isn't perfect, can add thousands of miles to your cruise.



"Careening at low tide for bottom paint"

In the S-2 9.2A, our best crossings were downwind on the leading edge of a front. One of the most memorable heavy air runs was a crossing from Bimini to Nassau. Having pulled anchor after lunch with a forecast for a Northerner, we set out across the banks with full lean and a 155% genoa. By the time Bimini has sunk to stern, we were

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condition. We carried our 170% verticle cut genoa. The breeze was a bit much for this sail, as half way up the second beat we tore it badly on a tack. Two boats got ahead of us during our change to the 155% genoa. We were able to catch "Prophet Sharing" but not quite catch "Cookie Monster", the Rogers 26 which won. Skip Boston on "Slam Dunk" was fourth in this race.

Tuesday was the start of the long distance race, a 110 mile triangle around some islands in the lake. Potentially this could have been a very long race had there been light air. But fortunately the wind gods were smiling and provided a steady 20-25 knots of air for the whole race. The first leg was a run to Kelly's Island. "Prophet Sharing" surfed out to what turned out to be an insurmountable lead in our section. They got quite far ahead of us on just plain boat speed. Comparing notes after the race we concluded that we had our board up too high, which made us roll more than "Prophet Sharing" and as a result we had to steer the boat more than they did. A lesson learned, keep the board almost all the way down in a breeze for best

speed. After rounding Kelly's Island we had about a 30 mile reach to a lighthouse. "Sea Dream" was fast on this leg, although none of the other Merits could come close to her speed off the wind. The beat home from the lighthouse was a long one in a solid 25 knots of air with Lake Erie's chop effectively preventing anyone from sleeping, which was great as we needed all the weight on the rail. I must admit it was one of the nicest nights I spent sailing last summer. Not only was the air warm, we had a full moon, and there was a meteor shower to entertain the rail sitters! "Prophet Sharing" won Section D by about 12 minutes, followed by "Sea Dream" who edged out "Slam Dunk" by two seconds! "BEEP, BEEP" was fourth.

The middle distance race was a 28 mile triangle around some marks in the shipping channel. The first leg was a tight reach in about 15-18 knots of breeze. "Prophet Sharing" using a small chute blasted out to a large lead again. Second around the first mark was "BEEP, BEEP". We carried a chute also, but ours was full size and we couldn't quite keep our boat as upright as "Prophet Sharing". The next leg was a run.

7.9



Skip Boston held very low on the run and dropped from about third to tenth in one leg. Going up wind on the last leg to the finish, "BEEP, BEEP" and "Prophet Sharing" held right. This turned out to be near fatal. Skip went left right after the mark and at the finish was able to beat out "Prophet Sharing" by two seconds. "Sea Dream" who was about a 1/4 mile behind us at the last mark also went right and edged us out by 13 seconds. Yacht racing is certainly a game of feet and seconds.

The finale of the series was a 10 mile Gold Cup race. At this stage of the series the S-2 7.9's were 1, 2, 3 (tie) in section and 2, 3, 4 in overall standings. Not a bad showing for a new boat. Unfortunately, the three S-2 7.9's were so intent on covering one another to win the section that we stumbled badly not only in section but in fleet. "Flower Kraut" won our section easily by playing the right hand side again (how many times did we learn that lesson

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Extended Cruising on our 9.2A

running with a full main and a 100% genoa pushing hull speed. As evening approached, our wind picked up to 35 knots. Upwind, the helm felt balanced and the sea motion was gentle enough to eat a hot supper. Darkness approached, and we were in for the show of our lives... a panoramic sunset that seemed to fill the sky followed by a light show of phosphorescing algae in our wake that trailed at 150 yards... all this complimented by a shower of meteors in the sky.

By midnight we had dropped off the edge of the Bahama Banks with our protection of shallow water. Rounding the Northwest channel light, the wave size immediately doubled. Our speed peaked repeatedly at ten knots as we surfed the last 50 miles to Nassau. We set anchor early enough to keep the sun from disturbing our sleep.

To sail downwind in heavy air is the best and easiest way to get where you're going fast. My fondness for sailing downwind showed itself in our course through the Bahamas. A large erratic loop from Nassau down the Exumas, Long Island, Cat Island, Eleuthera and back to Nassau, only to head South again down the Exumas.

Our longest stay in any port was Georgetown in the Exumas. It was our good fortune to attend the Out Island Regatta there in late April. The regatta is a sailing series lasting three days. The approach to racing is straight forward and not cluttered with rules and ratings. The two classes are 30 ft. and 16 ft., with only measurements being

overall length. The start is from anchor. To get a good push off your competitor is necessary for an aggressive start; from here anything goes... hiking boards, sand bags, or even dropping your less valuable crew as the wind lightens! It all adds up to the party of spirit on shore where lines of plywood shacks serve a variety of beverages and seafood.

If anything rivals the beauty of sailing in the Bahamas, it's seeing the beauty under the water. The coral gardens and fish provide a world in sharp contrast to the uniform surface. A reef teeming with 50 varieties of fish is not only colorful but looks a lot like a fish market.



While sailing the shallow waters of the Bahama Banks I found it most enjoyable to

don a mask and snorkel and drag from the folding swim ladder. At noon when the light was best, it was not uncommon to see fish 40 ft. below the surface. This form of drag diving eventually brought us a lobster feast two or three nights a week. In the Bahamas it's legal to spear fish using a pull spear or Hawaiian sling as long as one dives without tanks and respects the protected area. This provides cruisers in the Bahamas with an excellent and free food source. It is also the most efficient form of fishing as it allows the diver to choose the size and variety of fish wanted.

Life in the Bahamas is slow and a cruising person quickly picks it up. Days spent walking on beaches and exploring small towns, diving or sailing from anchorage to anchorage soon removes the stateside concept of time.

As our stay of four months in the Bahamas neared an end, our sailing abilities with the 9.2A were at their peak, spending 95% of the nights at anchor, using the dinghy as our transportation to shore or to diving, and sailing the boat anywhere we had to go. The 9.2 A served us well as a floating home, being both comfortable and safe; it served us even better as a sailboat being fast, responsive and seaworthy.

I no longer own my "Mystic Traveler," but she has left me with the impression that there can be few things finer in life than to travel on a sound yacht on a cruise of undetermined destination to, for months at a time, find only new shores, waters and winds. ■

Winning Starts

by Gary Jobson

There is no magic to winning a start. By using one, or a combination, of starting techniques you can be making good starts consistently within a few weeks. Taking the start gives a psychological lift and makes you work harder. When you pop out into the lead, the opportunity is there to look around, study your position, and tack at will.

Few things are more confusing than a fleet of boats sailing randomly along the starting line waiting for the gun to go off. Probably the worst, yet most common, starting technique is to sit on the line luffing, and trimming in at the gun.

The solution to the problem is to set up an organized approach to what can be a chaotic situation. Your goal is to start on the line near the favored end with full way on. Winning the start means keeping your options open and maintaining speed, permitting you to maneuver freely.

The Timed Run, and Port Approach, are techniques that can be used effectively in any fleet. In addition, variations can be used in combination with each of these formations. From each of these we obtain an infinite variety of effective starting techniques. Starts are actually won in the last 20 seconds before the gun when you make your final approach to the line. These formations will put you into a good position.

Deciding which technique to use is first determined by which end of the line is favored. Although race committees try to set square starting lines, there are many factors that go into favoring one end over the other.

By heading directly into the wind on the middle of the line, the end the bow appears to head closest to is favored. The acute angle formed by the boat axis and the lines axis proves which end is favored (Figure 1). Do not, however, rely solely on this information. Sail across the starboard end of the line on starboard tack and then sail across the port end of the line on port tack. When you attempt this maneuver try to cross the line at the same time a boat on the opposite tack is crossing the other end of the line; this will give a better indication of which end of the line is actually favored (Figure 2).

Check the bouys at each end of the line for current. The action of the water on the bouy will make it appear to be moving. Also watch the direction debris is moving in the water. Current can also be determined by taking bearings on shore objects. If there is a strong current sweeping across the line, allow for the set of the current laterally on your final run to the line in order to cross it where planned.

The end of the line you want to start at may also depend on which side of the course is favored. A simple way to deter-

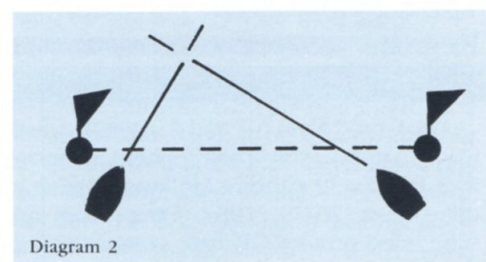
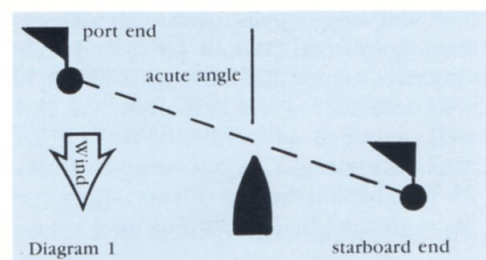
mine this is to get together with another boat before the race. Start off in the middle of the line on opposite tacks. Sail for two minutes on that tack and then both boats go about and converge. When the boats come together the one in the lead will have sailed on the favored side of the course.

If you find the port side of the course is favored, you will want to start on the port end of the line. If the port side of the course is favored, but the windward end of the line is favored, start to leeward of the fleet near the windward end. Always keep in mind, however, that the real purpose of racing is to be first to finish, not necessarily first across the starting line.

One of the most important factors to consider when starting is the congestion of boats on a line, which we will call a stack. Don't ruin a good series by taking an unnecessary risk on the starting line. Play the percentages, especially on poorly set and overcrowded lines. If you have nothing to lose, go ahead and take a risk going for the pin. But if you can't risk a bad start keep an element of conservatism in mind. The first objective is to get clear air. The easiest way to do this is to go through a wall of boats with a lot of speed. If you don't have clear air, tack to port immediately, even if it means heading for the wrong side of the course; but come back to starboard as soon as your wind is free.

If you anticipate a stack developing at the favored end of the starting line, plan to start one-third of the way up or down the line. Use starboard tack to force port tack boats to tack and then when all is clear, tack for clear air.

There are two traps you can fall into on a starting line — one at each end. A stack of boats is certain to develop when one end is heavily favored. If you find that you are



going to be trapped and you have 20-30 seconds before the gun, don't wait. You still have plenty of time to escape.

If you are early at the leeward end, jibe around and look for a hole. If the entire

fleet is early and jibing around, tack instead and cross the fleet on port. Often there are giant holes on a starting line when one becomes heavily congested. If you find that you are late and trapped at the windward end of the line with a wall of boats ahead of you, tack over and get to windward of the tack. You may end up late but you will have clear air and the option of tacking early.

Be tough and aggressive. In the words of Winston Churchill, "Never give in, never, never!" Think of each boat in the fleet as an obstacle to overcome. Organization, determination, preparation, and the competitive instinct will win the race.

The Timed Run

Our first starting formation is the Timed Run, developed by Harold Vanderbilt, and sometimes named in his honor. The Timed Run works best at the windward end of the line, although it can be used effectively anywhere on the line. It can be used in a combination with any other technique, since it gives an accurate indication of how far away from the line you are. The timed run is based on the theory that a sailboat travels at the same speed on a broad reach as it does close hauled.

Get out to the starting line early and make several practice runs. At three minutes before the starting signal, position yourself so that at two minutes you will be starting spot on the line, heading away from the line on the reciprocal course of the final (pre-determined) close hauled approach before the gun.

Tack at 1:04 (to the start) which allows you eight seconds to make the tack and regain speed. You've then sailed 56 seconds away from the line and have 56 to get back. If, on the first run, you find yourself early at the line, give yourself an extra few seconds before the tack for the final approach.

The crew should call time every five seconds so the skipper understands exactly where he stands on his run. When calling time call each number clearly, speak directly to the skipper if possible, and state the minutes and seconds remaining.

Often on the final run there will be so many boats stacked, trying to barge in from windward that they may blanket your wind. If you see such a stack developing, make your run shorter, taking into account the loss in speed due to blanketing from other boats.

Give windward boats plenty of warning to stay clear since they may not see you approaching. By running several times prior to the gun you will be marking a path in the starting vicinity that will be open only to you. A perfectly run time is impossible to beat.

If another boat tries to stop your Timed

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Grand Slam Fleet News

Grand Slam Fleet activity is happening all over. There are a few sailing schools interested in the new 5.5, and prospective 6.7 fleets in Houston and Vancouver, B.C. But, the most exciting fleet activity has been on the 7.9. Currently there is a fleet of 25 boats in Holland, Michigan, which should grow to 30 or more by Spring. Another fleet of 13 boats is in Detroit, and there is still another fleet in Waukegan, Illinois of 12 boats. In addition, fleets are beginning to form in Milwaukee; Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota, Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island, Tulsa Oklahoma, and Sarasota, Florida.

At the time of this writing our current backlog is well over 60 units on the 7.9 alone, and a second set of tooling is already in the making to keep up with the heavy demand for this exciting and versatile 26 footer.

Clark Weersing of Holland, Michigan has been elected as Fleet Captain for Fleet #1, and these are his remarks about Fleet #1:

The Latest, from Fleet #1

by Clark Weersing

Twenty-five boats! What a way to start a new fleet, according to Fleet Secretary Rich Vander Broek. And they're all paid up, says Treasurer Gary Kemp, \$15 each for boat owners, co-owners or associate members. Thanks to Vice Captain Dick English, many of us had an opportunity to sail his 7.9 "Arrow" until the first snow.

In addition to the above officers, Fleet #1 has four permanent committees. John Donnelly chairs the Technical Committee responsible for aiding in the development of Class Rules, providing official sail, hull and spar measurers and receiving requests for variations of class rules from the membership or manufacturer. His group has already made presentations to the fleet that led to the allowing of Mylar genoas with a minimum weight of 2.6 oz. It has also been adopted that only one suit of sails may be used any one season during our club racing schedule. In addition this committee is considering a preliminary set of rules and the use of floatation marks on the hull to help equalize inboard and outboard models.

The Club and Course Racing Committee is chaired by Fleet Captain Clark Weersing and is responsible for promoting local course racing opportunities and encouraging fleet participation. We have been granted "Fleet Status" and will be racing under the colors of the Macatawa Bay Yacht Club. The season will include 6 regatta weekends of racing, three races per weekend for a total of 18. In addition we

have been invited to sail in the Thursday Evening Family Racing program at M.B.Y.C.

Nate Bryant heads up the Offshore Racing Committee and is charged with informing and encouraging our Grand Slammers to participate in distance racing opportunities on Lake Michigan sponsored by other racing authorities. He especially recommended the Queens Cup crossing the big lake since we might be able to sail it as a fleet including other 7.9 fleets from around Lake Michigan.

The Social Committee is to make arrangements for social, business and special meetings. The chairman, Eric Robinson, is encouraging an overnight junket at the Grand Rapids Plaza Hotel to attend the North University Racing Clinic on February 27 and 28. Seventeen have signed up so far. Also in the works are plans for two overnight rendezvous, Port Sheldon and Saugatuck, as well as a trailer trip to Grand Traverse Bay. Thanks to Eric we have had our meetings at the plush Anchorage Marine Club.

Jeff Padnos is preparing our Constitution and Bylaws and will be presenting them for approval early in the spring. This committee will also hear recommendations for changes when needed.

In addition to the permanent committees we have a temporary one, headed by Scott Smith and David Slikkers, to plan for the first S-2 Grand Slam 7.9 National Championships to be held in late August at the Macatawa Bay Yacht Club. All owners from around the country will be invited to participate to take on whatever Lake Michigan has to offer, gales to drifters, possible in any one week.

Interest in the racing program is running high with ongoing discussions about crews and equipment, bottom paint and rules. One new owner, Bill LaBarge, is having his boat delivered to him in Florida so as to be well practiced when he returns to Michigan in the spring. Can you imagine a fleet of 25 7.9's hitting the line this spring, or even 30, a goal set by Eric Robinson?

1982 Grand Slam National Regatta

The Grand Slam 6.7 and 7.9 North American Championships will be held at Macatawa Bay Yacht Club in Holland, Michigan on August 26-29, 1982. Four races are scheduled on two Olympic courses on Friday, a medium distance on Saturday, and an Olympic course on Sunday morning to wrap up the series. The award ceremony will follow the last race on the lawn of the Macatawa Bay Yacht Club. Some 50-60 boats are expected.

Schedule of Events

Thursday, August 26

10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Registration and Inspection
5:00 p.m. Skippers meeting
7:00 p.m. Informal get-together

Friday, August 27

10:00 a.m. 7.9 Start
10:10 a.m. 6.7m Start Race #1, Olympic course
1:00 p.m. 7.9m Start
1:10 p.m. 6.7m Start Race #2, Olympic course
7:00 p.m. Party

Saturday, August 28

10:00 a.m. 7.9m Start
10:10 a.m. 6.7m Start Race #3, Medium Distance Race
7:30 p.m. Party

Sunday, August 29

10:00 a.m. 7.9m Start
10:10 a.m. 6.7m Start Race #4, Olympic course
2:00 p.m. Awards Ceremony

GRANDSLAM



Sailors World, located in Crystal Bay, Minnesota, came on board as an S-2 dealer in January of 1981. Since that time, they have had tremendous success in selling the S-2 7.3. As of December 1, 1981, they have sold ten 7.3's...which averages out to almost one per month!

We asked Gary DeSantis, John Vogt, and Rich Anderson, the owners of Sailors World, to share their secret of success with you. This is their story:

The S-2 7.3 seems to be the perfect boat for our area. We are located on a metro lake that has about 175 miles of shoreline in some 25 various separated bays.

The 7.3 is perfect for mooring on this

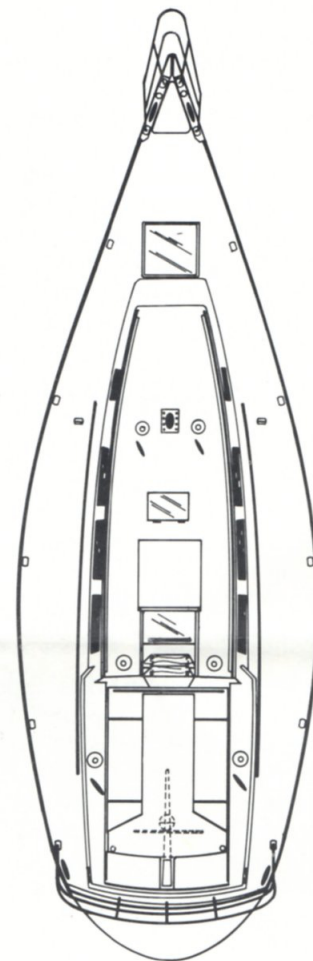
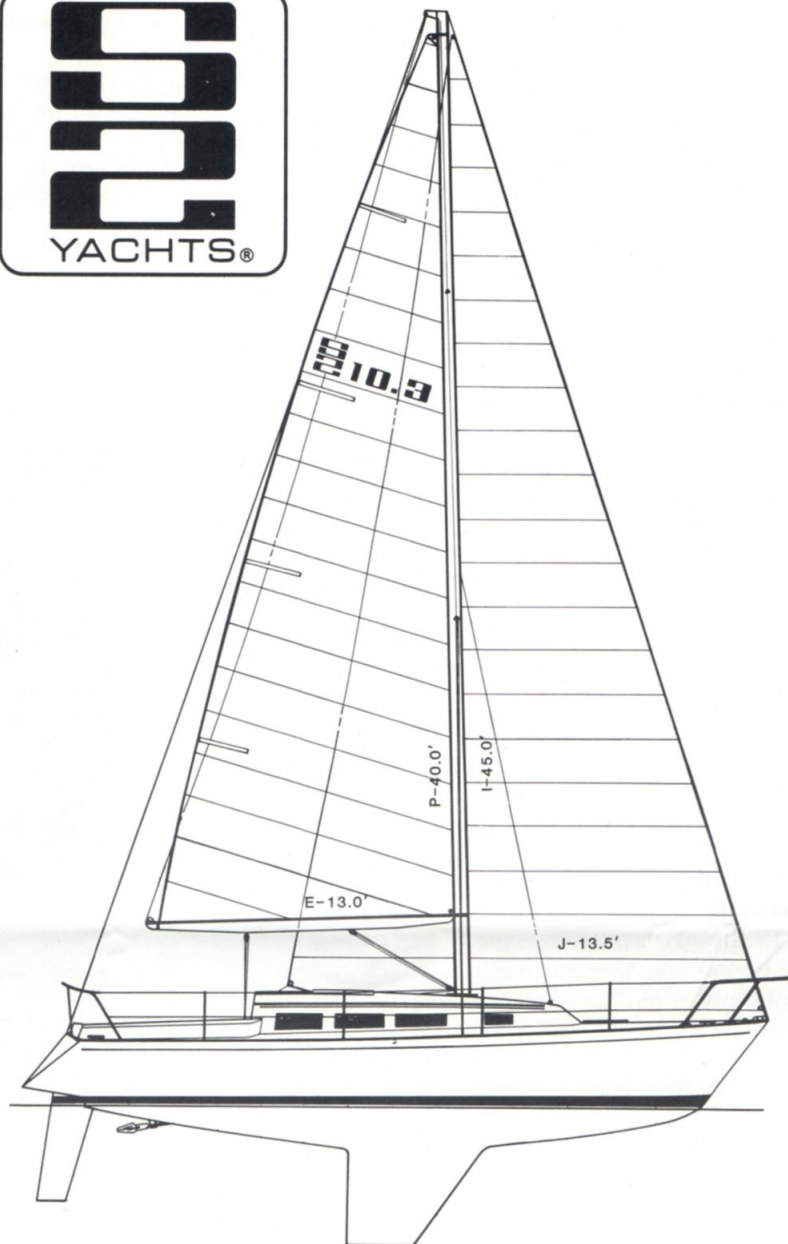
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OFFSHORE RACER / CRUISER

10.3/34

DESIGNERS: SCOTT GRAHAM,
ERIC SCHLAGETER AND
THE S2 DESIGN GROUP



S-2 announces the addition of a 34 footer, the S-2 10.3 to their line of quality sailing yachts. Designed by Scott Graham and Eric Schlageter, the 10.3 was drawn up with specific considerations in mind, ultimately to create a boat competitive under the International Offshore Rule for yacht handicapping. At the same time, designing a yacht excellent for cruising and easy handling with comfortable accommodations.

lake and built strong enough to trailer to neighboring bodies of water such as Lake Peppin, St. Croix River and Lake Superior (the farthest body of water being four hours away).

What sells the boat in our area is: 1) The Quality; and 2) Sailing features for the family. No other 23, 24 or 25 foot sailboat, we feel, is built with this much quality workmanship throughout. The joiner work, keel and rudder installation and overall structure and surface finish work are the primary areas we stress.

Most manufacturers don't go to this kind of detailed workmanship in boats this size. The S-2 7.3 is pleasantly overbuilt where it should be. The shrouds, chain plates, stanchions and all other running rigging is

heavier and virtually trouble free. At this writing we have yet to write one warranty claim on the S-2 7.3's we have sold.

With the way S-2 constructs the boat and with support names like North, Schaffer, Hall and Kenyon we can point out to a customer that there is no compromise in the quality of this 24 foot. Because of this we really emphasize resale value as a big plus for the S-2 7.3. Long lasting good esthetic appearance, unequalled structural integrity and use of the boat materials available virtually guarantee good resale and overall investment. The bottom line is that we sell the boat well because it's built well and sails well. The helm is balanced and responsive, stability and upwind sailing is

excellent and our customers describe it on the water as "smooth as silk."

The 24's selling success for us is no surprise. If marketed well its the perfect choice for the sailing family. You can offer a beginning sailor sound, quality investment that he can enjoy for years to come. Or take a seasoned sailboat shopper (and sailor) who wants a boat for smaller waters and demands the ultimate in sailing and construction features...he will be well satisfied with the 7.3.

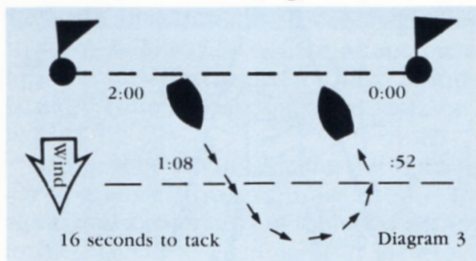
The best deal for us is when either party steps up in size; because they bought an S-2 7.3, they'll be back for another S-2...you can bet on it! ■

Winning Starts

Run by tacking under your leeward bow on your final approach, head off slightly, forcing him to tack early, or even better to force him to dip your stern before he has a chance to tack. Even when a boat does lee bow you, you have the advantage with greater speed.

After practicing the Timed Run you should be able to tell which boats are going to be early, late, too high, or too low by their position relative to you.

In a keelboat or large centerboard boat such as the GrandSlam or S-2, make runs at two minute intervals (Figure 3).



When you begin to head up for the tack, trim the sails. This will add weather to the helm, helping you come up with maximum speed, and also help you properly set the sails after the tack when on the wind for the approach to the line. It is important to note how long it takes your boat to tack and regain speed. To find this factor, practice tacking around a bouy and time how long it takes.

In any fleet, if a wall of boats appears when you make your final approach keep your speed up and drive over boats that are luffing. Only take a stern and pass to leeward of a boat if you have a 100 percent chance of breaking through a leeward. This is one of the biggest errors made on the starting line. Never take a stern unless you are sure you will get through, or you will get trapped.

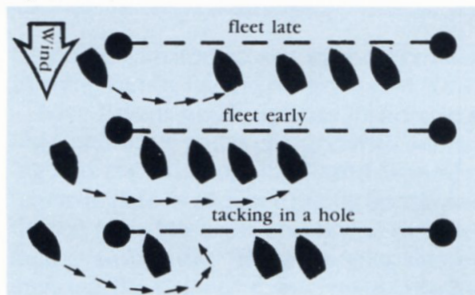
When running a time, tack for the line; jibe, however if a current is running through the line against the wind.

Port Approach

The Port Approach is the easiest starting technique to master and it can be the most successful. It works best at the leeward end, but can be used anywhere along the line. When using a Port Approach, you must have constant knowledge of the time left until the gun, and where you are in relation to the line.

Make sure you are the last boat running down the line and tacking over to port. If the fleet is late for the line note your time as you pass the leeward end and make a Timed Run. Approach the fleet and tack under the first boat driving for the pin. If the fleet is early, sail past the stack and find a hole where you can tack. Keep in mind that you are on port tack and that under Rule 34(b) a starboard tack yacht may head up to close hauled as she pleases,

assuming a proper course to start (Figure 4).



Many boats sitting on the line for 30 seconds won't even try to prevent you from tacking under them. Oblige by tacking in the hole and giving them bad air. Nice guys finish last.

Slow and Go

The Slow and Go start can be used when you find yourself early for the line, or if you don't want to get too far away to make a run. Set yourself up by getting to windward of your desired layline. As the start approaches drift into position with the help of the wind, bear off, sheet in, and get moving. Be careful not to get too close to the line so you will have enough room to build up speed before the gun.

The Hurry Up and Wait start is essentially a variation on the Timed Run (or Vanderbilt Start). It is very effective in battling a stack that is blanketing your wind or if you are forced to tack back for the line earlier than your planned Timed Run dictated because you are running into traffic or the line looks as if it will be crowded. This allows you to claim your position while you can still get it.

If, as with the Time Run, you were planning to tack with 34 seconds to go, but for some reason, you are forced to tack earlier, say at 40 seconds before the start, then, after completing the tack, you might slow up for say, four seconds in order to get to the line at the gun; thus Hurry Up and Wait. This technique gives you a reference point, so that it is possible to tell how far you are from the line and also how long to wait before making the final, fast approach.

When starting in the middle of the line, it is sometimes difficult to tell whether you are early or late at the line as there are boats blocking your view of the starting pins — usually more boats to weather than leeward. Well before the start, it is helpful to take a bearing across the starting pins to an object that will serve as a range on the shore, for example, a smokestack. Also note prominent shore objects across the line such as a house. When approaching the mark, there is often a sag in the fleet at the middle of the line. If this allows you to see the pin nearest the range you can tell where you are. If, just before the starting gun, by viewing through the pin, you see the landmark you have chosen, you may well be late for the line. If, just before the gun, by viewing through the pin, you see

the stack or are getting close to it, you may be over early.

Remember to keep your options open. Don't commit yourself to one spot on the line until you are certain that you are correct. Check the line often, keeping your mobility. Use a starting technique instead of sailing around randomly before the start of the race. Practice the mechanics of these starting techniques. A tough aggressive sailor wants a good start and his position and attitude immediately after the gun will show how successful he has been. It is all a matter of how much you want to win. Winning may not be everything, but the desire to is. ■



Grand Slam 5.5's the spirited 18 foot-class racer that's exciting, dependable, and simple to sail.

She's the perfect choice for active families, first time sailors, and cottage owners alike. She's easy to rig and sail singlehandedly, with an efficient fractional rig, simple comfortably-placed hardware, and sails designed for handling by every member of the family. There's a deep self bailing contoured cockpit you can sit in to sail in comfort and safety, and a cuddy cabin that offers generous room to stash sails and gear for a day's adventure. Her centerboard's clean and simple, with no pins or mechanical parts to deteriorate in salt water, and trunktop controls for raising and lowering her unique pivoting centerboard. And her stiff, lightweight core construction and positive foam floatation make the going secure, with the uncompromising S-2 construction to enhance safety today and resale value in the years to come.

The factors that give Grand Slam 5.5 spirit, energy, and fun, add up to a remarkable daysailer. She's a snap to launch, pull up to the beach, and dock, with a full rub-rail for an added measure of forgiveness. And her Grand Slam design makes trailering anywhere second nature. Because the 5.5 introduces you to the world of sailing, she'll open up a whole new horizon. ■

Sailing the 7.9

by Perry Lewis

Last spring when Ric Sternkopf and I decided to campaign our 7.9 in the MORC International Regatta, we knew the boat would be a darn good one. But we didn't know just how competitive it would be. As the series unfolded it quickly became obvious that the boat is indeed very fast. What we hadn't guessed is how much fun the boat is to sail. We both came away very impressed, and enjoyed the 7.9 as much as anything else we've sailed. The boat is well conceived, well built, attractive looking, comfortable and fast.

Just how fast is the boat? My first experience with it was a race against the nine J-30's and a handful of other boats. Over an olympic course in light and medium air, we beat 5 of the 9, boat for boat! Not long after that, the 7.9 stopped getting 30 second/mile from the J-30's in PHRF! At the MORC series we raced primarily against Merit 25's, Rodgers 26's, and some J-24's. All three of the 7.9's in class D were as fast as any of these boats in any condition. On many conditions, we were dramatically faster anytime off the wind and much of the time upwind.

We went to that regatta very ill-prepared, having sailed our boat only one weekend beforehand, and that was using different sails and crew. The fact that we are able to win our class is proof that the 7.9 is a relatively easy one to learn (I know that we're not geniuses!). We didn't discover any magic tricks to going fast; the boat seemed to tell us what to do. Everything went smoothly. The cockpit is large and open, the crew can sit aft within easy reach of all the controls, deck layout is simple so that the sails go up and down on schedule, etc. The helm is responsive, and the boat turns and accelerates quickly. With a couple simple adjustments to the sails and rig, it is easy to depower and power again.

Another pleasant discovery for us was to see how complete the boat comes from the factory. With many boats, we would expect to make major changes or additions. When we took delivery of our 7.9 we scratched our heads very hard trying to think of ways to improve it. We came up with only three minor ones: a change to wire halyards, addition of a solid vang to support the boom in light air, and a different backstay adjuster. This last change was needed only because we used a lightweight mylar/kevlar mainsail which demanded a lot of backstay attention.

Another question we faced was whether to choose the inboard or outboard motor. Because we expected a light air series, and dragging propellers around is usually thought to be a slow in light air, we voted for an outboard. To our surprise we could discern very little speed difference on the

race course (we were the only 7.9 with an outboard). If the prop were important we should have had an advantage in light air, yet our biggest advantage turned out to be in breezy stuff.

The rig on the 7.9 is very simple but equally effective. I believe the way it should be set up will depend on the kind of sails you are using. Our mainsail demanded more than normal mast bend (up to 8"), while our genoas wanted a really straight headstay. This prescribed very tight upper shrouds and backstay. We used only enough lower shroud tension to keep the mast in column sideways. The result was more prebend (1½-2") than other boats (or sails) might use. Tighter lowers would have given us even more headstay tension (straighter mast down low), but because of the extreme backstay and upper shroud tension there was little sag in the headstay anyway.

Another thing we did a little differently was to lengthen the headstay 2". This increased rake enough that the main boom barely cleared the lifelines (and our thick skulls). I can't explain exactly why we did this — I am just fond of sailing this way. I believe for the light air series we sailed, extra rake was probably fast. Even in heavy air with our large-roach mainsail we never felt we had too much weather helm.

On any boat the main is used to adjust helm and heel angle. Because the 7.8's main is so large, it should also be thought of as a power source. Basically power is adjusted by making it fuller and flatter; backstay and flat reef are the principal ingredients. It's not a simple rule that the harder it blows, the flatter the main should be. It also needs to be changed depending on water conditions and the size of jib being used. For example, in 20 knots with the 155% genoa the main will want to be board flat; in 20 knots with the 102% jib you may want it quite full (even for the same water conditions). In any case it's important to have the capability of boarding out the main, in order to depower. And because both the boom and traveller are long, the traveller becomes a very important adjustment. So when sailing upwind you'll want to keep a quick hand on both the backstay and traveller.

After we made a couple of obvious mistakes, our choice of genoas seemed pretty easy. MORC inventories include a 170%, which we used for much of the series. However, it appears to have little advantage over a 150% or 155% sail. In light air and leftover slop it will give you extra horsepower to go faster. But in medium air or in flat water you'll go just as fast and point higher with a smaller sail. A 155% genoa can be carried to 20 apparent or even 22 with a five man crew. Once the main is really flat and the traveller is down, and you still heel 20°, it's time to switch to

the small jib. If in doubt, we found it was better to change down than to hang on with too big a sail. Once you've overpowered it gets difficult to steer: you feather up and stop, then the bow falls off, you heel over and go sideways, and the boat rounds up all over again! It should be easy for the helmsman to tell when he's overpowered and going slow.

As a rule you should be able to point as high as other boats, but don't expect to go much higher. In flat water we trimmed our genoas right up to the spreader tip, and had the boom amidships. The jib could be sheeted inside the shrouds and trimmed hard enough to get the leech several inches inboard of the spreader tip. In rough water we eased the sheets considerably to open the slot and increase twist.

When sailing downwind we didn't do anything very special. We sailed the boat flat and usually kept crew weight amidships. At slow speeds we all moved forward (helmsman as far as the hiking stick would allow), and only moved way aft when planing. Crew weight was furthest aft on power reaches (one person behind helmsman) for a variety of good reasons.

One surprise off-the-wind was the effect of the board. We all expected to go faster by raising the board whenever the wind was very far aft of the beam. In flat water it was easy to tell how much board to pull up; you'd go fine until you pulled it up just a little too far, when you'd suddenly slide to leeward. In rough water it is more complicated. The helmsman must feel when the boat isn't tracking well (he's working too hard). When quartering waves roll you or throw you sideways, instead of lifting you forward, it's time to let the board down. Even on a dead run in waves, we found ourselves going much better (and more comfortably) with the board all the way down.

Learning to get good speed out of the 7.9 shouldn't take very long. Once the steering and sail trim adjustments become semi-automatic, you'll be freed to concentrate on the more important aspects of winning the races — strategy and tactics. When we went to the MORC Regatta we knew nothing about making the 7.9 go as fast as it should. And because we are sailmakers, we were perhaps too interested in studying our sails than in looking around the race course. This really hurt our tactics in the first couple of races — we were oblivious to everything except trying to go fast. But as soon as we got more comfortable with our boat speed, or more exactly with knowing our boat, we were able to think about tactics more of the time. And the results were more rewarding!

I hope you have as much fun sailing your 7.9 as we've had! ■

during the week?) with the best 7.9 "BEEP, BEEP" finishing 5th in section and a terrible 32nd in fleet. "Prophet Sharing" won our section by getting 8th in section, nipping "Slam Dunk" who was 9th. Their overall finishes of 42nd and 44th put them out of contention for fleet honors also. We were pretty happy on "BEEP, BEEP" as we did beat the Merit 25 "Sea Dream" which enabled us to clinch 3rd in section and complete the "Grand Slam" of section D. Our bad finishes overall though dropped the S-2 7.9's to 6th, 7th, and 8th in fleet. To prove a point about the trailerability of the boat, we actually dropped the rig of "BEEP, BEEP" to the deck while steaming into the harbor at full speed! We were the first boat out of the water and 45 minutes after getting to the dock, the boat was ready for the trip home to Holland, Michigan.

We learned quite a bit about the 7.9 during this regatta. We carried a mylar/kevelar main during the series, more as an experiment than anything else. We found

our speed to at least equal to any other boats in our section and actually faster than the Merits in all upwind conditions. The only Merit that could consistently stay close to the 7.9's was "Sea Dream". They also had about two years sailing time on us. We set the rig up with about 18" of rake. We felt that this was important for good pointing ability upwind. In most races we carried the 170% genoa. We switched down to the 155% genoas (a mylar sail) when the breeze hit about 18 apparent upwind. It probably would have been wiser to carry the 155% in a bit less breeze. One thing we did learn for top flight MORC competition was that the more crew the merrier! The top boat "Prophet Sharing" carried six people on board to hold her down in a breeze. Next year in L.A. we will be taking five people, and we hope to improve on our overall finishes. ■



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