

DeBrief: Olympic Development Clinic 2017

November 24-26 Miami, FL

Summary: This year's Race Clinic revolved around the theme of **Getting Good Starts**. Ed Baird gave two talks on the subject, which we'll recap later, and our coaching staff's focus was about data collection, best practices, and discipline to develop winning strategies once in the starting box. Our success rate of executing organized and helpful data collection during our prerace prep was about 30%. Not exactly winning performance.

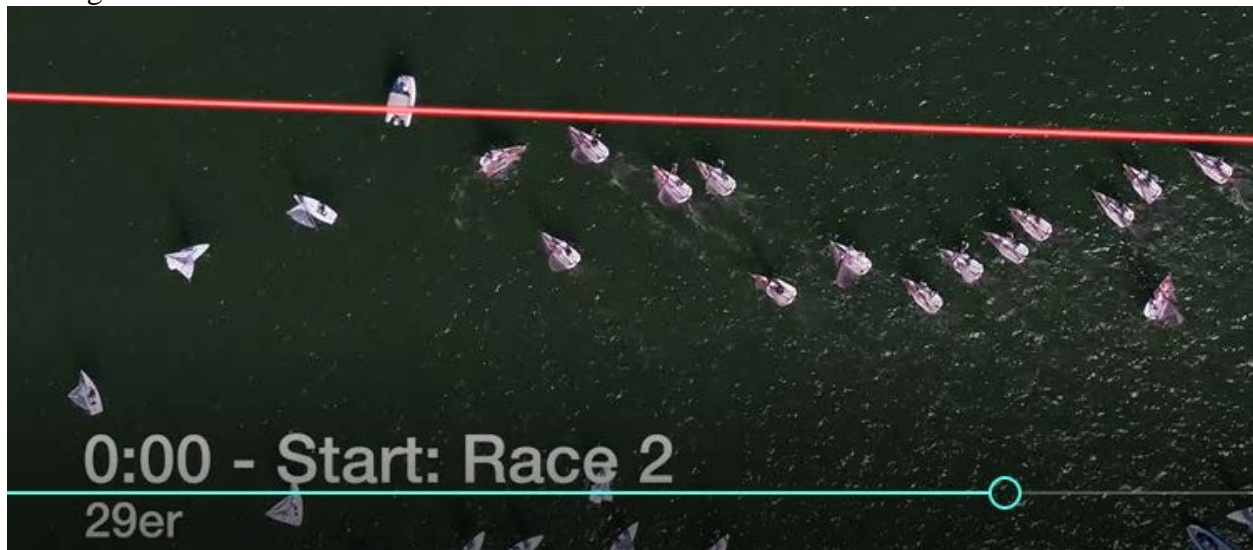
The short list of to dos includes:

- Get out early, sail the racecourse
- Run a series of line ups to make sure your boat's top speed
- Take note of the shift interval during these line ups to get an idea of the pattern
- Transit the line: know where it is and what your angle is
- Have a plan A, B, & C of when the shift comes.

[Take the link to Fred's article about regatta preparation here.](#) Get a cup of coffee and read this article thoroughly.

If you were first off the line, but missed the shift are you really first?

Fuzz commented on the fact that at the elite level of the sport, all the handling practice and crew work has been done and mastered. Once on the race-course boats go through a series of moves and counter moves like a game of chess. Setting Up for your next move was the whole enchilada of Ed's talk. His point, simply, was if you were first off the line but missed the shift are you really first? Think two to three steps ahead. Otherwise you get stuck in a grave of your own making.



To recap much of Fred's talk on this subject, consider the scenario where you're setting up at the pin and sitting rail to rail with the boats below and above you. Your battens are popped at 30 seconds and you start to get headed, now you're nearly bow to stern on the boat below you. An alarm should go off in your head signaling a left shift. This squeezes your lane off the line and

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creates a pile up at the pin. Plan A was to start a few boats up from the pin. Now your in a tight line just to avoid a pile up. Initiate plan B and look for a lane to tack out.

Once on the new tack you set yourself up for the next shift coming down, which we can assume will be from the right. Tack on it. Tacking now puts you in play with the one to three boats that squeaked by the pin unscathed who rode the header for the first minute or more of the beat. It also puts you in a leading position on those boats that got stuck in bad air with tight, headed lanes.

Identify Skills to Improve: We can agree that we need to become more disciplined in our morning routine. Get your boat set up and launched early. Spend more time on the water than your competitor. Gather information. Don't be rushed to get the race started. Be observant. Be prepared.

So we've talked a lot about non-29er specific practices to improve our racing. Now let's dig into some of the 29er specific issues this weekend.

Speed DownWind & Puff Hunting: Downwind in unstable patchy breeze meant skippers had to scan for breeze down wind, a lot. Your neck should be sore from searching for breeze. The important thing here is where to look. The difference in speed and directional change in the 29er is huge in planing vs displacement conditions. This means the area where to look for the next puff changes based on your boatspeed. This illustration shows that in when the boat's in displacement mode, your next available pressure will approach from behind, while when the power is up and the boat gets moving new pressure will come from your beam and ahead. Know where to look.

