

# DeBrief: MidWinter's East Regatta | March 16-18, 2018

Miami: 4.5 – 6.5 knots 125 degrees to 180 degrees

Routine breeds success. The most obvious evidence of this was our team's **starts** on the last day of racing. Starting well, especially when the breeze is light and stable, gives you options and the opportunity to tack on the next shift ahead. This was paramount Sunday: due to the stability of the breeze (slight variance in direction) it was imperative to stay in phase and stay lifted.

**Priority 1:** to tack as soon as we were knocked. Getting punched out off the line made this possible.

True Story: Ripley and Severin got hooked at 40 seconds by the Joslin bros on race one, and quickly slid up to windward and gapped one and a half boat lengths off their leeward attacker. It was impressive, especially given the softness of the breeze.

Because Rip & Sev had run the line on each tack and practiced 6 accelerations in the light breeze and chop prior to race one, they started on time, which turned out to be two boat lengths ahead of the boats around them (those boats who hadn't gotten the sights or practiced accelerations) winning the start in the middle. What happened to the boat who attacked them off the line? Because Rip & Sev practiced accelerations and knew where to hit the line full speed, they quickly put the attacking boat below their bow, then below their jib, then behind their wake.

The biggest lesson of the entire event for me is found within this practice. Your mission each day of racing must follow a process in order to identify the days pre-starting preparation.

We did well Sunday to figure out that **starting well was a top priority**.

How did we get to that decision? For me, it all came together after an on-water conversation with our resident weather guru, Fred Moffat. But that was icing on the cake.

It started with our macro and micro weather forecast in the morning. Using the Bethwaite Stability Index scoring system, we knew there breeze would be very stable (score 7), due to high pressure, seabreeze, and surface heating throughout the day (water 75 degrees and land 82 degrees).

Then I took wind readings at four points across the race course for 3 minute intervals [bottom right, top right, top left, bottom left] before all boats made it to the race track.

After we grouped as a team above the starting line, we race several speed tests to get everyone high and fast. Then went back down to starting zone.

Then we ran 20 second acceleration exercises (a series of 5) with 2 minute straight line upwinds. Before the starting sequence went off, athletes ran the line (each way) sighting the line by sailing first on port from the pin to the boat, lining up the headstay and the mast with the flag and pin. Also making sure to line up the jib cleat and rudder pintel with the flag and pin. Best to do this on each tack to get most spatially aware.

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Sailing in light air, upwind: we knew to avoid the middle of the pack and make gains on the edges of the fleet. Understanding that taking on more risk at the edges upwind may increase risk, if you could be the tip of the arrow upwind and not get caught in the octopus you could round in top 8.

Something we failed to discuss was opportunities downwind. There seemed to be two strategies on the run: a) send it 110% to the corner, or b) gybe early and stay in pressure before the fleet flopped on you.

Unfortunately it seemed like the fleet did a lot of domino gybing downwind, especially on the last day. And some boats got gobbled up by the dead air that sat beneath the cascade of kites. Looking back, how might we avoid this in the future?

The biggest issue was getting caught in a high lane downwind and getting jumped by trailing boats. While your position may be leading on the run, if trailing boats are low and inside the only way to make it out alive is to gybe in pressure, fast and sneak away with a low gap.

Which begs the question, if we want to sail downwind with the most opportunity for options (option 1: send it to corner, option 2: gybe before leaving pressure, option 3: jump boats ahead) then why are we in a high lane to begin with?

To avoid a high lane on the run, we must round the top mark with a gap. If you are approaching the top mark thin on the layline, then your boat will likely not have enough power to make a deep downturn and bareaway for your set.

Looking forward to future regattas, we need to consider our top mark approaches and how it impacts the run.

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## General DeBrief:

"US Girls team Berta Puig and Bella Casaretto (Miami, FL) put on a clinic last weekend at the 2018 MidWinter's East finishing with 24 total points. This three day, 10 race series was a showdown of light air skills and strategic execution.

Even with three days of soft air and steep chop in Biscayne Bay, each day brought a different challenge to the race track. And this event being the finals for the ISAF Youth Worlds spot turned the heat up on the competition. Yet, even with the pressure of this selection event, the 29er fleet was able to switch off and enjoy the mornings under AP socializing with one another and making new friends with the Canadian and Caribbean sailors who added the MWE to their spring break training camp road map. Top competitors like Taylor Hassen and Steven Hardee (St. Croix, ISV) and Canada's Audrey Staples and Caterine Krikorian-Kunz who brought their A-game to this event.

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Great Northern Squad's Charlie Hibben and Nick Hardy (Boston, MA.) placed second overall, finishing with 38 points by locking into a high mode upwind that was hard to match. The US fleet is very strong and it is exciting to see top representation and skills from our core 29er regions like Miami, New England and California.

## Top 5 finishers

- 1 Berta Puig & Bella Casaretto (FL) 24 pts.
- 2 Charlie Hibben & Nick Hardy ( MA) 38 pts.
- 3 Ripley Shelley & Severin Gramm (FL) 45 pts.
- 4 Brooke Sachoy & Jana Laurendeau (MA) 49 pts.
- 5 Ryan Eastwood & Sam Merson (CA) 52 pts.