

Acton *Action*

Houston Sailing Association



The starting line at the Sunfish North American Championships in early June. Why go to big regattas? Any benefit? You know you aren't going to do very well against the nations' best, right? Champion Snipe sailor Kim Couranz makes the case on page 2.

HSA Spring Series Brings Optimism

New Champions and Stronger Racing Across All Fleets

HSA's Spring Series came to a close on June 28th with some new names and faces taking the top spots.

In the Hobie fleet, Mark Costandi challenged his fleet comrades to come out and take him on. Largely unopposed until the last two races of the Spring, he finally

got good wind and flying hull fellowship. He won one race and finished second in the other to put the final touches on a stellar campaign where he only missed two races.

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Bee shirts, cicadas, and RollerGirls and all that wind!

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Sunfish Rule Change

Need more help in high winds on your Sunfish? This rule change can help!

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Whacking the Dog

Dreams, racing and persistent shifts with Dave Dellenbaugh.

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Sunfish Help?

If you don't recognize the rig in the photo, it's because it is a rule change for the mainsheet that was recently passed by the Sunfish class.

You are now allowed to add a block (but only a class legal block) to the bridle through which you can thread your mainsheet. The bitter end of the line attaches to the small eyestraps on the aft boom block.

The added block allows more purchase, making it easier to sheet in during heavy air. Of course your mainsheet will have to be about ten feet longer. More on page 5

Big Regattas Mean Big Opportunities

Kim Couranz is a top Snipe racing sailor. The following is from an article in SpinSheet, a newsletter for Chesapeake Bay Sailing on why attending big regattas is a good idea.

1. You'll learn on the water. The most obvious opportunities for gaining skills present themselves while you're out sailing. Watch the top boats as they sail upwind—are they using a lot of vang, or none? Where does the crew sit in the boat when it gets windy? Check out their tacks and gybes and garner some boathandling ideas.

2. You'll learn in the boat park. Many one-design boats allow for different ways of setting up the rigging and such. How are the top boats set up? Of course, don't go poking around someone's boat without their permission, but ask and likely they'll be happy to show you just how they set up that smooth-running traveler system.

3. You'll learn before

the regatta starts. For big regattas, many boats will arrive a day or two early to get their boats set up and get some time out sailing at the regatta venue. Sail with these folks; one-design sailors are always happy to have more boats out to train with, and they'll often share tips while you're out on the water. In pre-regatta training, getting you faster helps push them to go faster. And sailing at the regatta venue ahead of the regatta itself is a great way to study local wind and current conditions, a good skill to practice.

4. You'll learn by watching routines. Most top sailors aren't just winging it every morning when they arrive at the regatta site. They generally have a mental checklist that they follow each day, including getting their boat ready, getting their on-water hydration and nutrition ready, getting themselves and their gear ready, making sure they have a good handle on the weather forecast, and much more. To sail fast, you need to check a lot of boxes, so watching sailors work through all their to-dos can give you ideas handle yours. (cont. pg. 6)



Left to right: Mandy Brewsaugh, Grant Brewsaugh, Emilie Westcott, Erica Nyberg, Andy Mahle, Deirdre Mahle, Carrie Baker, Chad Keyser, and John Funk. Not pictured – Mandy Birdwell who along with Emilie, Erica, and Carrie are part of the RollerGirls. John is a ref.

Intro to Sail Beats Wind Hazards

Plus HSA Gets the RollerGirls!

Our club's first and only Introduction to Sailing Group Weekend happened on June 17-18 and couldn't have been better. Despite a frightening forecast, the weather and wind for both days turned out to be just what we needed. Mind you, the night between the two days was filled with horrific weather stories of tornadoes and wind damage all over the southwestern Ohio map.

All of the ten participants were able to get tiller time both days, which is usually our goal for the weekend. And they got a lot of it. We were thrilled to get lots of positive feedback from members of

the group about their experience.

Not only did we have good wind, we had good stories to tell. It was an unusual group since five of them were connected to a woman's roller derby league in Cincinnati. The league is called the RollerGirls and our sailing partners were all on the same team. They, along with referee John Funk, all decided to try out sailing while the RollerGirls league is on a COVID hiatus.

Here is a link to a Cincinnati RollerGirls promo on YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/c/CincyRollergirls>



The Fall Series and perhaps even the two remaining holiday series look promising for the Hobies as Charlie Buchert, who came out the last weekend, seems to have mostly recovered from back surgery. Mike Wier also seems to be ready to compete and ready to help train new Hobie sailors. Don Fecher, who is often the favorite, will no doubt be ready for the challenge as will newcomer Kevin DeArmon, if the young lion can just remember where the lake is.



In the Handicap fleet Sunfish sailor Brian Callahan has emerged as a frequent flyer, having raced all nine of the Spring Series races as well as the Founders' Day Sunfish regatta and the Memorial

Day Holiday Series. His main competition there, Laura Peters, missed out on some of the Spring and didn't qualify, but she did manage to be the only boat to beat Brian Callahan, pulling back a final weekend bullet and at a single win on Memorial Day.

Peters took some weekends off for work and lost one other by attending the North American Sunfish Championships in North Carolina in early June. Her absence not only gave Callahan a leg up, it also allowed Dom Everaet to jump into third place behind Callahan and Jerry and Darrilynn Brewster. The Brewsters seem to master the Handicap fleet with the exception of the two top Sunfish racers and are still looking for that breakthrough win.

The steady improvement of the other contenders in that fleet bodes well for the competition to come. The Diane Pierok/Ken Wright tandem are obviously getting more comfortable in all conditions. Curt Donahue and Stephen Cook, each in a cruiser, have been steady participants and are

learning more each outing. All are tougher competitors than they were even a year ago.

In the Y-Fleet, Roger Henthorn and Bobbie Bode have re-established themselves at the top of the Y pyramid after a bit of a slump in 2020. Henthorn credits his crew Bode for her work on the jib for their success,



but he also likes the job his new sails are doing.

Pete Peters and Rose Schultz in "LiveYire" struggled a bit in the Spring and Holiday Series so far but showed signs of a renaissance in that final and difficult Sunday of the Spring.

Every boat in the Y fleet has shown marked improvement, evidenced by some strong finishes this year. Brett Hart and daughter Maggie,

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HSA Spring Series Brings Optimism

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although missing races here due to Brett's job transfer, are showing signs that they will no longer inhabit the rear of the fleet. That holds true for Scott Eversole and daughter Mckenna as they more often find themselves in with rather than away from the front runners.

Newest Y guy Eric Anderson has flung himself into the learning curve with gusto and, with everything new for him and his crewing daughters Leda, Lauren, and perhaps even Lilly, he has a ready supply of able bodied mates.

Charlie DeArmon now has a steady crew in Amy Marks and together they have found new success in a fleet that must now regard them as a threat.



**Stay Safe. Stay Healthy.
If you are not
fully vaccinated,
wear a mask.
Thank You.**



ITS participant
Emilie Westcott
aboard Dom
Everaet's Catalina
22.

Intro to Sailing: Cicadas, Bees and RollerGirls, Oh My!

Emilie Westcott was one of the participants in our recent ITS. She is not only capable at the helm, she is a RollerGirl, a writer, and a storyteller.

Emilie showed up the first day of ITS wearing a long sleeve shirt that had alternating yellow and black horizontal stripes. Being on the same boat that day, we had to ask. She relates the story here:

"I had a friend tell me he was going to spend

the cicada uprising indoors, on his couch, wear a 'bee suit'. We spent a few minutes discussing how gross cicadas were, while both my husband and I envisioned him dressed like a bee for two weeks.

"I was distracted by swirling questions like, why a bee? Are bees the natural enemy of cicadas? Maybe he's talking specifically about Africanized bees? Will the cicadas even fall for it given the immense scale difference between bees and humans? (continued on page 6)

Sunfish Class Allows Added Block

Language and Reasoning for Rule Change

The Rule

3.7.1 The mainsheet may be any length and diameter. A class supplied running block attached to the bridle may be used to allow an additional purchase on the mainsheet. When using this additional purchase, the end of the mainsheet shall be tied to the eyestay of the aft boom block. The trigger clip may be removed or replaced with an alternative clip of approximately the same size. A small running block may be used on the bridle with or without the clip

The Reasoning:

The additional turn in the mainsheet works the same as in the Laser Class, allowing a significant reduction in the force needed to pull the mainsheet with the sole introduction of a low cost small block (as supplied by the Builder for the lower boom aft block) and the use of a 3 meters (10 feet) longer mainsheet. This absolute low cost and feasible solution, will allow all Sunfish sailors a much easier sail trimming in mid to strong winds and will specially benefit junior-, female-, grand master- and great grand master sailors to easily trim the sail in winds above 10 knots, making the Sunfish Class more competitive and consolidating it as one of the world's most inclusive International Sailing Class.

RollerGirls, Cicadas, and Bees, Oh My!

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Is this crazy enough to work?

"About ten minutes passed before we both realized at the same moment that he was talking about a beekeeper's suit. I tried the bee tactic in his honor and to be honest, there were no cicada spottings on day one (with the bee shirt) and two separate cicada spottings on day two (without the bee shirt).

Correlation or causation? We may never know."

Pretty sure I spotted Emilie in the RollerGirls promo on YouTube. Very cool. (She was not wearing the bee shirt.)

1. Going to Big Regattas (cont. from page 2)

1.

2. **5. You'll learn at evening socials.** While conversation bounces around from topic to topic at regatta dinners, it always comes back to sailing, often to talking through the day's racing. Fellow sailors often share how they set their boat up, why they chose one side of the course, what they thought the current was doing....

3.

4. **6. You'll learn by growing relationships with fellow sailors.** How best to get to regattas? With a travel buddy! How best to meet travel buddies? At regattas! For new sailors, traveling can be daunting. From securing boats on racks or trailers to driving a big vehicle towing a trailer to so very many hours on the road, there's so much to handle.

7. You'll learn through photos. Big regattas often have event photographers. Check out your boat pictures, and critique them! You can often identify things in photos that you can't see in the heat of competition; perhaps the jib leads could be a little farther off in the big breeze

Persistent Shifts and Why You Whack the Dog

by Mike Stratton

The other night I found myself in that curious half awake, half asleep world where dreams meld somehow with your half woke reality. I was dreaming that I was sailing in a race and that I had somehow sensed that the wind was in a persistent shift to the left. I was trying to get to the left side of the bed but there were obstacles, like someone on my windward hip going the same direction and preventing me from tacking.

“So I started whacking her legs (the dog’s, not my wife’s) to make her, I dunno, tack away?”

There were actually two someone’s – my wife and our dog who was sleeping between us. I remember trying to tack but the dog, Beatrice, had all four of her feet planted squarely into my back which is equivalent to being on my windward hip. I couldn’t move.

So I started whacking her legs (the dog’s, not my wife’s) to make her, I dunno, tack away? The dog relented somewhat due to my flailing away at her and I was able to roll over, which in my dream meant that I was going to get to the side of the course that I wanted – in the direction of the persistent shift.

I’m not sure how it all turned out. I must have awakened and the whole race was over, but I was simply trying to practice in my dream race what I would in a real one – get to the side of the course where the persistent shift is happening.

Dave Dellenbaugh, the *Speed and Smarts* guy, says that your strategy in a persistent shift is the opposite of what you do when the wind is oscillating or when the wind’s behavior is unknown. (A persistent shift is one that keeps moving in one direction rather than back and forth as an oscillating one does.)

His advice is three fold: (1) head for the shift –the rule of thumb for both oscillating and persistent shifts is to sail toward the next shift. So sail toward the side of the course where the persistent shift is happening. (2) Sail fast to the next shift – that is, sail faster and lower than normal so you get to the shift sooner as opposed to sailing higher and slower. (3) Fight to go the right way – if you have determined that the persistent shift is on the right side of the course, work hard to get to that side, even if you are being headed and have to duck other boats to get there and even if you have to sail in someone’s bad air to get there, most of the time.

Whacking the Dog and Persistent Shifts

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Dellenbaugh also says that when you have concluded that it is a persistent shift, you need to disregard all the principles you have been taught about how to get up the windward leg. That includes NOT staying near the middle of the course. Otherwise you will lose ground to those boats that went farther to the favored side. That includes NOT tacking on a header. Otherwise you will be headed away from the side where the persistent shift is happening. That includes NOT sailing the longer tack first. Otherwise you will be sailing away from the persistent shift. Sail the short tack first and get to the side where the persistent shift is happening. That includes NOT tacking when another boat is crossing you. Otherwise, again, you will be going the wrong way. Stay on the tack that takes you to the shift even if it means ducking a bunch of sterns to do it.

In my dream I'm pretty sure I beat both Dawn and Beatrice to the windward mark. After all, both of them were sleeping through the whole thing whereas I was semi-conscious of what I was doing. In the real world of racing, the equivalent to whacking Beatrice on the legs to force her to "tack" worked. I doubt that whacking Roger and Bobbie with my whisker pole will do the same, but it might be worth a try.

Dave Dellenbaugh is a champion helmsman, tactician, author, coach, rules expert and seminar leader.



Beatrice is a champion mole digger, grass eater, rule breaker, Frisbee grabber, and impediment to a good night's sleep.

