

## ***Topper worlds Debrief***

### **ISA Website news**

#### **WORLD TOPPER CHAMPIONSHIPS 2007**



Overall, there were one hundred and seventy three entries at the Topper World Championships in which sixty of these competitors were under the age of fifteen. Over the championship ten races were sailed in the ever changing weather in Lake Garda. There were four qualifying races followed by six more races for the finals. Thomas Chaix, the coach felt the event was very successful, he commented that the event was particularly tough for the younger sailors involved but overall the results reflected the teams hard work, attitude and focus on and off the water.

Philip Doran, from Courtdown, secured a 9th final position despite a very difficult last race at the Topper world championships. Philip showed consistency throughout the races with five top ten finishes which helped him secure this excellent result. Evan Tobin from Kilrush, Matthew Kinkaid from Newry and Rory Lynch from Blessington secured a top 50 position while Colin O Mahony from Blessington was in the Gold fleet. Finn Lynch aged eleven reached 10th place in the Silver fleet, He was the youngest participant and also the best of the six under 12's entered.

#### **Results**

9th and 2<sup>nd</sup> (U15): Philip Doran

41st Evan Toibin

42nd Matthew Kinkaid

48th and 9<sup>th</sup> (U15) Rory Lynch

69th Colin O Mahony

97th and 26<sup>th</sup> (U15) Finn Lynch

The topper international association AGM was held at the championship and the 2008 worlds have been awarded to Ireland at a venue to be determined in the next few months.

Provisionally it was agreed that the Topper Championships will be held in 2009 in Austria, 2010 in Croatia and 2011 back in Garda.

### **Coach debrief**

Overall the championship went well and I was very impressed by the focus and motivation of the sailors in difficult situation. I am telling I did not like waking up that early either! You were well hydrated at all time and I found your lunch bags were actually very much OK (if we except the sweets and the Mars bars!)

## ROUTINE

Waking up

Dip in the lake for a wake up swim

Breakfast

Rigging + getting in gear

1.15 hours before actual 1<sup>st</sup> start : morning brief beside RIB. Dropping food and drink in RIB.

Launching from 50min to 30 min before actual start

Getting the body in gear, prioritising external components for strategy.

Debrief at various time in front of club (usually tried to do it at protest time limit but did not really work)

Back to accommodation

Early sleep

## PRIORITISING EXTERNAL COMPONENTS

Malcesines did not display the usual straight forward tactics encountered last year. This induced some confusion after the first two races. I introduced a system where you had to sort out the priorities to be able to keep it simple (not overloading your mind!)

Wind strength : In lighter air (at least 3 races), potential losses through decreased pressure were enormous, way bigger than taking advantage of a shift or a wind bend. In stronger breeze the importance decreased.

Oscillating breeze : Being in phase is the most important to be gain boat length after each tacks.

Wind bend : permanent bend there all the time. Apart from the last race, the morning breeze, when fully established, was providing us with a good 10-15 degrees bend at the top of the course.

Persistent shift : The wind is following the forecast, Sea breeze can also provide persistent shift.

Tide/current : consider this to optimise route or to sail in zones where significant advantage can be obtained. A slight surface current started to appear after a few days of strong northerly wind.

Waves : they dictate the way you have to sail the boat and the way you are going to adjust your controls to optimise speed. Target area of flat water upwind for safer tacking.

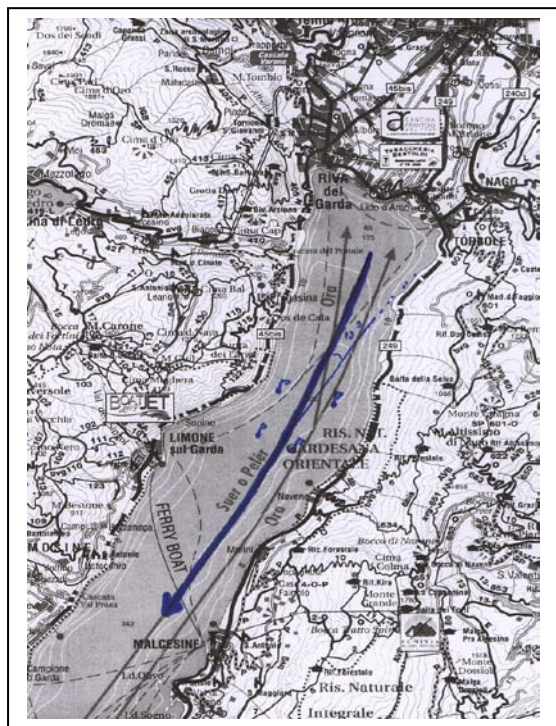
Line bias : gain right at the start enough to be in control.

Course bias : will influence time spent on one tack on the choice of the first tack (the longer one first)

Building your strategy is actually prioritising the above up to the point where you have only three or four factors left to consider which one is the directing one.

In most our races, the left wind bend at the top of the course (see figure) was our major factor to consider. However, if the wind dropped and the North wind (Peeler) was getting weaker, wind strength became our priority.

## THE LEFT BEND



In blue is the Peeler, the Garda Northerly wind we had to sail in 9 out the 10 races we competed in. As you can see, the wind actually bends right where we had our trapezoid course with definitely a difference of 15 degrees between the bottom of the course and the windward part of the course.

The strategy was to take advantage of the line bias to some extent (middle of the line), go as fast a feasible to the left and tack about 150 boat length below the lay line. Any boat tacking later were overlaying. Tacking too early and you were missing the full advantage of the bend (only using 10 degrees of it)

## POINTS TO IMPROVE IN FUTUR

- team work in pre-race routines
- placement compared to the direct opposition. Control and avoiding cover! Especially on the runs.
- Leeward mark rounding. **Anticipation, placement and fight** to hold position until tacking possible! You (almost all) ended up in most situations as the outside boat, having to give room and if sometimes you managed to get near the mark, you were putting the bow down breathing dirty air from the boat rounded just ahead of you and allowing the boat following you to put his bow above your transom (no Tack allowed until he goes, oops).
- Acceleration off the line (**timing**)

These points should be within your focus for the winter training and future event in the topper or your new class of choice.

Good luck

*Thomas Chaix  
05 Sept 2007*