Toni's Tips for Two Handed Racing

For this edition of tips and tricks I would like to share Toni Sacco's debrief notes from the WetaFest. She showed the lads how it was done at WetaFest sailing with Randy Smyth consistently beating the single handers in the breezy conditions. It is something which I have not witnessed before and it was great to see. As I have not had much experience double handed racing the Weta I will leave it up to Toni to share what she observed and learnt sailing with Randy. She obviously had her eyes open and soaked up a lot of knowledge in the 3 day regatta, enjoyable reading!

Hi All,

I wanted to share with you notes that I jotted down when I got home after sailing with Randy. I apologize in advance for any mistakes, as this is my interpretation of what I could recall. Hope you enjoy.

Heavy Air
1. Tight rig - Tighten the shrouds to the bottom hole to bend the mast. Tight forestay.
2. For a flat sail put the sheets in the aft most clew blocks. [Chris: I think Toni is referring to having a straight leech and less twist, especially as being double handed they could handle the power that this sail set up gives].
3. Keep a tight main halyard to remove creases in the main sail

Upwind Sailing in Heavy Air
1. Keep flat sails and a tight cunningham. Tighten the halyards on the gennaker and jib when you're on the water to account for stretch.
2. Sheet in the main nearly full so there is no twist in the sail, but, the focus is on the jib's tightness so that you can sail as high as possible. Sheet in the jib as hard as possible but make sure the top tell tells on the leach are flying.
3. Drive the boat to keep it flat. Focus on keeping the bow of the leeward ama out of the water. Flat is fast.
4. If lots of wind pinch slightly, just enough so the luff chord on the jib flaps slightly.
5. Actively trim the main as necessary to keep power and speed in the puffs and lulls. Trim so that the top tell tales are flying.
6. Choose speed over angle - take the extra tack or gybe if necessary, turn down or up as necessary to keep speed
7. Weight - hike out fully with butts on the ama and both sailors behind the shrouds
8. Power through the waves if necessary. Wait for space between the waves to tack so that you're not tacking into a wave.

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Heavy Air Downwind

1. When trimming set the gennaker trim first to the angle you want to sail. Then trim the jib and main to match.
2. Actively trim the main on the waves to aid with stability, sailing flat, and to surf the waves.
3. Weight Distribution: one body all the way at stern of boat next to the rudder; other person on rail, aft, but moving fore/aft as necessary to maintain stability. Weight back to keep the bow up.
4. Drive up to gain speed, drive down when overpowered.
5. In big puffs, when necessary drive to avoid plunging the bow of the leeward ama in the water. Actively trim main if necessary. Again, flat is fast.
6. Sail for speed even if you compromise angle.
7. We maintained a tight rig, including cunningham.
8. Turn down if necessary to sheet in the main.
9. Make most of your adjustments to keep the boat flat with your driving and sheeting of the main. Ease out the gennaker if necessary.
10. Shoot for a well balanced boat with minimal weather helm in which the boat drives itself.

Light Wind Sailing

1. Bring the weight as far forward as possible to keep the bow down.
2. Sheet in the jib about 1-2 inches loose of when it's fully sheeted in.
3. Tighten the windward jib sheet slightly to give the foot curve and create belly in the sail.
4. Keep your sheets loose.
5. Loose cunningham
6. Ease cunningham on the downwind
7. We maintained flat sails with the sheet in the aft most hole on the clew of the jib and main.
8. Ease the halyards slightly.

Where to put your sheet in the clew block?

Aft for straight leech, forward for twist
Heavy Air- flat [Chris: Have a straight leech as long as you can hold the boat flat]
Light air - belly/twist [Chris: You can achieve a lot of this with mainsheet tension, rather than putting the main in the forward clew hole].

Some tricks for doublehanders

In Heavy wind
1. Driver handles tiller and main, crew handles gennaker and jib, or, crew handles all sails
2. Drop the spin while going upwind, but be sure you have a way to tie it down.
3. When going around the windward mark the crew eases the jib and hoists the gennaker, skipper eases main and drives down.
4. During Gybes the driver handles tiller and holds spin sheet while crew gybes the gennaker and then the jib.
5. During Tacks the jib should be brought to the other side of the boat by the wind and the sheets tacked without the sail stopping, backwinding, or flapping.
6. Narrow and fast tacks.

General Racing Tips

At the start
1. Accelerate through the starting line
2. Slowly sail up to the starting line so that your timing is on for you to be on the line at the start.
3. Make sure you're at the favored end be it the pin or the boat. Upwind end if upwind start, downwind end if downwind start
4. Look for a clear lane - clear air - or just hit the line at the start and accelerate past everyone for clear air
5. Start accelerating 10 seconds before the start so you're on the line at the start.
6. Hang out above the pin or boat (whichever is favored) before the starting line. Randy 'heaved to" so that we parked.

Before the start
1. Give yourself ample time.
2. Sail out into the course to look for the wind, scope out clouds, wind patterns.
3. Decide which side of the course looks best.
4. Find a mark on shore to view the starting line to ensure you're actually on the line at the start and not behind it.

Continually look for wind
Are the boats ahead of you lifted or knocked?
Look for wind shifts, or more/less wind on the water
Clouds - look for shifts, more/less wind
Use the geography to your advantage- if wavy sail behind the shoal, etc

Making the lay line
Sail 5 seconds past what you think the layline is, esp. in heavy weather.
In heavy winds the layline is past 90 degrees. The mark is near the aft end of the ama.

#1 rule - Have fun! Don't crash.