

Eric asked me to write a frostbite style WOW. Here is some thoughts on the weekend.

June 7, 2007

1. After my first winter of frostbiting, I can say that it truly helps. Usually, in the spring I am focusing on boat handling and set up. This year, my boat handling, although far from perfect, seemed much more automatic, allowing me to focus on the important things- starts, shifts, etc.

2. Many people had trouble with the famous Barrington chop. John and I seemed to have the best speed in it, although we used different techniques. I steer a lot, pushing the bow up going into a wave, then steer down at the crest. The windier it is, the more aggressive the tiller movements are. John prefers to minimize tiller movements and steer with his weight as much as possible. We do agree on three things however:

1. Move back slightly
2. Keep the hiking strap tight, so that you are locked into the boat
3. Lean back hard going into a wave- when you are hiking and go into a big wave , you need to pull hard on the strap with your forward foot. This helps pull the bow up to meet the wave.

3. While I am still confused by the current, some things are beginning to make sense.

1. Be careful of going right on the first leg when the tide is coming in.
2. At the leeward mark, avoid tacking early and staying close to the shore. Scott Walker and Bruce Morris seem to think this is especially true late in the afternoon, when the wind has pushed more water up the bay. Whatever the reason, the tacking right at the mark was deadly.
3. There seems to be a reverse flow at the Rumstick shore. At one point I was going downwind, carving waves like crazy, only to be passed by group to windward, closer to the shore, sailing in smaller waves. It took my simple-minded brain the whole leg to realize I was sailing on the other side of a tidal shear. That is why I had bigger waves- I was going into a strong current, while the boats to Windward had a following current! Watch for lines of weed, as they are good indicators of tidal shears.

4. When the breeze is out of the south, the left side usually pays off. This is true of most windward legs when there is a left side shore (Rumstick Point). As the breeze travels over land , it backs in relation to the prevailing wind causing a convergence. This convergence usually causes more pressure and a geographic left hand shift, not only in Barrington, but at most venues. Okay, enough with the meteorology lesson, as this does not always work out. In the 5th race Scott went right and smoked us by 100 yards.

5. Thanks to everyone at Barrington Y.C. for putting together another great weekend.

Bill