



USA FINN CLASS

November 2020

www.finnusa.org

SOLO

NEWSLETTER



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Image by Kevin Polk



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For more details contact USAFA Secretary at secretary@finnusa.org

SOLO Newsletter is a non-profit official publication of the USA Finn Association and distributed to its members and other interested parties free of charge. Send your articles to the USAFA secretary, we are always looking for the new and interesting content.

Editors

Rodion Mazin & Peter Frissell

Big thank you to all the contributors and especially to **Diane** and **Eric Frissell** for the quality check.

Shout-Out you to **Chuck Rudinsky** for donating a HIT mast to the class!

Other 2020 supporters: David Piersol and Joe Chinburg



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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

A year ago who would have thought we would be required to wear a mask in a bank, or (as I learned thru NPR) that the New York Philharmonic Orchestra would be playing in the back of a pickup truck. Thankfully, it appears the end is in sight with the first shipments of vaccine. I expect by early next summer the disruption will be reduced as COVID tapers off. Meanwhile, in the Finn and sailing world we have seen the major regattas cancelled but increased attendance at local, informal events. We have found some young people think the Finn is an AWESOME boat and the lack of boats less than \$6000 becoming more of an issue. The California and Florida fleets are active and Will Libcke's article regarding the Great Lakes Series is an indication of what can be done. The Gulf Coast has been making great use of the class boat and had some new Finn sailors at Nationals. Personally, due to the local -only sailing, I did a greater number of races this year without having to travel. People are searching for boats so they can participate in the local events. If you know of anyone that has a boat not being used, please let Rodion or I know so we can match the boat to the person. Rodion has recently put a number of used boats on the website. Please look at the new US Sailing One Design Website.

<https://www.ussailing.org/one-design-profile/finn-usa/>

Many thanks to Doc. Hunter and Buccaneer YC race committee volunteers for stepping in at the last minute to run Nationals. We were glad to see John Dane Sr. and Jr. from Pass Christian who participated in the Nationals they originally organized, only to have their club suffer damage from Hurricane Zeta shortly before the event was to happen. We appreciate Mobile Yacht Club for hosting an excellent dinner served outside on their spacious patio. Many



thanks to the others who have stepped up to run regional regattas during the pandemic including Mike Dorgan and Al Marshall (Cazenovia). Congratulations to Darrell Peck for winning the Nationals.

On an international level, four days after registration opened for the World Masters, the number of registrants passed 100. On a National level, a socially distanced Nationals occurred without a hitch and 13 boats are registered for the North Americans including Luke Muller. While sailing in the northern climates is both literally and figuratively "on ice," we look forward to hearing about how they go. It appears the Olympics will happen this year and we wish Luke Muller the best of luck at what will probably be the Finns last Olympic games. Not having the Finn in 2024 is truly a great loss for the Olympics.

Peter Frissell
USAFA President

USAFA 2020 Accomplishments and AGM report

We wish to thank all the people who contributed to the USAFA and regatta organization. Especially those people who put forth the effort only to have the event cancelled. As time has progressed all of us are adapting to the new normal. The pandemic has contributed to a conflict-ridden environment with heightened tensions and strong feelings on both sides. In this acrimonious environment, it is critical we continue to communicate in open discussions. We must be cognizant and informed about the concerns of all class members. USAFA welcomes all comments. We are planning the best way forward based upon respect for the safety and concerns of all our class members. How do we grow the class? Many of the discussions revolved around the obvious. Increased web presence, allowing people to try the boat, etc. Based on these basic ideas and additional input from people both inside and outside the class, USAFA leadership have been executing a plan to insure the class is ready for the future. We are confident these goals can be achieved by working together. Below is a list of what current leadership has accomplished in the past year:



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1) The class structure had deteriorated over the years and Joe Chinburg initiated an effort to update the constitution, bylaws and formalize the class structure. Rodion and I have been continuing this effort. Jack Caldwell retired as the class's registered agent, and current laws required us to formalize our legal status. We chose the 501c3 format, as many other classes have, in order to allow donations. This was not a simple task requiring many hours of labor. Approval was accomplished without incurring any legal or accounting costs.

2) Have established a line of communication with the IFA to coordinate resources and give the USA more visibility in the IFA, along with requesting help with marketing efforts. The IFA has acknowledged our need and will advise more specifics.

3) We believe that long term, the USAFA will be better off having a good working relation with US Sailing than not. We have been in communication with US Sailing, and are taking advantage of their efforts to grow one design sailing in the US. We have our own webpage on the US Sailing website.

4) The class now has some younger leaders to help insure a smooth transition to the future.

5) The Solo and website have been greatly improved thru Secretary's efforts.

As a result, we have attracted 20 people who previously have not been members of the USAFA. Our Facebook following is up 30%. We have local regattas run and attended mostly by people under 40. (Cass Lake and Crescent Yacht Club).

Our current and future projects include:

Not having a reasonable supply of both new and used boats is limiting growth as much as finding people with an interest in sailing Finns. Currently, approximately 35% the cost of a new European boat goes to taxes, transportation and other inefficiencies. We are working on two alternative solutions for boats to be made on this side of the pond. Additionally, for those with fewer financial resources we have been working to resurrect older boats at very low cost. The lower cost effort has resulted in three new fleets being developed in the Detroit area.

We have been investigating various software's which will help automate the dues, accounting and record keeping functions.

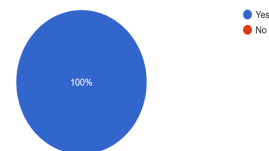
We have been saving money for several years. Two new suppliers are considering the supply of class legal boats for the US and Canadian Market. When their plans are more fully developed our financial resources will be utilized marketing the USAFA, in conjunction with support from the IFA.

We would also like to discuss the feasibility of holding the Gold Cup and World Masters in the U.S. If your club is capable and willing to submit a bid please contact USAFA secretary. USAFA will support all the efforts to get all the Major Finn events back to the North American continent.



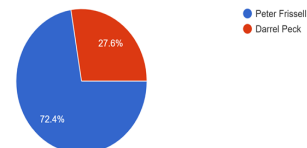
Accept new Bylaws dated 1/19/2020

30 responses



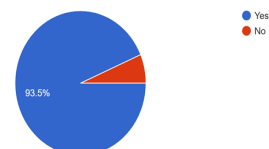
Vote for the USAFA President

29 responses



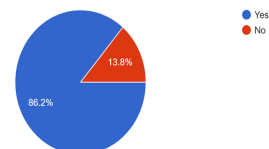
Vote to retain Rodion Mazin as the USAFA Secretary (no proposal received)

31 responses



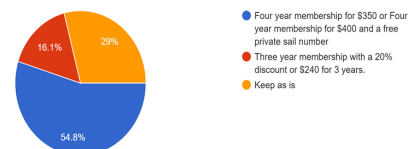
Proposals for all major regatta bids, VP nominations, and proposals to be submitted NLT two weeks before the Annual General Meeting. No proposals f...a, to be announced or voted on prior to the AGM.

29 responses



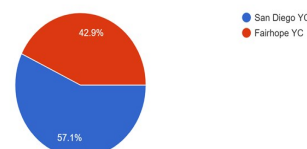
Proposal to institute a multi-year membership discount.

31 responses



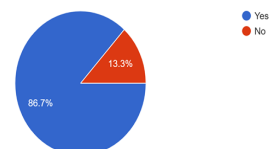
Vote for the 2021 Masters North American venue

28 responses



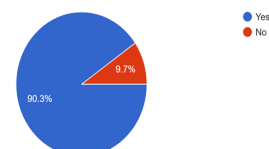
Proposal to restore Pacific Northwest (PNW) Finn district to Washington, Idaho, Oregon and elect Darrel Peck as the VP for the region.

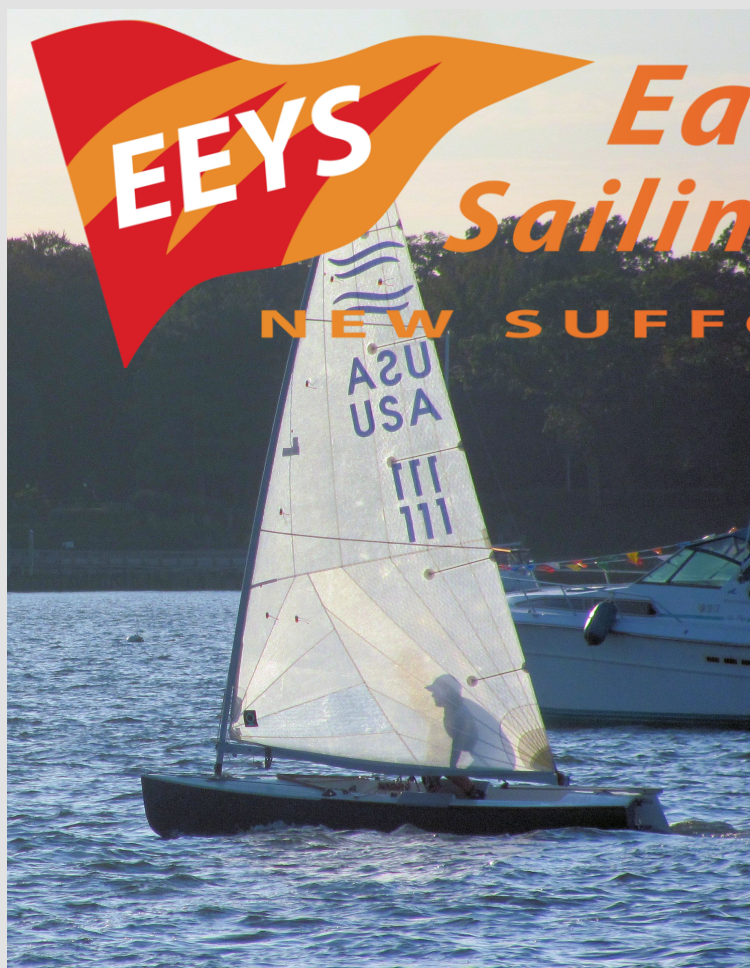
30 responses



Proposal to institute regional voting for the VPs. VPs will be responsible for running annual voting before AGM. If VP fails to properly carry his or he...mportary substitute until the subsequent elections.

31 responses





East End Youth Sailing Foundation

NEW SUFFOLK, NEW YORK

The issues with the weight sensitivity of the traditionally used dinghies has been realized by many college sailing programs and a number of them have started keel boat programs with a national competition circuit. A donated Hobie33 was the opportunity for EEYS to launch its own keelboat program. The boat is 35 years old, with all original equipment, and the first years were spent less sailing than working on the boat. The removal of 35 years of bottom paint and fairing of hull and keel, as well as new sails and standing and running rigging made the boat race ready. To the great excitement of the 7 high school kids (four girls and three boys) in the keelboat program last year, the EEYS Hobie33 Swift has become the boat to beat in our



THE EAST END YOUTH SAILING FOUNDATION

By Christopher Ku-

The East End Youth Sailing Foundation ("EEYS") has been providing high school sailing programs to three high schools from the east end of Long Island, New York for seven years. All of EEYS' programs are completely free of charge to the students and the schools. While the emphasis of EEYS is on high school sailing, our true mission, is the development of young men and women with sailing the vehicle, allowing our students to develop skills that will serve them well beyond their high school years. EEYS places a strong emphasis on instruction that fosters teamwork, leadership, and learning while creating a close sense of community amongst a culturally, economically, and academically diverse group of students.

EEYS runs high school dinghy programs in the spring and the fall, with after school practices four days a week and competition on the Saturdays. The sailing teams are members of the local high school sailing league which encompasses some 25 schools from Long Island and Westchester County and are members of the Mid-Atlantic Scholastic Sailing Association (MASSA) and the Interscholastic Sailing Association (ISSA). The teams compete at a league level and at MASSA/ISSA ladder events. The EEYS dinghy programs and most of the competition runs on Club 420s; EEYS has use of 9 boats through the generous support of the Old Cove Yacht Club. The downside of the C420 is that it is quite weight sensitive. Pairing up the right team members to get to an ideal weight combination for the weather conditions can be a challenge for the coaches. And, primarily, the weight issues tend to exclude the heavier high schoolers from competition, and by extension, from the sport itself.

local waters. This year because of Covid-19 rules, EEYS is running the keelboat program with a much reduced crew.

The next step in accommodating the heavier high school student is an older Finn Dinghy (its seems to be a 70s Vanguard) that was made available to EEYS. The Finn will fit in nicely with the upcoming fall program since because of Covid-19 restrictions EEYS has had to shelve double handed sailing and will be moving exclusively to single handed sailing in Lasers. The spring was spent on some necessary repairs. The hull was faired and repainted, lines were replaced, and new hiking cushions installed. There is still some work to be done but those can be winter projects. The Finn came with two sails, one CDN and one USA, go figure. Both were in mediocre condition and, not really surprising, both completely fell apart, literally, after just a couple of uses. EEYS was very fortunate to be donated a few Finn sails by Rodion Mazin of the USA Finn Class so that we can start using the boat this fall. Obviously Finn sailing is not a high school sailing disci-

pline so the Finn will be used only in practices but then one of our coaches is personally interested - the photos are of him in the Finn. We have a trailer and dolly for the Finn (the dolly weighs almost more than the boat and will need to be replaced) so that once we can hopefully return to normal competition after the pandemic has run its course, we can have him travel with the Finn.

Since its inception seven years ago, EEYS has provided all of its educational and training programs to any East End high school student at no cost. More than ever, it is crucial to provide high school students with after school alternatives - especially activities that take them away from their screens. There is nothing in the world that packs as many life lessons as sailing; it teaches teamwork, engineering, history, patience, oceanography, ecology, etc., all in one fell swoop in a challenging and fun environment. EEYS is a 501(c)(3) educational organization and draws on donations by individuals, organizations and businesses as its sole source of revenue.

Tikkie terug Jaap

By Stephen Smeulders

This article is intended for the readers who have their gaze set on a [D-Fantastica Finn](#). The consensus with sailors is that the mast & its setup, are crucial in our sport. Prior to this experience, my own focus was on the 22'2" measurement to the transom, as well as 'how the boat felt', while sailing. The North Sails white paper, [Tune your rig for outright speed](#), spells out in detail how to measure leech tension. It also provides target matrices that provide guidance on mast collar & leech tension pairs, depending on weather conditions. I wishes to thank Wild Harbor Finn Fleet for demonstrating this measurement technique and identifying an

issue that required immediate atten-



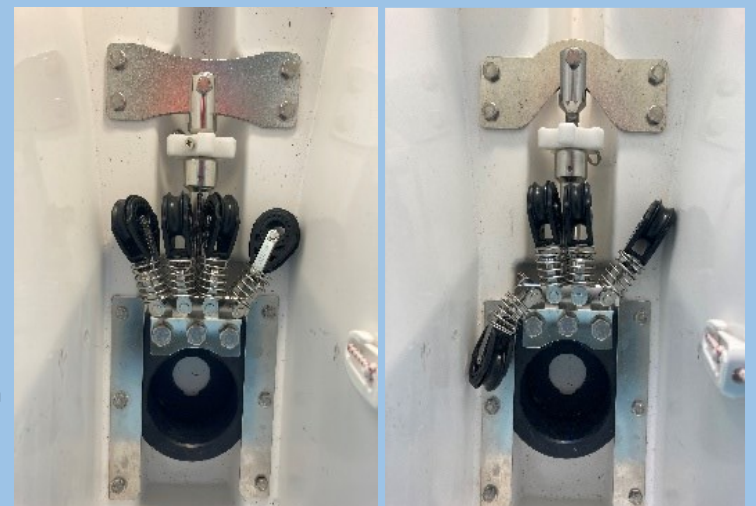
[Dinghy Racing USA](#) or [Dinghy Racing Centre](#).

Replacement of the existing Mastplate with the Special Mastplate is only complicated by the lack of real estate in that location of the boat. The backing plate into which the four (4) 10mm bolts are threaded, will not drop into the

hull upon their removal.

Special thanks to Dinghy Racing Centre for FedEx'ing the part as well as all the technical, & reassuring, support. They advise that D-Fantasticas purchased through them, will automatically be delivered with the Special Mastplate, as well as with some other accoutrements, at no additional cost.

'Tikkie terug' is a Dutch soccer, comic strip, colloquialism, that translates: 'A little bit back'



tion.

The D-Fantastica, that was purchased direct, was also bundled with a HIT mast with bend numbers very close to the Wilke (refurbished) mast I acquired 10 years ago. Despite our best efforts, it was discovered that, at most, 70lbf leech tension was achievable with the deck

I am the most recent member to join the Finn fleet. Upon the recommendation of a couple friends who are fleet members, I purchased an entry-level Finn at the beginning of June. After my first and only practice sail, I decided I was ready to come out of quarantine and give racing in the fleet a shot. I raced in the June One Design

Weekend racing on Saturday June 13. It was awesome! Getting towed out in the morning to the Coronado Roads, I had a feeling we were in for a great day. The blue sky and conditions were picture perfect.

The breeze filled in pretty well. We had twelve boats on the starting line. The SDYC RC was, as always, top rate, led by Summer Greene. We sailed five really solid windward-leeward races. By the end of the day I was a little sore and had hiked out more than I have in recent memory in big boat sailing (sorry Ernie). I'm still adjusting to tacking the boat, and I got a few scrapes and even capsized. But, I had a smile from ear to ear. It's really fun to push a boat and yourself, and the Finn is a great boat to do that. I got better race after race thanks to the many boatspeed and boat-handling tips offered by others in the fleet. The Finn fleet is filled with good sailors who simply relish racing these fun boats. I enjoyed watching the graceful sailing of many in the fleet, a result of the boat and fleet being a lot of fun and fleet members

Reflections: Why have I joined the Finn Fleet? By David Balfour



going out to sail and practice often. Mike Dorgan makes it look too easy. Lee Hope's boat is mislabeled 'My Bad'; he's a smooth operator. Matt Dorgan hikes his boat flatter than anyone else. Mike Entwistle and Jim Buley are really quick downwind, a tribute to their

weekly practicing. I got to watch David Ryan leap out of his

boat to avoid a death roll and John Reiter turtle while they were pushing the envelope downwind and making gains on the lead boats.

After the ODW racing was cool too. There's a Finn band; a band comprised of Finn sailors who happen to like to rock out. We celebrated the day on the water and the camaraderie of sailing with

friends.

After the day, I was pretty pumped. I look forward to the next opportunity to get out racing my Finn. Fortunately, opportunities abound for sailing and racing in the fleet: several boats make it out nearly every Thursday afternoon for practice in the La Playa basin; invites come out in flurries for casual sailing on the weekends; and there's a solid race day a couple of times each month.

The Finn is ideal for social distancing too. I would recommend it highly to anyone who is looking to join an active fleet of great sailors who enjoy sailing and racing together.

SDYC ODW by Michael Dorgan

SoCal Finn sailors were treated to an Epic weekend (13-14 June) of sailing Finns hosted by the San Diego Yacht Club with the June ODW Saturday and the SDYC 'Cold Rum' pursuit race on Sunday. Both days were near perfect weather with sunny skies and medium air. On Saturday 12 Finns raced 5 races out on the Coronado Roads off Point Loma with mostly 8-12 knots of breeze keeping the fleet on their toes. New comers in the Finn: Roland Fournier (ABYC) and David Bal-

four (SDYC) were constantly in the mix and had big smiles when they hit the dock.

On Saturday evening and while practicing 'social distancing' the SDYC Finn Fleet hosted a get-together complete wwith beverages and the tunes of the Finn Band, wonderful evening rocking the night away.



Photo by Ian Trotter and Summer Green

SDYC July ODW- Treated 8 Finn sailors some fantastic sailing conditions and close racing with the course just off the Zuni-ga jetty under Point Loma.

Race committee in teams of 'two household members' did an excellent job of running 4 double windward races including running practice starts before each of the 4 races were started, making for some fun starting practice. First two races were won by Mike Dorgan. James Buley and Mike's son Matthew Dorgan both near the noise. In race 3, Mike was done for the day after breaking his tiller extension universal joint right after the start thus opening the door for Matthew and James Buley to duke it out for the overall win. Roland Fournier would have been in the noise if he did not start next to Dorgan when he broke his extension, getting tangled up right after the start, causing Roland to have to retire from Race #3. In the end it came down to the last race and who beat who to win the title. Matthew Dorgan at 6'6" and a youthful 20-yrs-old hiked hard and it showed in the 12-15 knot breezy last race, opening up a nice lead to the finish and short sail home winning the July ODW.



June ODW Results

1. Michael Dorgan—6
2. Lee Hope—20
3. James Buley—22
4. Roland Fournier—23
5. Matthew Dorgan—24
6. Michael Entwistle—25

7. John Reiter—33
8. Mark Ashburn—47
9. David Balfour—49
10. Dave Ryan—52
11. Randy Benton—53
12. Tim Fleming—54

July ODW Results

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Matthew Dorgan—11 | 4. Roland Fournier—20 |
| 2. James Buley—13 | 5. Michael Entwistle—22 |
| 3. Lee Hope—19 | 6. Randy Benton—23 |
| | 7. Michael Dorgan—24 |



Finns heading to the finish off Point Loma. Photo Mike Dorgan

Finn Fleet sailed the pursuit race in the San Diego bay along with 50 other various sailboats sailing the inaugural SDYC 'Cold Rum', a spin-off from the popular and iconic Hot Rum. The Finn Fleet was one of the first to head off the line w with larger & faster sailboats chasing. Adding to the challenge of touring around San Diego Bay, dodging large quantities of pleasure boats and including a few 'Rodney Dangerfields' or two... there was a large flood tide making navigation an important aspect of the day.





SYNC VISUAL, INTELLECT, AND FEEL

By Luther Carpenter
U.S. Sailing Olympic Head Coach

USA Finn sailors! Peter Frissell recently asked me to contribute to the Solo, and as I thought about the wide range of readers, I thought it might be interesting to share an article I wrote for our US Team last summer. It is not Finn specific, but is a good piece that covers a lot of ground that should give you some things to think about.

When you train for the Olympics, the dilemma of “what to work on next” can be fairly daunting. My approach is to always evaluate our last data points from regattas, and set goals to improve where we can reduce points on the scoreboard. For our team, I see three categories that can help improve our game team-wide:

- We need better preparation so we can sail with more confidence
- We need to sail more consistently in shifty conditions
- We need to approach our sailing with a stronger bond between feel and visual intellect.

Let's start with feel. Feel encompasses a wide range of important sensations (you should write this list down in your notebook):

How fast is the boat going?

Do I have a balanced helm?

Is the groove difficult and elusive, or do I have the perfect amount of gear changeability?

Is the boat balanced?

Am I over powered or under powered?

Do I accelerate well and on demand?

Is my technique solid through transition?

Can I race well with the boat feeling like this?

Do I have different modes to choose from, and can I switch quickly to each?

Is my hiking technique strong, efficient, and translating into boat speed?

Am I in sync with the subtlety of the wind velocity increase and decreases?

Do I feel efficiency on the centerboard?

Do I feel the subtle sheet pressure on the sail I'm trimming, and have

found the right range? “The last 3-5 inches of mainsheet trim are what

defines the fastest boats”

Do I know what absolute fast forward is?

Do I know max height mode?

Do I accurately know the “stall points” of sail trim and angle sailed?

My favorite question is, “how does it feel?”. As your coach, I'm looking for answers from the list above. I'm reminding you to **think in depth** about your sensations. I don't want to hear “good” or “terrible”, I want you to answer in an intellectual manner.

I'm not asking you to over-complicate moments. I want to teach you how to arrive at answers without hesitation, because you've trained yourself to feel and think with those checklists. It's your new fast track template.

Intellect is a term used in studies of the human mind, and refers to the ability of the mind to come to correct conclusions about what is true or real, and about how to solve problems.

In the sailing world, there are many types of intellect needed, which all have their time and place:

Feel intellect is essential, and ALL of the medalists have a PHD in it. You will too. (A-P above)

Visual intellect is the ability to recognize things, and **immediately perceive the complete story**. Snapshots is a term we use to identify familiar and repeating tactical situations. When trimming sails, a glance at your mainsail leech is visual intellect - you must decide if the twist and depth is right in an eye's moment. And on the course, an approaching wind field or mixed puff pattern must be part of our visual intellect. Generally, **visual intellect is calling on a vast library of stored knowledge** in our brain. Our eyes see it, it triggers experience data, and we react. The best sailors in the world dominate with visual intellect.

Board room intellect is used more in depth for designing equipment, or studying detailed weather phenomena, or maybe it's creating our budgets and strategizing fundraising. It's essential deeper thought, but isn't appropriate in the cockpit during a race.

Post action intellect is what we do when we debrief.

Visual intellect is an area where our team can improve dramatically. I want our team to draw “more detailed information” from quick looks with confidence. We need to be better sail trim experts, by



training our eyes relating “what we see” to “how we feel”. **This relationship is one of the main points of this article.** We should be able to look at a picture of a sail, and know exactly how that boat feels. **Visual intellect and feel are bonded as one.**

I was asked a few years ago “what’s more important, being able to see it or feel it?”. It’s both.

Let’s look at a common example: If the wind is a steady 8-9 knots in smooth water, we can sail our boat very accurately in a narrow groove. Trim and telltale behavior can be described as twitchy and accurate, while creating a boat that has minimal feel while being highly efficient. *That is the unique relationship of speed and height for that condition.*

It’s the “feel” of mainsheet tension in your hand, a completely neutral helm, butt/leg pressure down on the deck (while feeling good load against the efficient centerboard), wind on your face, “seeing” just enough twist, upper batten telltale behavior, jib tell tales, and the next approaching wind feature. It’s a LONG list, and you are in charge of continuing the cycle over and over with top precision. It’s fun, and it’s a condition where visual leads you to feel, which sends you back to visual, etc. So the intellectual knows that “no feel is good, the groove can be narrow, the boat can have great power and pointing, mainsheet trimming through a fairly small range is everything, and once moving the boat can be sailed quite flat with maximum efficiency.”

The computer running the show

Let’s talk bigger picture. How do we sail more consistently over the length of a regatta? That goal is achieved by having the proper (intellectual) mindset pre-race, during the race, and intellectually focused on each specific condition. Our minds are mini-computers being challenged with a series of scenarios, and we must constantly spit out the best percentage moves in rapid order.

A single sailboat race is a collection of 600 (!) probable input/reaction moments. Here’s my math: 40 minute race (2,400 seconds), an input and decision/reaction every 4 seconds = 600. That could be a telltale flick, a wave to steer around, a boat to duck, a puff to hike and ease/trim, a lay-line to hit, etc. When you really think about it, it’s amazing we can process all that and react to everything. Pole vaulters run, jam a stick in the ground, and arch over a bar - done! We are major multi-taskers, switching from “more vang”, to “aft thigh”, to “am I crossing?”, “down 8”, “3 minutes off lay line”, and maybe even “15 degree right shift - gybe setting!”.

In regatta debriefs, we’ll sometimes say “your event was three key decisions away from finishing top 5”. Really? $600 \times 8 \text{ races} = 4,800$ decisions. And I only screwed up 3 times? I’m sure my desktop math is flawed somewhat, but clearly some inputs and decision moments have more “value” and implications than others.

Let’s dig deeper. If I’m having a visual input every 4 seconds, how in the world do I know which ones are the most important to pay



attention to? It's like going to the Houston Rodeo in Reliant Stadium: Cowgirls/Cowboys, bucking broncos, Margaritas, flashing lights, 60,000 people, it's hard to know what to look at! So we categorize and highlight the top priorities to watch **each race**. On the water, you assess, discuss with your teammates, and use your coach as the information vessel - "Coach what are you seeing on the course?". Coaches are observers on the sideline reporting bankable facts.

But it's more than a pre-race discussion, or cherry-picking a single 4 second moment; it's the ability to chain together multiple looks, and assess bigger picture decisions. In split seconds, your mind is telling you "this is different, and the moment of opportunity is NOW", or "hmm, I'm getting a *"feeling"* the puffs are coming from the right more often as the day goes on". Or, maybe in the midst of a complicated day, your veteran intellect is telling you "a finish between 4th and 6th is just fine here, position properly to maintain your place".

I think sailors love racing, for it IS that adrenaline of **thinking all the time** that is such an intense high. When we get it right, it is nirvana.

Now as I'm emphasizing intellect, it's important to mention that a challenge in the Olympic world, is everyone is an intellectual. Banging off by yourself begs the question "why am I the only one over here?". Why am I gambling leverage? What is the percentage play that my internal computer knows for my best overall regatta score? There is "smart leverage", which is splitting short-term for something better; and there is desperation, gambling, or looking for the easy way out. And of course there is "sticking with the fleet, positioning better, and being patient for the next snapshot to move up the chains".

Intellect is seizing opportunity, and also staying the course. In poker, we don't go "all-in" every hand. We wait to keep losses low, until the better cards arrive. And even in the midst of a good hand, we still manage risk as related to our chances of winning the hand. Sailboat racing is exactly the same – there is a lifted tack, there are laylines, and there is fleet geometry. With so many knowns, why bet on unknowns?

The reason I'm emphasizing visual intellect/feel, is that I want to give you the tools to be more comfortable and dominate in the subtle positioning game. Certain wind conditions deliver a racecourse that keeps the fleet quite compressed as everyone arrives together at the first mark. Can you thrive in the knife-fight conditions? Do you love rounding the weather mark with 25 boats close behind? To win your answer must be "YES!".

Let's talk about **shifty unpredictable winds**. It's challenging because it's calling on the visual/feel skills at an alarming rate, even sometimes faster than every 4 seconds. Past history (meaning what side paid) has less bankable value, and there is a premium on reacting quickly to change as it is occurring. Your goal is to be "seeing it" (or realizing it) before the others, and claiming the open lane as the puff/shift comes in.

Story time - who is one of the most successful US Olympians in sailing? Paul Foerster (3 Olympic medals, 2 PanAm medals). Paul grew up sailing on Texas lakes, and enjoys shifty conditions. He's a quiet man who gets confidently down to business. His most important pre-race routine? Get out there as early as you can, and **sail the shifts to get a "feel" for the timing**. That's Paul's method regardless of condition. He trusts his eyes, his feel, and his **experience** more than a weather forecast or his coach. Paul needs to be our



hero.

When thinking about Paul, I create this mindset and advice on shifty days:

On shifty days when warming up, NEVER sail on a header. Sailing on the lifted tack ALWAYS feels better/easier, so follow Paul's advice and get a "feel" for it.

On unpredictable days, history can't be trusted, so you need **more** pre-race "data". Sail at least two test beats with some length, and then many "short-bursts". During postponements and recalls stay in phase to increase your confidence, track the **rhythm** of the shifts, and reinforce transitioning well. The **rhythm and feel of the wind is your data** to collect.

Acceleration and transition are two absolute requirements to race well in shifty conditions. As you sail in phase, don't be afraid to crack sheet to accelerate followed by a trim and climb in height. I'd be willing to bet that the last race you won, you accelerated well.

Success breeds confidence which multiplies success on shifty days. Arrive to the race course ready to feel and learn the condition, and stay sharp all day. Your to do list is: Always be in phase, accelerate well, always sail in clear lanes.

And a Paul bonus - He worked on his boat more, trained more, and wanted it more than anyone else. Malcolm Page quote on Paul "he was hard working and bloody smart!"

"Ok, how do I get better at visual intellect, and match it with my feel sensations?"

It's simple – but don't fall prey to just reading it, you have to DO IT. Sail more alone, and heighten your awareness. Become a master at gear changing, transition, and acceleration because YOU feel it and react.

Look at your sails, and equate vision to feel. Experiment, don't always do it the same way.

Become a master at identifying the "edges" of performance - i.e. what is just slightly too full, too flat, perfect depth. Where is the line when stall is approaching and how do you "reload"? How quickly can you get into fast forward VMG, standard angle, and high pointing VMG, all in perfect trim?

Use your coach, other team members, etc to discuss trims and techniques.

"Race" from the moment you leave the dock to return. Cruising will come later in your life.

Wrap-up

So it's easy right? Make 4,800 good decisions and you win a Gold

Medal! That's pretty daunting, but first step is to internally demand to sail with focus and purpose. I like to say every day "what is the hardest thing about this condition?" Once I've answered that question, that challenge is one of my primary focus points of the day. Tomorrow, instead of smashing into the chop and hating it, you'll be psyched to heel slightly, keep a higher percentage of load on the rig and board, and sneak a 1.5 length gain in that nasty set of 3 waves in a row!

The intensity at which you operate on the water needs to be high, as there are always gains to be made. Step one is to tell yourself you WILL BE the best at visual intellect and feel. You'll see the wind more clearly, you'll sense the wind going left with 20 seconds to go, you'll perhaps be master of slight twist for acceleration, and then

squeezing in for a burst of high mode. Someone is the most aware, is observing better, and drawing confidence on the day – why shouldn't that be you?

Another key attitude to have is "what's next?" If you can train yourself to look forward, you'll find that everything is easy. It means you are sailing "head more out of the boat" and that gains come easily when you see the plot. Lanes are easy to claim, and to quote Steve Hunt "my tactics are insane cause I'm in my big fat lane!"

What's the condition, what's the pre-race plan, what's the line look like, what phase is the wind in, how is the boat moving, what's the key to speed, what's my next move. Feed the computer solid data, and your mind will react with the best solution. Head to the podium, drink champagne!



RACE DAY GAME PLAN

By Skip Dieball

The vibe of a typical race day is part of the sport that I love. The anticipation, seeing friends in the boat park, prepping the boat...it all adds to the excitement of the day!

A few years back when I was coaching the late Geoff Ewenson, I worked hard to develop a daily plan that

kept us focused on the task at hand. Whether it was a practice day or a race day, we would work into our routines for each day and be ready for what we were to be faced with. For Geoff and I, it wasn't always easy staying focused with so many outside factors, but we worked hard on it and it played into staying focused mentally.

Game Planning for the day starts early in the day. I'll review the

weather over breakfast and think about the trends for the day. I'll then check in on what I see as we get the boat ready. Mentally, I try to prep the boat and my mind, from gear to sail selection to "it is a boatspeed day" vs. "it is a shift day".

Once heading out to the race course, I'll focus on what I see on the water. Pressure trends, directional changes vs. what was forecasted and then ULTIMATELY going upwind to get the numbers and spend time analyzing what I am experiencing.

I like to study the numbers both upwind and downwind and record so I can visually see what is happening. For example, I'll write down the first number we get on a given tack, then every minute or so record what is happening writing bigger numbers to the right and smaller numbers to the left. After 10 minutes on each tack, you have a pseudo-graph of what the wind is doing. From there, I'll auger in on what I think the wind is doing from pressure, shift and overall weather situation and set up the first beat strategy before

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getting our starting line homework done. When I do all of our starting line work, I'll continue to focus on what I saw pre-race and then use the time to further strategize what I see and do a number

of wind shots to further graph the wind and check in on which end of the line is favored. Occasionally I'll check in with our upwind numbers to see if everything correlates.

- So be sure you focus on the day's breeze as often as you can.
- Outline a daily routine from the time you wake up until you turn in for the night
 - Head to the boat park with a solid daily game plan
- Have a solid weather forecast for the day & review notes at the end of the day

- Recognize what you see when you get to the boat/boat park
 - Use pre-race time (the sail out) to gather all your info
 - Correlate all factors and develop a game plan
- Repeat and tweak in an effort to get better every day



GEOFFREY EWENSON (July 13, 1970 - October 14, 2020)



From the late 1990s through the 2008 quad, Geoff Ewenson was a staple on the North American Finn circuit. Having competed in the 2000, 2004 & 2008 Trials, Geoff was a fierce competitor, but one of the nicest and most generous friends ashore.

I had the privilege of coaching Geoff for a number of years and we traveled extensively. The trips were as much about competing and getting better as they were to see the world and live in the day. Geoff was the master at taking in the fun and keeping perspective.

When he hung up his dinghy boots, Geoff set off onto a very successful professional sailing career. Again, I had the pleasure of being part of some of the adventures and he'd often return the favor by sailing with me. We had a lot of fun and often talked of "when will we sail together again?" We had the most fun sailing the Star together, often doing way better than we should and having fun all the while.

Geoff was a great sailor, but even better friend. I will miss the adventures, but always smile when I think back to the many trips and experiences we had together. Rest in peace friend.



MOO MOO FINN



The Southern California Finn Fleet was elated that the 'powers to be' and their enacted governmental orders of NO BOATING was lifted to allow persons quarantining together... to be able to sail together. Since the Finn Dinghy is a single-handed boat and the Finn fleet was invited to the Corte Madera Valley and lake in the East San Diego County for some light-hearted Finn sailing and social distancing at 4,000 feet, it was a perfect day to hitch up the Finn and head to the mountains!

Thirteen eager Finns made the trip out Interstate 8 East, all meeting just beyond the gates to a 5,000-acre active ranch, complete with mountains, beautifully lush green hills of grass and assortments of active cows grazing all around the lake. The Fleet drove together single file down a narrow road through lush oak trees and vistas that went on forever. As we drove, you could feel your blood pressure ease, your hands on the steering wheel loosen, and many cares drifted in the rearview mirror...

While it was a long drive compared to heading to SDYC to launch our boats, the 'sound of silence' was well worth the drive. Everyone got busy unpacking and launching the Finns. We were rusty sailors sailing the topped off lake with big smiles on our faces. Rich Wright from MBYC did a great job of both managing the running and recording of the races as well as NOT flipping the very narrow canoe which he was perched on for most of the day.

If you have never lake-sailed before, you should, but bring your patience as anything can happen! One minute your leading, the next minute you are under a bluff, the wind is shifting 180 degrees, or stuck in an underwater forest of reeds or finding that there is one granite rock, just off the starboard lay line at the weather mark, making sailing both fun and adventurous. All Finn sailors were up to the task with multiple sets of sailors finishing near the noise in various races, keeping it fun.

After three successful races and some cloud action killing our breeze, we broke for lunch. The sailors and guest, ALL at a distance,



had lunch on the short peninsula overlooking the majestic lake. Some of the sailors brought wives and paddleboards, some brought dogs and another brought their kids to paddleboard, canoe, fish, and explore the lake. For the spectators, the viewing of the racing was fantastic as the fleet was



always an ear-shot away, and marks were set very close to the sailing action making it a fun day for all.

After lunch, another three races were run with the last two races to include an obstacle... yes, sailing around a little Island, with barely enough room for 1.5 Finns to round abreast... This little Island provided a great 're-start' opportunity for all involved. In the end, our gracious host and recently new Finn sailor, Dr. Dave Ryan, was the overall victor- always staying out of trouble, sailing clean and fast, and winning easily. Maybe local knowledge helped, who knows, but in the end, it did not really matter to any of the sailors, with many commenting how great it was to just be out sailing and feeling 'normal' again.

Once all the Finns were hauled, de-rigged, and tied up on trailers, some of our Finn Band members pulled out their instruments and played a few songs while watching the sunset to the west; sparkles on the lake looking like a golden pond. Hard to believe we were in an economic free fall from the threatening COVID-19 Pandemic, but for a few hours, it all seemed like a million miles away.



Many thanks go out to the Ryan family, with many family members in attendance, for the invite and to both the Finn sailors for making the trek and for our Finn Fleet Band, always entertaining, capping off an exceptional day of (almost) mile-high sailing with friends.

QUARANTINE REGATTA

By Will Libcke

The Detroit Finn Fleet has traditionally used the Bayview One Design as the season opener for the Great Lakes High Point Series. Sharing a course with Lightnings, Stars, and Vipers provides an opportunity to win converts and show sailors that the Finn Class is alive and well. Public Health concerns moved the regatta to mid-August, when suddenly the Finn was dropped from the program for not meeting the minimum entry requirement because East Coast and Canadian boats couldn't make the trip. USAFA Midwestern VP Will Libcke called in a few favors and got the blessing to host the Finns the same weekend at the Pontiac Yacht Club.

The morning breeze was deceptive as the five Finns made their way into Cass Lake. The cool, steady 4-6kts was replaced by afternoon heat and haze as the course was set by an ambitious race committee. At the start Peter Frissell was able to squeak ahead and gain an early lead on the excruciatingly long first upwind. Steven Morrow gave chase followed by U23 2021 boat grant recipient Ethan, Will Libcke, and U23 Luuk. The wind clocked to the right making the downwind a reaching parade, with the finishing order remaining the same.

With the wind shift came a change in course and the other boats on the lake, so the upwind was fraught with chop from pontoon boats,



leading many competitors to stop in the light breeze. Steven Morrow found the right shifts to round in first and maintain his lead to the finish, winning three of four races and the series.

After racing, the sailors gathered around a cooler of cold beers (socially distanced of course) to cool off after a hot day on the water. It was a surreal experience to have a Great-Grand Master and the President of the Class standing next to a junior who had never sailed the boat before that day, and it fills one with bright hope for the future of the class. Corinthian racing, grassroots sailing, and the love for a timeless one-design that brings out the best in sailing ability is what it's all about.



I started sailing the Finn only two years ago in order to get back to what I love – sailing regularly in one-designs. It's been very good for all aspects of my life. Michael Mark has been coaching as we share the same energy from our Star days. But the Finn is something different. It was me and Liberty, a forgiving yet fast red, white, and blue '84 Vanguard. And now with my second boat, a 2001 Devoti my sailing keeps improving and I keep having a blast. Little upgrades here and there, mast, rudder, and generally trying out settings and sails has been all consuming while delivering great joy. Meanwhile Michael has been painfully patient teaching the not so subtle art of the rabbit start. Or rather, has been suffering endlessly through the process. Anyway, he's been hugely responsible for showing us how much fun the Finn is to sail. Also thanks to the late great Louie Nady, as well as Jim "Doc" Hunter for getting me started. And Terry Greenfield and Darrell Peck for their support, insights, and nuggets of knowledge that open whole new paths for me in the Finn. Many thanks! Plus my new good friends Cesar Rocca and Ernesto Bergeron who have joined us in the last year, as well as my old Star crew bud, A.B. Reasonover, who tells great stories and is fast in the light stuff. Ched Holder joined our group and purchased a boat! In the last several weeks we

have now Julian Bingham and Andrew Glass as new Finn owners. Such a great group and it keeps growing! Having a class boat for folks to sail has certainly been good for growth. Plus a couple of us have a spare Finns so we can handle guests.

Hurricanes and hot weather are a part of gulf coast life. We can thank hurricanes Marco and Laura that skirted by on their way to TX/LA. Marco passed far enough south that we didn't do anything but enjoy a little extra breeze. For Laura we moved boats to higher ground just as a precaution. We are all truly sorry about the losses and damages in TX and LA as we all have suffered through not just the damage but the seemingly endless week or two of sweaty half conscious sleep in hot and humid houses with no power and sky high fuel prices (IF you have a generator!) It's just once every five years or so for a bad storm and the very bad ones come along only very rarely. Overall Mobile has been very fortunate as the sailing has been great lately.

So far, 77 tropical and subtropical cyclones have affected Alabama since about 1851. Only three major hurricanes in 1926, 1979, 2004 and only one off-season storm on 2018 have made landfall in Alabama. You want your boat and meteorologist Jim Cantore to be far away from one another. We know when he's in town its gonna be bad.

All the Mobile Bay Finns that practice are at Buccaneer Yacht Club. There is much support from Mobile Yacht Club as their restaurant and bar patrons really like seeing us duke it out on the water in front of their club. In fact, now on Thursdays they set up a repeating start sequence horn and short course for us. It has been so great! Folks walk down the pier to watch. I feel like all is right with the world on

Thursdays. After a session, we'll talk salty Finn stuff as we put things away, then amble down the street to Mobile Yacht Club for a night cap, listen to live acoustic music and maybe get a bite to eat and further discuss observations and techniques along with increasingly lighthearted suggestions and challenges as we gently attempt to lure new people into sailing with us.

This past Thursday I stopped by a friend's table as he and his wife dined, and he asked if we had an extra Finn he could try. He said it would possibly help get more of his other friends who used to sail back into sailing. So yeah we do!



— Liberty Bells —
By Noel Miller

2020 Toilet Bowl

By William Smith



On August 8 and 9 we held the 52nd Finn Toilet Bowl Regatta on beautiful Cazenovia Lake at Willow Bank Yacht Club. Just a month earlier we were pretty much resigned due to Covid restrictions and travel constraints to canceling, however with great planning and reorganization of our club operations, led by this year's club Commodore and Finn fleet champion Al Marshall, followed up with encouragement of Legend Gus Miller and Class President Peter Frissell, we decided to give it a go. There were eight boats and the race committee of Peter Bushnell and Carl Boller, of our laser and FD fleets, put on six good races on Saturday and two more Sunday morning in light to medium 5-10 wind. Courses were mostly W with an O thrown in. Peter Frissell won Toilet Bowl trophy honors, sailing a boat he had just picked up in Maine and was bringing back to set up for use as a class loaner. Bill Smith, Al Marshall and Gus Miller followed. Racing was good and competitive, with each of the top five sailors having at least one first place finish. Federico Meira, our new 2020 fleet champion and decades earlier Finn sailor (he remembers sailing with wood masts), sailed well but had some rigging issues. It was great to have new Finn sailors Chris Sheldon, who came with Gus from RI, sailing his nicely finished Finn, and Larry Davis and Eric Ol-

son from Willow Bank out on the water. Though our on-shore activity was somewhat subdued, our sailing was competitive and great fun, and holding the 2020 Toilet Bowl helped bring a few days semblance of normalcy to an otherwise crazy time. The entire Summer 2020 actually turned out well for our Willow Bank Finn Fleet, with seven sailors competing in 25 club points races in remarkably good weather and wind, and we are looking forward to more great Finn sailing on Cazenovia Lake and our 53rd Toilet Bowl regatta in 2021.



U.S. NATIONALS

Or Better Later Than Never By Rodion Mazin

Seventeen competitors were not deterred by either COVID-19 outbreak or the hurricane Zeta, and despite the challenges, the USA Finn National Championship proceeded. 15 boats were able to get on the starting line in light winds, with competitors coming from as far away as Oregon, Michigan, New Hampshire, Kansas, Massachusetts, and Florida. Given the political and humanitarian situation in the country, as well as the unusually active hurricane season on the Gulf Coast, USAFA declared the national championship a success. Friday, the mirror-like surface of the Mobile Bay didn't support any sailing, but a casual rocking outside of the harbor and a quick tow back.

Despite the favorable forecast, the race committee decided to not take any chances and give the first start at 9:25 am on Saturday. This decision allowed for three races and by the end of the last race, the wind dropped to a "whopping" three knots with some of the competitors drifting backwards on the finish line. Saturday had super shifty conditions with seven to nine knots of wind at the start of the day. The favorite side of the course shifted from left to right each of the upwind legs. Darrel Peck (USA 35), John F Dane (USA

69), and Rodion Mazin (USA 16) tied after the second race, sailed a very close battle. Rodion led the third race all the way to the finish but got unlucky and drifted with the current past the finish line, losing the race to Darrel Peck, John Dane, and Michael Mark, who banged the left corner and placed third in the third race. This race was a lucky charm for Darrel who didn't let go a sweet smell of victory and finished strong with another two bullets on Sunday. Sunday, the wind shifted to the Easterly direction, with some mild chop, but still not enough pressure to hoist an





Rodion Mazin rounding leeward mark, just behind USA 35



Julian Bingham and Noel Miller

2020 Finn Nationals Results

- 1-USA 35 Darrell Peck BucYC 2 2 1 1 1 7
- 2-USA 69 John F Dane PCYC 1 3 2 2 2 10
- 3-USA 16 Rodion Mazin USCG 3 1 4 4 6 18
- 4-USA 69a John Dane III PCYC 5 8 5 3 4 25
- 5-USA 117 Michael Mark BYC 6 4 3 7 8 28
- 6-USA 95 Thomas Duffy Pcyc 4 5 10 8 5 32T
- 7-USA 40 Charles Rudinsky GBM 8 6 6 5 7 32T
- 8-USA 116 Ernesto Bergeron BYC 9 12 8 9 3 41T
- 9-USA 101 Peter Frissell NCYC 12 7 7 6 9 41T
- 10-USA 1138 Scott Griffiths MYC 7 9 11 10 10 47
- 11-USA 11 Julian Bingamm BYC 10 10 14 11 11 56
- 12-USA 151 Albert Reasonover Jr. BYC 13 13 9 12 12 59
- 13-USA 10 Noel Miller BYC 11 11 15 14 13 64
- 14-USA 155 Hans Claesson MYC 15 14 12 13 14 68
- 15-USA 1113 Andrew Glass BYC 14 15 13 15 15 71
- 16-USA 5 Terry Greenfield BYC 17 17 17 17 17 85T
- 17-USA 5199 César Roca BYC 17 17 17 17 17 85T

"O" flag and allow free pumping downwind. In the fourth race, Rodion and Darrel started ahead of the fleet from the pin end and led all the way to the windward mark. The left-hand side of the course was favored, but the shifty easterly wind didn't hold, shifting more to the right on the second beat. John F Dane, Chuck Rudinsky, John F Dane Senior, and Ernesto Burgeron chose the right-hand side and closed up on Darrell. John F tried to finish ahead of Darrel, but experience and plenty of light wind sailing in San Diego helped Darrel hold his spot. The last race was a repeat of the fourth one, with most of the folks but Darrel making poor decisions on the racecourse. Darrel secured his 4th U.S. Finn Champion title bringing the trophy back to Oregon.

As usual, thanks to the support of the Buccaneer Yacht Club, Commodore Jim "Doc" Hunter, and the Mobile Yacht Club, the small but friendly group of the Finn sailors was able to compete in a regatta putting aside politics and fear of the coronavirus for the good of the sport, comradery, and good sportsmanship.



Start of the race four. Darrell Peck winning the pin.



Thomas Duffy, a new member of the Pass Christian Finn fleet rounding a leeward mark

ON THE RISE

By Michael Dorgan

2020 Pacific Coast Championship

Twenty-five Finns flocked to the San Diego Yacht Club this weekend for two days of the 2020 Finn Pacific Coast Championship. Among the sailors were those new to the fleet, those known for the fleet, and many active, enthusiastic competitors excited to be out on the water in their single-handed boats. Seven races were sailed out in the Pacific Ocean on the popular course of Coronado Roads.

In first place was Charlie Buckingham with 12 points. In second place was Phil Ramming with 23 points. Taking third place was James Buley with 26 points.

Charlie Buckingham, coming to San Diego from Newport Harbor Yacht Club, credits his 11 point leading win to familiar winds and consistent sailing. "The conditions were very similar to Newport Harbor...no more than 10-12 knots at the most. The direction was really consistent as well, which made it easy to figure out. I'm new to the boat, so I kept my head down and tried to work with the controls. If it was a windy event, the results might have been really different!"

Also sailing this weekend was SDYC S/C Mike Dorgan...a typical "top-of-the-fleet" finisher. Dorgan has been essential in growing the Finn fleet in Southern California and is one known to always put the Finn first, however, this weekend his priorities were family and fleet members. Dorgan put this race second when son, Matt Dorgan, was having boat troubles and had to make his way back into the Club - at the cost of his scores. Not only did Dorgan forfeit some of Saturday's racing for his son, but also was found assisting another sailor



in the fleet who had capsized on Sunday.

"I was looking for Matt during the race and when I finished I didn't see him, so I got worried and sailed in to look for him. It's not every-day you have a chance to be a dad. On Sunday, one of the new guys in the fleet capsized sailing downwind. Jeff Johnson (Waterfront Director) and I sailed out to him, I dove in and helped flip it back up," Dorgan explained.

"I'm the fleet organizer and running the regatta; I feel like I have a responsibility to members of the fleet and the boats we loan out. It's been a lot of work, especially with Covid-19 going on, but we have a great thing going. The Finn fleet is growing and we're having fun."



A new sailor, David Balfour, recently joined the fleet and left Sunday night with the Fun Award - an award that Dorgan created for the half-fold of the fleet. "It's always great when your last race is your best race, and that was the case for me," Balfour started. "The last race saw lots of wind and hiking and getting some tips from my fellow competitors was also helpful."

The Finn fleet is fortunate during the Covid-19 pandemic to be able to race in their socially-distanced, single-handed boats. However, the weekend didn't look exactly like a typical Finn celebration. All pre and post racing socials were cancelled, and awards were given to the top finishers in a socially distanced setting.

"As more of the public is granted access to activities, likewise, sailing regattas are easing back...but still with a lot of austerity and cooperation from competitors while ashore. San Diego is still work-



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ing through some unique crew restrictions from San Diego County for recreational boating that don't appear anywhere else in California, but local sailors have largely complied. These singlehanded regattas are great that way. They're safe, compliant and the competitors are all polite and thankful to be sailing," expressed SDYC Waterfront Director Jeff Johnson.

"SDYC did a great job running the races as well as putting on the event in our current environment. It's a lot of stress stepping up the plate like that to host an event and with so many of them being canceled, it was nice for the Club and the sailors alike to be able to have this regatta. Overall it was a success for everyone," added Buckingham.

