

MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND: ...and the last shall be first!

By Dan Muss

Sailboat racing on Deep Creek Lake starts on the Saturday of the Memorial Day weekend with a tune-up race called the Steiding Cup. For that race all fleets start together and there is one winner. The second race on Saturday is the 1st race of the Becker Cup with races 2 and 3 on Sunday and race 4 on Monday.

The PRO (Principle Race Officer) for this weekend was Charles Buffington and he had very difficult conditions to deal with in that sufficient wind for racing was very sporadic. But he and his team did a fantastic job in getting in 2 races on Saturday and one each on Sunday and Monday.

For this regatta my wife, Carol, was crewing and, in the first race of the Becker Cup, we had all kinds of problems, the worst of which was we had the spinnaker tied on cross-wise with the head of the sail attached to the port sheet. It went up all right but it was impossible to fly. We finished next to last.

The wind was very nice for the race on Sunday but halfway through the Silver Fleet start the wind died and the PRO stopped the count and raised the postponement flag. Then, for the next half hour we bobbed helplessly, and, one by one, the Master's Fleet started for home. Finally we were the only boat left in our fleet. Now, in a regular series race the PRO would not start a race unless there was a minimum of two boats racing, but in a regatta all boats registered count, even though they are not sailing. The wind then came up nicely and the Silver Fleet got off and Carol and I sailed our race alone, assured of a first place. But we sailed that race as tight as we could and caught two Silver Fleet boats that started 5 minutes before us.

On Monday the wind was again up and down but very few complete lulls. We got a reasonable start on starboard in the middle of the fleet but tacked as soon as we could to get clean air. The race was very tight on the first couple of legs but our spinnaker was flying perfectly and on the second downwind leg we pulled away. On the last windward leg to the finish we sailed into a hole and Meehan took us.

But that second assured us of a regatta win, even with terrible result of the first race.

And, finally, here is the Coraor's race story from the Gold Fleet:

“Monday's race, the last in the regatta, toyed with our emotions. We were in a good position at the start, right on the line at the pin end, in fact, another sailor told us that he thought we had been called over early. So after falling off for a few seconds in confusion and looking over to the committee boat, but seeing no individual recall flag, we continued on. Shortly after that we found ourselves in second place right behind Palmer's boat, which held its place the entire race. We held our place until two thirds of the way down to the leeward mark. Then we were in that terrible position of being ahead and losing the wind only to be caught by almost the entire fleet as they got the wind before we did. At that point, instead of being in second place, we were close to last.

In spite of feeling discouraged, we didn't let our spirits sag and, on the upwind leg, we continued racing and caught a few boats. But we then fouled Skoog and had to do a 720(two complete circles in place). At that point I was ready to cry, but having raced so many times with my father in that predicament and hearing his voice inside my head ‘Never give up. You don't know what might happen. Just sail the boat!’ And that's what we did.

However, trouble was not over! Coming up on the windward mark for the second time, we tried to squeeze in front of Yonke (who was way ahead in the Silver Fleet) and ended up hitting the mark! So we had to do a 360 degree turn! At that point we were in the back of the fleet again but decided to head over toward the shore where we picked up a great wind sailing side by side with Yonke that resulted in us passing much of the fleet. After rounding the leeward mark in good position, we were able to hold on and ended up in 5th place, which put us in 5th place over all, one out of the money, but a few places better than we normally do in a Gold Fleet Regatta. Amazing things happen sometimes when you think you've ruined your chance of doing well.

And I can still hear my father's voice.....”

Race Results [skipper/ crew(s)]

Steiding Cup 2015

Winner: Darrel & Kris Van Hutten

Becker Cup 2014 Results

Flying Scot Gold:

1 Alex Pline/Joni Palmer, 2 Jill/Mark Bennett, 3 Jon Skoog/Ralph Kemp, 4 Ray Gauthier/Katherine Bennett

Flying Scot Silver:

1 Thomas Yonke/John Meredith, 2 Ellen Tran/Dorothy Walters, 3 Spenser/Marie Deakin, 4 Greg Shafer/Ned Holloway

Flying Scot Masters:

1, Dan/Carol Muss, 2 Dick/Doug Gregory , 3 Larry/Debbie Anderson, 4 Frank Meehan/Conrad Lundeen

Flying Scot Challenger:

Race1 1Rob/Karen Gerlach, 2Mike Geller/Mike Hall, 3 Jeff/Julie Haseler

Laser Open:

1 Mary Tran, 2 John Benhart, 3 Charles Graham, 4 Peter Frey

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