



## WINNERS WRITE-UP

### FW-1 - Bill McCulloch (Laser Standard)

We had over 20 boats out for the first day of the frostbiting season Sunday, with a good breeze and light rain.

One of the keys to success in short course dinghy racing is having a good start. I relied on my line sight to ensure I was near but still behind the starting line. I found that the pin lined up perfectly with a channel marker, so it was a really good sight. I started the first race conservatively with a middle-to-boat end position to avoid a crowd/mayhem at the pin in the stronger breeze. The pin was so favored that the boats down there were able to tack and cross shortly after the start, so I adjusted my strategy for the next few races to be further down that way and could flip onto port and cross after the gun. For races 4 and 5, I could afford to get a bit more aggressive and go for the pin, once with a port tack approach, tacking onto starboard to leeward of everyone at 30 seconds, and once reaching in with speed right at the gun so I shot through the lee of boats that had to slow up and wait for the gun to sound.

We had quite a bit of chop upwind. You want to keep your bow from pounding into the chop as best you can. I use my body to keep the knuckle of the bow in the water. With my feet in the straps (or toes under the grabrail), I drop my aft shoulder sharply. This sudden movement creates torque that forces the bow down and keeps it from slamming. You're also turning the boat without using the rudder, which is very efficient. If you ever sail in ocean swells, you can torque your boat by dropping your forward shoulder to head up a swell and then your aft shoulder as you get to the top to head down.

Always try to get your mainsheet out of the cockpit and on the deck when on the starboard tack layline, and don't forget to ease your vang some at the mark so your boom doesn't hit the water as you bear away. I didn't have a chance to get my sheet out in race 4 and paid for it as it got caught on my foot as I was trying to bear away. Erik got by me and ended up winning that race. Erik had really good downwind speed all day and passed me to leeward in race 5 to win that one too. He was practicing some things he learned from YouTube videos that were highly effective. These are the links he shared about downwind Laser technique:

[Overtaking Waves, International Sailing Academy  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SeY6RoTVRB4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SeY6RoTVRB4)

[Laser Downwind Technique Tips, James Gray, British Sailing Team Coach  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-a8b1kBbFdU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-a8b1kBbFdU)

[Laser Sailing Downwind Body Positioning, International Sailing Academy  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oiBe2N8YuP8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oiBe2N8YuP8)

[Laser Sailing Downwind: Sail Through the Fleet Downwind, International Sailing Academy  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y10zGG2nHjs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y10zGG2nHjs)

[Top Tips from the Boat Whisperer, Steve Cockerill, Rooster Sailing  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVsx5i6bG98](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVsx5i6bG98)

(a bit long video, but a rather entertaining and straightforward comment, includes *how to avoid the death roll*)

Thanks again to Bengt and Melissa for the RC work, and we'll see you Sunday!  
Bill