



## WINNERS WRITE-UP

### FW-4 - Erik Broekhof (Laser Standard)

Hi All,

Following up on last Sunday's races, I'd like to share some of my thoughts and experiences about the day.

First and foremost: Wow, what a blast and challenging breeze. The RC did a great job and had their hands on with capsized boats and even an unfortunate broken rig (which was fatigue, it just snapped at the deck after rounding the top mark)!

I liked having all the different racecourses, surfing the choppy waves dead downwind in the windward-leeward courses but also being able to plane fast in the broad reaches in the triangle courses.

Kudo's for Anne, Graham, and Kai. They sailed pretty flawlessly and fast. As Anne and Graham were often close to me, I could only admire how steady and fast they sailed, without getting in trouble.

#### **Wind:**

The NE breeze over Glenn Island resulted in a gusty day with big 30 degree shifts and huge lulls. The higher gusts would often arrive from extreme left (through the channel) or right. The highest winds in races 1 and 5, while races 3 and 4 were relatively moderate (so much different from 3 weeks ago, when the Southerly breeze gave pretty steady and solid breeze and nice waves).

Actually, I didn't have time to mind the current too much in a breeze like this. I guess it was pretty slack at first. Only before the last start, I noticed it.

Clear starts and decent upwind and downwind speed got me going, but I managed to throw away a lot by making some clumsy errors.

#### **Starting:**

Getting in the front line at the start was important. As at first the RC boat was favored, we saw a bunched-up fleet there. Later the line was more even.

In breezy conditions, a Laser will reach top speed in 5 seconds, so you'd have to position yourself early, really close (1 boat length to half a boat length) at the line.

Next fight for that position by wiggling with your rudder to stay in position and height (in an upwind position). And (really important) use no mainsheet at all, as the slightest amount of sail pressure will slide you sideways into the boat to leeward.

While staying in position, I tried to stay 1 boat width clear of the leeward boat and tried to wiggle at the last moment a bit more upwind (to be able to accelerate better at the start).



The tight pack of waiting for front line boats would basically block any coming boat from behind ('big boat' starters), so you really had to position yourself early.

Lauren is actually mastering this technique; it's great to watch her doing it.

### **Upwind:**

I often tried to work the cunningham upwind and even the outhaul in the most significant lulls and gusts. As the gust and lulls followed each other rather quickly, I sometimes felt it was hardly possible to keep up with perfect sail trim. When overpowered, I eased sheet quickly and to get the boat going, combined with a strong hike backwards, followed by trimming block to block.

Given the huge shifts and big gusts, I didn't see a particular favored side and tried to play the shifts in the middle of the course.

### **My sloppy preparation:**

Looking back at it, I should have done a better preparation. I came in late to the first start and had no idea about the shifts and the first race. And the major shift and lulls got me so occupied (almost capsized in a self-tack shift, which cost 10 positions), so I often didn't prepare before most top marks, resulting in a horrible bear away with a tangled sheet.

Continuing my sloppiness, after the course change to triangle HA course, I forgot to practice some reach-to-reach jibes, resulting in 2 embarrassing capsizes in the race while jibing at the jibe mark.

After my jibing capsize in the last race, I even looked for more trouble while (being tired) I should have sailed a bit more conservatively. As I pushed too much trying to catch Anne, I didn't anticipate the big gust coming and flipped again at the bottom mark. Lessons learned here: stay out of trouble and keep anticipating the gusts while sailing downwind.

In the end, the warm fires and gas heaters at the club made the day perfect. Thanks, you all, and see you next week on the water!

Best,  
Erik