

Sailing a Manly Junior

By Byron White
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Starts

Firstly I normally get out on the course early. I do this to see what the day is like (shifts, chop, the race course) and practise tacks and gybes. When there is a couple of minutes to go before the five minute gun I normally decide on a game plan, like what side to go and so on. When in the five-minute period I keep on checking the favourite end to start at. This helps lots in big fleets. To be able to get out of the start quick and easy make sure you get in the front row to get clear air. Also a handy thing is what you call digging a hole. This is when you stop your boat and hold up boats to windward so you don't get lee bowed.

First Work

On the first work you should know your game plan - which is the best side of the course. Make sure you work your shifts so you sail the closer angle to the next mark. You may need to sail through small knocks to get to a big layer of new breeze. Another thing is you should stay with the front pack. Make sure you stay near the pack so if there is a major shift you don't come out too bad. You don't need to be way out in front to win.

Downwind

Your pole when going down wind is important to be in the right spot at all times. This is why you should always adjust the pole especially on a shifty day. On runs square the pole back as much as possible and so it is clear of the jib and the kite floats nicely. Also on a tight or broad reach keep the boat as flat as possible. When going square make sure you are on the rhumb line (centre of course) as much as possible. You don't broad reach unless it is really windy.

On reaches I sail the apparent wind by bearing away below the mark in a gust and in less wind heading above the mark.

Communication and teamwork

Some good rules

1. Don't yell at your crew if they are slow - yelling doesn't get the job done quicker
2. Be supportive of your crew
3. Don't criticise crews if they make a mistake
4. Let your crew know well ahead what your going to do
5. Do your job, not the crew's jobs in the boat. Otherwise your steering and trimming jobs will be done poorly.
6. Time on the water is very important so you can practise your tacks, trimming the sails and boat handling as a team.

Editors comments: I asked Byron for some of his "tips", he certainly has an impressive record. He was State (NSW) and National Champion 2003/2004 season. Aged 11, it is believed he is the youngest to achieve both titles in the same season. From a total of 16 races in the two series, he had 7 x 1st, 5 x 2nd, 2 x 3rd, 5th & DSQ. Thank you for your thoughts, there is much wisdom there, Kingsley Forbes-Smith.