



Sprint 15. 2UP sailing!

Interesting things happen

when you sail the Sprint 15 "2UP" as I found out during my brief and very enjoyable sail at the Sprint Nationals Pentewan in August. To be honest I had never raced the Sprint 15 "2UP" before and had no idea how the boat would perform.

There are a few Sprint 15 sailors who have far more 2UP sailing experience than I but sometimes a new kid on the block can add a little something to the performance mix!

Event technical support is Windsport's prime role in keeping the sailors on the water but The Class Association has always offered an open invite for the Windsport support to join in some of the racing at events if time permits.

I enjoy a race as much as the next person and with junior sailor Holly Farthing offering to crew on the Windsport demo boat, off we went.

Event support got in the way to make the first start and race of the day but that gave us a bit of on-the-water sailing time to work out some team roles and techniques around the boat while keeping an eye on the fleet racing i.e. who was doing what and how.

Between races we latched on to "Grumps" and asked Stuart to sail upwind while we tried out a few variations and sail settings-interesting!

The first thing we learnt was that with two on the boat, where you sit fore & aft is critical as you have a significant effect on how the boat moves through the water.

Second was the very sensitive set of the jib sheet tension, which controlled the slot. Holly learnt what easing the jib "really meant" and how to make a controlled adjustment, 2 ticks out and 1 tick in, small adjustments. After half a leg of sailing up wind we had some feel and found we could pretty much keep pace with Grumps. We did not have the opportunity to test our downwind techniques which came to haunt us at a later date!

With the second race start sequence underway, we just had time to try a few off the line acceleration skills and we were lining up with everyone else.

Front line starting with some space to leeward is just as important 2UP as it is singlehanded - maybe more - but the acceleration bit takes two with the right sequence of weight transfer, sail sheeting, speed build and settle down. We got there but we could have done better. Over sheeting kills any boats speed but over sheeting a jib squeezes the slot and the hell out of the main. Easing the jib 5 ticks and off we go!!

Team tacking is about timing of body movement, sail movement and rudder control. With the help of Holly we managed to roll the boat around the tack requiring less rudder movement. Easing the jib over to the new tack and setting the slot against the mainsail speeds up the reattachment of the airflow over the mainsail and acceleration up to speed on the new tack. The quicker and smoother that happens the less leeway is made through and after the tack.

By the first windward mark we were up with the top part of the fleet and our pointing ability and boat speed was good. We just had to focus on the clicks! - and the weight distribution.

Now for the reach. Experience said this should be our strength, the leg where we should be able to use our extra sail area and generated power to outpace the una-rig boats. To do that you need clear air so, after the windward mark, we sailed high for a few boat lengths to give us room upwind to do our own thing. To produce the extra power the whole boat needs to be dynamic. Small changes in weight distribution, concentration on sail set - in particular jib set - as it squeezed the slot and accelerates the air over the



mainsail. We did alright - bit tricky on the concentration front but that will come with practice! By the reaching mark we had reeled in a few boats.

Now for the downhill run. I have always had trouble converting over to sailing the Sprint 15 down wind having sailed other cats. It normally takes me a couple of races to find the rhythm again. What should we do? Sail low like the una-rigs, sail high like a Dart 18? We tried both and got drilled by both una and other 2UP teams so we were doing something wrong giving us food for thought between races.

In the second race we got better up wind and across the reach. It was all down to time on the water, working together and understanding the way of operating as a team. Our "Achilles heel" of downwind sailing we worked on. It appeared the edge was setting the jib and understanding the pressure in relation to the downwind sailing angle. Too high and you delivered good jib pressure and boat speed but lost out on distance sailed. Too low and the jib collapsed and you might as well sail as a less than effective una-rig. The technique and skill for us was that very fine line for when the jib was just about to collapse set at the right angle with the boat heading as low as possible. It took a lot of concentration and we did not get it right all the time but we did get better and had something to work on.

Final debrief notes. Sailing the Sprint 15 2up with a suitable crew is good fun and can be competitive. There are a few things to learn so some team practice is very worthwhile. Making it fun as well as competitive is a balancing act.

Concentration levels can vary. Over a period of time, the transfer of techniques and skills absorbed by the crew from the helm is a fast track learning process when they go on to helm at a later date. Important note: Whenever possible encourage the crew to helm the boat back to the beach after racing.

The future.

The Sprint 15 has a long tradition as a single hander but it would be great to see more 2UP teams of dads and daughter/ sons or two young family sailors out there mixing it up on the water.

Thanks Holly and see you on the water.

Brian Phipps : Windsport Coaching.

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