

**CAVALCADE**  
**SUMMER EDITION 2011**

Dear fellow Cavaliers,

I am afraid to say that it's not beginning to feel a lot like Christmas. As I write these notes with less than 2 weeks to go before we celebrate the birth of Christ, it is decidedly unChristmasy with this, our second week of cold wet weather interspersed with a few hours of occasional sunshine. We have been fortunate in that almost all of our races as I recall for this half of the season, have been sailed in at least dry weather with fairly strong north east breezes and strong tidal flows which for Blind Justice at least has proved challenging to say the least. More about that later.

Our Spring series concluded on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December with a refreshing course change as the last 4 or 5 races had been sailed on Course A. With a light easterly breeze blowing last Saturday, Course Q was appropriately selected. Unfortunately for some of our fleet the race became a disaster with Quattro and Christina mistakenly reading the shortened course signal displayed on the Committee boat just after our starting signal as being the shortened course signal for our division.

In my opinion, the starter should have shortened the course for our division due to the light conditions but did not, however they did shorten the course for the following division which was then mistaken by some of our fleet as being applicable to our division. Accordingly Quattro and Christina sailed the shortened course only to be advised after finishing that there was no shortened course and they both appropriately retired after finishing.

Both of these crews have my deepest sympathy as I know from bitter experience that there is nothing worse than sailing as hard as you can for the duration of the race to finish and to then be told that there either was a shortened course or there was not a shortened course as the case may be.

I have some real first hand experience of the pain and anguish of confusing the shortened course signal as 3 or 4 years ago in the last race of the season when there was at the start plenty of wind with no obvious reason for a shortened course the starter shortened the course - a signal undetected by our boat and at least as I recall Brian McConachy and 2 or 3 others who all merrily sailed off on the long course only to realise halfway through the race that some of the fleet were sailing through the finishing line thereby leaving one in the agonising position of making a decision to either continue the full course in the hope that it had not been shortened, or alternatively head for the finishing line in the hope that the course had been shortened!! What a dilemma! The result for us was that we lost the overall season handicap points score by 1 point.

The point of this little dissertation is that I firmly believe that there should be a better system for alerting competitors to the existence of the shortened course signal.

I know rules are rules and the black letter technical experts will simply refer you to the rule book, however, my point is that very often if a shortened course signal is displayed (which with the Amateurs is a fairly rare event) by reason of the fact that in

those circumstances the breeze is inevitably light - Code Flag S often lies limply, nestled between various other flags and is quite hard to detect, particularly so when we are constantly reminded to stay well clear of the start line for the earlier division. Surely something as simple as a flashing light on the roof of the Committee vessel indicating that the shortened course signal is in operation would be a sensible idea.

I firmly believe that our committee should take this matter up with the Amateurs and see if we can negotiate a better outcome.

On another but quite distinct issue, I am seeking some feedback from our racing fleet on the existing Course A configuration. Being on the receiving end of 4 bad tactical mistakes in a row when sailing Course A, I am wondering if there is anybody out there who feels that Course A could be reconfigured so as to make the decision between going up the eastern shore as opposed to the western shore on the first leg a little less determinative of the outcome of the entire race.

Please be assured, this is not sour grapes from a boat that seems to have found the wrong side of the harbour in 4 races in a row, thereby gifting the boats that went up the other side a 400 or 500 metre lead at the top mark which can never be reeled in, thereby reducing the rest of the race to a procession - it is a serious suggestion for making the course a little shorter with perhaps the top mark being the Beashel buoy. That would in my view, reduce the impact of the decision to go east or west on the first leg not so influential upon the rest of the race and thereby make the race more interesting and competitive instead of being out of the race at the first mark with 7 legs to go!!

Your thoughts please.

## **Season Points Score to Date**

### **1. Scratch**

Undoubtedly the star performer in the first half of the season is Brian McConachy's team on U2 stringing together a very impressive four firsts and four seconds. Not only has Brian and his team been winning the races but they have been winning them by considerable margins sufficient enough to enable U2 to slot into second place on handicap! Perhaps Brian and his team could deliver a racing seminar to our group in the early new year.

Bringing up second place is the consistently performing Flying Circus which this year seems to be able to string together regular high place getting, unlike previous years when Peter Donnelly and his team tended to "porpoise" a bit from one race to another.

It must be strange for Rodney and Craig Mitchell to find themselves sitting in third place on scratch, no doubt an alien sensation to the team from Centaurus. No doubt they will have to say something about that in the second half of the season.

## 2. Handicap

In the PHS Division Christina III with Andrew and Richard Christian on board have maintained their strong performances from last year when they won the PHS Division. Christina is in the lead in the PHS Division but has U2 nipping at her heels, only 2 points behind. Quattro with David Brown and John MacLeod driving the ship are currently on third, 5 points behind U2.

Looking at the points score in the Handicap Division it will, as usual, be a close run thing as at the halfway point of the season only 12 points separate first down to sixth and as we all know a few strong/disastrous performances can really turn that points table upside down very rapidly.

## 3. The Sydney Harbour Regatta

Some of our membership may have become aware of the fact that Audi have withdrawn from sponsorship of this event.

At the time of publication of this newsletter the Regatta is still scheduled for 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> March next so ensure you have this date in your diaries. As per last year this will also combine our Cavalier 28 State Championships. Having our State Championships combined with the Audi Regatta does save the Association considerable costs of separately staging the State Championships.

Due to the withdrawal of Audi as a sponsor there is, at the time of writing, a degree of uncertainty as to how events will unfold. Perhaps, another sponsor will be found, perhaps the participating clubs will need to impose entry fees. More details will be provided as developments occur.

## 4. Racing Tips

Some of our members would have attended a seminar conducted at the Amateurs a few weeks ago. The seminar was delivered by a couple of hotshots from North Sails and whilst it was apparent that these guys were about a generation younger than most of the audience and were more familiar with sailing in the pointy end of the international fleets of Farr 40s, Etchells and the like, they made a number of points which would have relevance for what they termed as "older, slower, heavier boats with overlapping headsails and spinnaker poles".

I attended and made a number of notes which are reproduced hereunder in shorthand but I trust will be understood by our membership. As I interpreted them, their main points were as follows:

- (a) Develop the pyramid approach - the base being boat handling and preparation, the middle section boat speed and the apex tactics.
- (b) The helmsman should steer only. Tactics and sail trim are a job for others.

- (c) Keep rudder movements to a minimum.
- (d) Keep a constant angle of heel as far as possible.
- (e) When tacking upwind main sheet to be eased just slightly prior to the tack, do not move traveler.
- (f) When attempting to calculate the optimum point for a downwind gybe so as to be on the lay line for the bottom mark, look at the mast head windex - when windex is pointing at the mark that is time to gybe.
- (g) When sailing up the harbour in a north east breeze with a maximum incoming tide stay west within an imaginary line from Bradley's Head to Georges Head (yes, that is what they said). I tried it 4 times in a row and it has been the wrong side of the harbour - perhaps there was more east than north east in the breeze!
- (h) When endeavouring to get "the Bradley's lift" aim to tack your boat right underneath the mast head of HMAS Sydney.
- (i) In a north east breeze there will be an intermittent wind shear effect on the western shore with the breeze going to the left when sailing up wind.
- (j) In a south/south easterly course watch for the flags on top of the Royal Sydney Golf Club, they will be a good indication of where the wind is coming from before it reaches you (you will need eyes like a hawk!).
- (k) At maximum tide the flow in the harbour is strongest in and around the Georges Head area.

I hope this is of some assistance to you in trying to unravel the mysteries of selecting the perfect course when sailing on Sydney Harbour.

In conclusion, let's hope we get some decent Christmas weather in the near future unlike what we have been getting of late.

On behalf of your Cavalier 28 Committee may I take this opportunity of extending to you, your family and friends best wishes for the Christmas season and our combined hopes for a happy, safe and prosperous new year for everyone.

With Kind Regards

Stephen O'Halloran  
Secretary  
Cavalier 28 Association.