

Coach's Notes from 2008 Western Hemisphere & Orient Championships

At the 2008 WH&O Championship, US Team Coach Leandro Spina compiled an extensive list of notes based on his observation of the US team's performance. Here is an abridged version of his notes, compiled by Peter Commette and Merrill Varn:

The power of Team USA lay in its superb ability to analyze and adapt.

General:

- Be able to sail with wind and game at hand (if sailing with pirates be a pirate).
- Develop a disciplined routine every tack, jibe and mark rounding should be the same.
- Keep your office clean; don't wait for the problem to find you.
- Work hard between races, don't lose focus even when Race Committee must postpone.
- Decide on vang settings for fastest sail shape before the race but be ready to change sail shape with changes in conditions.

Start:

- Adapt to the dynamics of Race Committee.
- Perfect understanding of timing and distance to start line is critical.
- Vang off pre-race (tight leach could push you over line early).
- Vang on 15 seconds before start so you can get off line fast.

Upwind (keep in mind windy conditions at 2008 WHO's):

- Keep boat flat, flat, flat.
- Need routine so that every tack is the same.
- Basics always work - ease, hike, trim.
- Skippers should drive to avoid waves; crew should trim to skipper's angles.
- Duck boats in order to get to the favored side of the course.
- Don't bang the corner too soon.
- In waves, one tack is generally directly into the waves and must power hike the whole time – remember you can rest some on other tack.
- The more you hike, the more vang you need.
- Depower by easing traveler, tightening vang, moving mast forward.
- Traveler, vang and mast settings will vary tack to tack (ignore ugly collapse in bottom of main with mast more forward).
- Crew set hiking straps differently for different tacks because hiking style will be different for different tacks.
- Set jib leads for conditions of tack – may be different settings port and starboard tack.
- When legs get sore remember everybody else's are too, this is time to make your gains.

Reaches:

- Sail on leeward chine to stay in planing mode longer.
- Windward chine is same as putting on brakes.
- Skipper in charge of steering and main trim.
- Crew focuses on kinetics (catching waves and staying on

leeward chine), jib trim, informing skipper about wind and other boats.

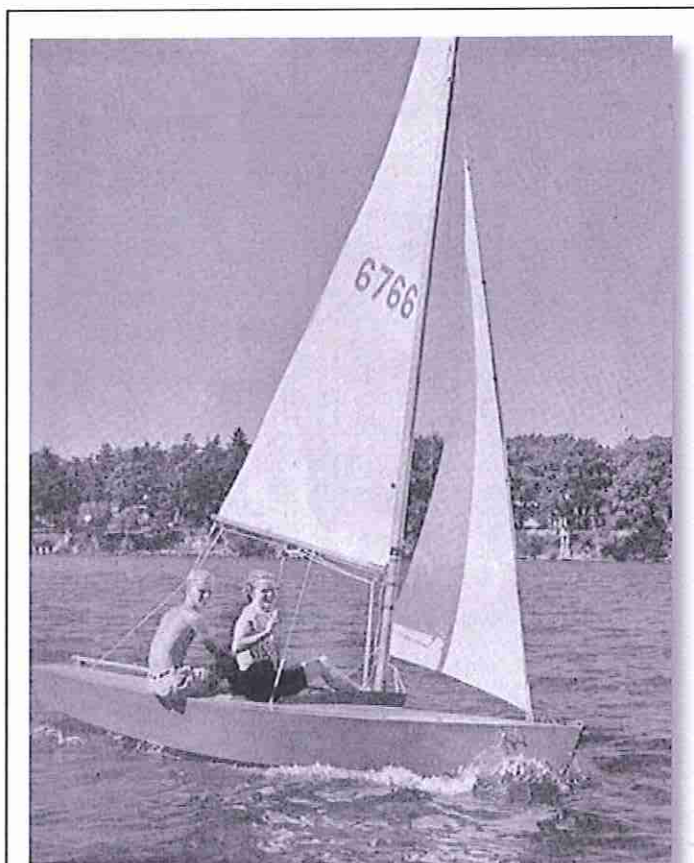
- Starboard jibe usually closer reach (apparent wind angle usually close); wait to launch pole may not need to release jib halyard.
- Port jibe usually more open angle, release halyard and set pole fast.
- On reaches usually best to set pole as far back as possible and use jib halyard to change sail shape.

Downwind (strong wind):

- Crew should trim jib through the jibe in order to give boat more stability.
- No need to rush into launching pole.
- Pole should be launched in 3 long pulls over your head not toward skipper. Last pull put all weight on it.
- When pole doesn't go all the way out, leave it. Pull jib halyard in to maintain sail shape. Once stabilized ask skipper for 5 seconds to finish pole.

Mark Roundings:

- Windward mark – release vang before ease sails, keep boat flat with main, hike, move back.
- Need routine, all mark roundings should be identical. 🏹



1947 Emmons Snipe #6766, originally owned by Hiram Upson (Lake Quassapaug, CT) who is shown racing at 1952 Snipe Nationals (Green Lake, WI). Cover photo of Snipe Bulletin (October 1952), by G.Lundeen.

Read more about Emmons Snipes in John Rose's article on page 12.