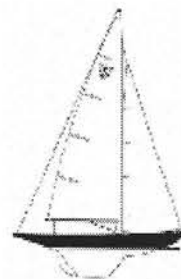


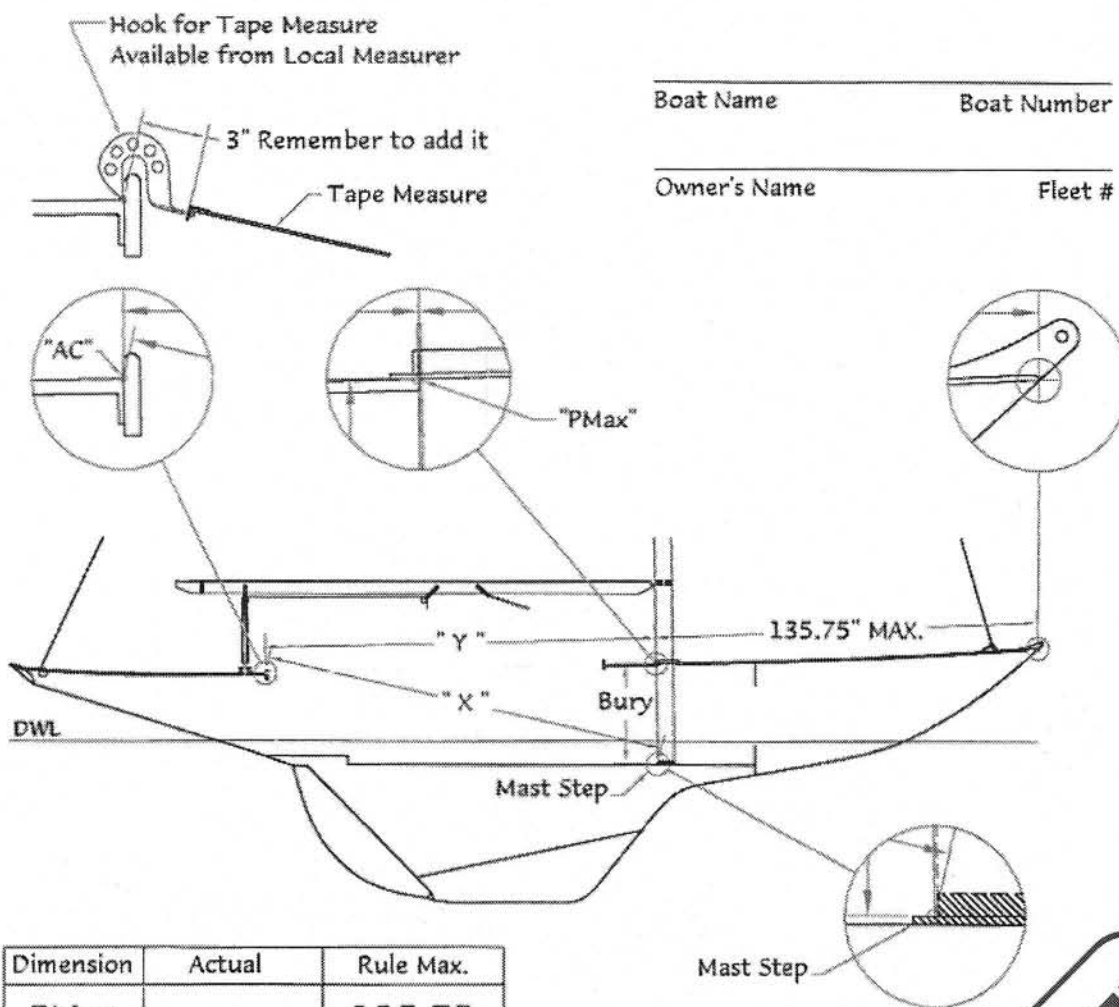
Masthead



The Official Publication of the Shields Class National Sailing Association

Fall 2003 • Spring 2004

Shields Mast Step Measurement Form



Boat Name _____ Boat Number _____
 Owner's Name _____ Fleet # _____

Dimension	Actual	Rule Max.
PMax		135.75
Bury		
Y		
X		

All Dimensions in Inches
 First Measure & Record Actuals
 Find X from Table "X"



Measurer's Name _____ Date Measured _____

A MESSAGE FROM THE 2004-2005 CLASS PRESIDENT

By Skip McGuire

In 2004, the Shields Class enters its forty-second year – happy, healthy and strong. These beautiful classic boats continue to attract fine sailors all over the country. The Shields is the largest and arguably the highest-caliber one-design fleet in Newport, Rhode Island, and there are about a dozen other strong fleets elsewhere in the East, Great Lakes and California. Shields owners love the boat's simple, clean lines and one-finger steering and are attracted by other features that have stood the test of time:

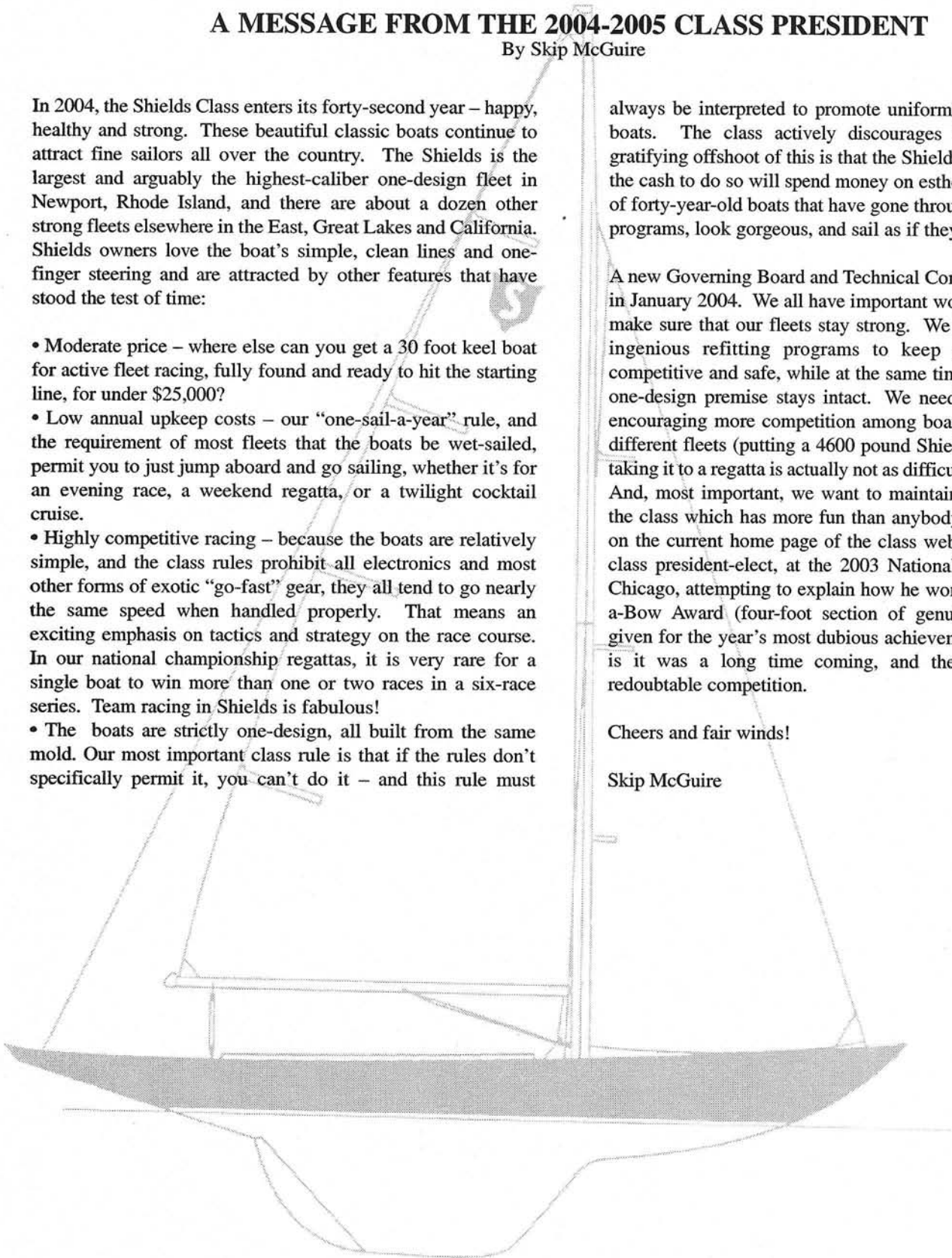
- Moderate price – where else can you get a 30 foot keel boat for active fleet racing, fully found and ready to hit the starting line, for under \$25,000?
- Low annual upkeep costs – our “one-sail-a-year” rule, and the requirement of most fleets that the boats be wet-sailed, permit you to just jump aboard and go sailing, whether it's for an evening race, a weekend regatta, or a twilight cocktail cruise.
- Highly competitive racing – because the boats are relatively simple, and the class rules prohibit all electronics and most other forms of exotic “go-fast” gear, they all tend to go nearly the same speed when handled properly. That means an exciting emphasis on tactics and strategy on the race course. In our national championship regattas, it is very rare for a single boat to win more than one or two races in a six-race series. Team racing in Shields is fabulous!
- The boats are strictly one-design, all built from the same mold. Our most important class rule is that if the rules don't specifically permit it, you can't do it – and this rule must

always be interpreted to promote uniformity among existing boats. The class actively discourages “arms races.” A gratifying offshoot of this is that the Shields owners who have the cash to do so will spend money on esthetics. We have lots of forty-year-old boats that have gone through extensive rehab programs, look gorgeous, and sail as if they were brand new.

A new Governing Board and Technical Committee took office in January 2004. We all have important work to do. We must make sure that our fleets stay strong. We need to encourage ingenious refitting programs to keep our boats sound, competitive and safe, while at the same time making sure our one-design premise stays intact. We need to find means of encouraging more competition among boats and sailors from different fleets (putting a 4600 pound Shields on a trailer and taking it to a regatta is actually not as difficult as it may sound). And, most important, we want to maintain our reputation as the class which has more fun than anybody. The photograph on the current home page of the class website is of a certain class president-elect, at the 2003 National Championship in Chicago, attempting to explain how he won the famous Take-a-Bow Award (four-foot section of genuine Shields bow), given for the year's most dubious achievement. All I can say is it was a long time coming, and there was plenty of redoubtable competition.

Cheers and fair winds!

Skip McGuire



SHIELDS TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

By Kim Roberts

On January 10, 2004, the new Board of Governors of the National Shields Class met at Larchmont Yacht Club and voted in the members of the Shields Technical Committee (TC) to be headed by me, Kim Roberts, your new National Measurer.

1. Kim Roberts – National Measurer, Fleet 9
KimRoberts04@aol.com
2. Richard Robbins, Fleet 10
3. H.L. DeVore, Fleet 1
4. Robert Radway, Fleet Captain, Fleet 3
5. Andrew Burton, Fleet 5
6. Peter Gerard, ex-National President, Fleet 9
7. Bam Miller, Fleet 2
8. Skip McGuire – National President, Ex-officio member, Fleet 1

The board also voted to spend up to \$5,000 to laser measure the hulls of five Shields, using US Sailing's new machine. Accurately recording the shapes of a full range in levels of finish will help the TC understand how and where the boats have been modified and what can be done about it, if anything? We also have a University Naval Architectural Class volunteering to analyze the potentials for boat speed variations. We might, in fact, approach other Naval Architects for their opinions.

The five boats will reflect a spectrum of the fleet; a pure Cape Cod Shipbuilding Product, the most extremely modified bottom, Fleet 9 has one, a TPI Marine Services (TPIMS, ex-Waterline Sys) Product, a Midnight Marine Resources (MMR) Product, and an amateur finished bottom (average run-of-the-mill loser). These boats were measured in March and Analysis should be done by May.

Speed shops like TPIMS and MMR need instructions from the Class on the Do's and Don'ts. The most difficult part of the Measurement Job is judging the finish on the bottom, did someone over fill and fair, and gain advantage. Experts will tell us if there are huge advantages or not.

As discussed with the Board of Governors on January 10th, the other issues to be addressed immediately are:

- Mast Step Location Measurement
- Sail Measurement Difficulties, rewrite the rule?
- Flotation - why do boats keep sinking, what can we do about it.
- Construction Material Specs. and Scantling Rules - Facilitating reconstruction
- Compile all Measurers Interpretations completing a set.
- Deadwood - Is it advantageous for it to be filled with water.
- Reef Points in mainsail, should they be relocated lower.
- Sail Cards - Should we require submittal with this years dues.

The TC set up an e-mail chat forum for itself which will remain private, TC members only. It has proven instrumental in conducting the affairs of the committee. Everyone reads everyone's comments in a very timely manner and decisions flow out. We will be publishing them shortly, check the class website, www.shieldsclass.com. Problems with National participation and communication are not non-existent, we are all in the same chat room.

We have set up an All Class, All members Forum to be moderated by Bam Miller, Shields 18, Fleet 5. We feel the members have always wanted to chat about Shields issues, so now here is the forum in which it can be done. Access to this Shields Chat Forum will be through a link on the Class website. This way if its address is ever moved, the link on the website will always be current. We are sure the members can create buttons in favorite spots to shorten up the signing on process. Remember to sign on with your boat number, boat name and include your Fleet number, which locates you for the conversation you want to discuss. This will help the moderator file so they can read what they want, on whatever subject.

Access to the TC remains through the upper management and their e-mail addresses are on the Class website. Mine is above.

2004 is going to be great, and Edgartown is going to do a great job with the Nationals.

Kim Roberts, KimRoberts04@aol.com, cell (401) 864-2531

NEW MAST STEP SPECIFICATION

June 15, 2004

On June 12, 2004, the Shields Class Governing Board met to consider the Technical Committee's unanimous recommendation that the Class adopt a new Specification to govern mast step placement. The Governing Board unanimously adopted the proposed Specification. Unless any Fleet objects, the new Specification will automatically become effective as of the first day of the 2004 National Championship Regatta for boats competing in that regatta, and it will become effective for the Class at large on January 1, 2005. If any Fleet objects within 60 days, under Article IX of the Class Constitution, the proposed amendment to the Specifications will be placed on the agenda for a member vote at the Annual Meeting, which will take place at the 2004 National Championship Regatta.

The Specification is the result of six months of intensive effort by the Technical Committee. It is somewhat complex, but its complex nature is dictated by the nature and character of the variations in existing boats which is described below.

Background

Early in the process of developing information, the Technical Committee and the Governing Board recognized four conflicting facts:

The boats have been built over many years by several different builders.

No guidance as to step location is to be found either in the Official Plans or in the existing Specifications.

The Class's Basic Rule of Uniformity, Specification 1.3, reads as follows: "*Any alteration of a Registered Yacht and the use of any item of equipment on a Registered Yacht, which is not expressly permitted herein, is prohibited.*" This can be and has been interpreted to mean that no owner can move his mast step. However, in the case of damage or reconstruction, there is no way to tell an owner where the step should be located, or whether or not the position of the step in any boat is legal.

In spite of the generally-understood prohibition against moving mast steps, the Technical Committee recognized (as a result of informal analysis over the years) that in fact there is some variation in the horizontal (fore-and-aft) step placement on existing boats. It seems clear that some of this variation is not accidental but has been the result of efforts to improve performance. We know that step location in combination with partners location can in fact affect performance, and the Governing Board therefore believes that step location (like partners location) should be fixed or constrained by class rule in order that the boat be truly one-design. Accordingly, it was decided to measure a large number of boats to see how much variance there was in the actual step locations in the boats that are actively racing, and to work towards the writing of a new rule (or a clarification of the existing rules) based on those findings. The theory was to find a definition for step location that would satisfy the desire for certainty without requiring wholesale changes in numerous boats, particularly if there was no evidence of "rule-beating" intent.

The Technical Committee, with the assistance of Fleet

measurers, measured the step and partners locations of more than 35 boats in four different fleets (Newport, Larchmont, Marion and Seawanhaka).

This effort quickly revealed two things that made the measurement problem more difficult: first, the vertical location of the steps in the boats, *i.e.*, the mast "bury" (distance of mast step below deck) varied by more than three inches, because the liner molds and step construction techniques have not been the same in all boats over time. Second, the measuring point (the forward edge of the bow chock) which the class rules have used for years to locate the partners may not be completely consistent for all boats, although the variation is probably not great.

The same hull and deck molds have been used for every boat built. Because the deck mold registers perfectly inside the hull mold when the deck is installed, the Technical Committee and the Governing Board concluded that the molded deck flange, where the fiberglass turns down at the aft end of the cockpit on centerline, is a trusted point common to all boats and can be considered a consistent measuring point for locating the step. From this point one can measure in a straight line to both the partners and the step.

There is a teak coaming of varying heights and angles fastened to this fiberglass deck flange that could interfere with taking accurate measurements. A special 3-inch hook was fabricated to reach over the coaming and to hold the end of a tape measure to facilitate the measurement. The hook is designed to fit against the after edge of the cockpit coaming so that consistent measurements can be taken forward of that point to the after edge of the partners and the after edge of the step without having to correct for the height of the coaming. Any method that insures accuracy of measurement may be used.

The measurements the Technical Committee took are shown in the attached Table 1, "Mast Step Measurements." We decided that this table should be distributed generally to the class for all to see. Without extensive quantitative analysis, it seemed clear to us that the better-performing boats generally shared three characteristics:

- Partners were located at or near the maximum aft location permitted by the rules. (Indeed, we found that some of the better-performing boats had partners that were aft of that position, and the owners were asked to correct that problem.) Specification 2.2 says that the aft edge of the partners shall be 135 3/8 inches aft of the vertical projection of the mooring line groove in the bow chock, with a tolerance of plus or minus 3/8 inch. That means that the permissible maximum aft location is 135.75 inches aft of the bow chock measuring point.
- Steps were relatively far forward as compared to the overall mean position of the steps in all the boats measured.
- (As a result of the above) a rake of at least 1.25 degrees aft, and sometimes up to 2.83 degrees or more.

The New Mast Step Specification

The new Specification limits how far forward the mast step can be located. For any given boat, Table "X" (which is a part of the Specification) shows the maximum forward limit of the after edge of the mast where it rests on the step. This measurement is taken from the aft cockpit coaming, a point called "AC", and will produce a rake of exactly 2 degrees if the partners (measured from the bow chock) are located as far aft as the long-standing class specification permits. The maximum forward step measurement, ("X" in the table) is derived from a trigonometric formula that depends on two variables: first the distance from the surface of the deck to the top of the bearing surface of the step, called "Bury", and second the distance from AC to the maximum permissible aft location of the after edge of the partners, called "Pmax." See the "Shields Mast Step Measurement Form" for a graphic representation.

The text of the new Specification follows:

"5.11 Mast Step

The mast step shall be located on the centerline of the boat and shall consist of an aluminum casting (as supplied by Cape Cod Ship Building) that is fastened to a fixed horizontal foundation. After the effective date of this Specification, the mast step shall not be moved except under the supervision of a fleet measurer, who shall record the boat's "Bury," "Y" and "X" dimensions

after the step has been moved so as to be in a position to certify that the step location appears to be in conformity with this Specification.

The maximum permissible forward position of the mast step shall be determined as follows:

Measure the maximum permissible aft position of the after edge of the mast partners (135.75" inches aft of the mooring line groove in the bow chock, *see* Specification 2.2). Mark this position ("PMax") on the deck at centerline.

Measure the distance ("Y") from the aft edge of the cockpit (on centerline at the surface of the deck behind the coaming, Point "AC") to "PMax."

Measure "Bury," the distance from the upper surface of the deck at the aft edge of the partners to the surface of the mast step flange upon which the mast sits.

Using dimensions of Bury and Y, find the dimension "X" in Table X. "X" is measured from Point AC to the intersection of the aft edge of the mast where it rests on the step.

(b) If the actual distance from Point AC to the intersection of the aft edge of the mast where it rests on the step is greater than "X," the mast step shall be moved aft sufficiently to comply with this Specification.

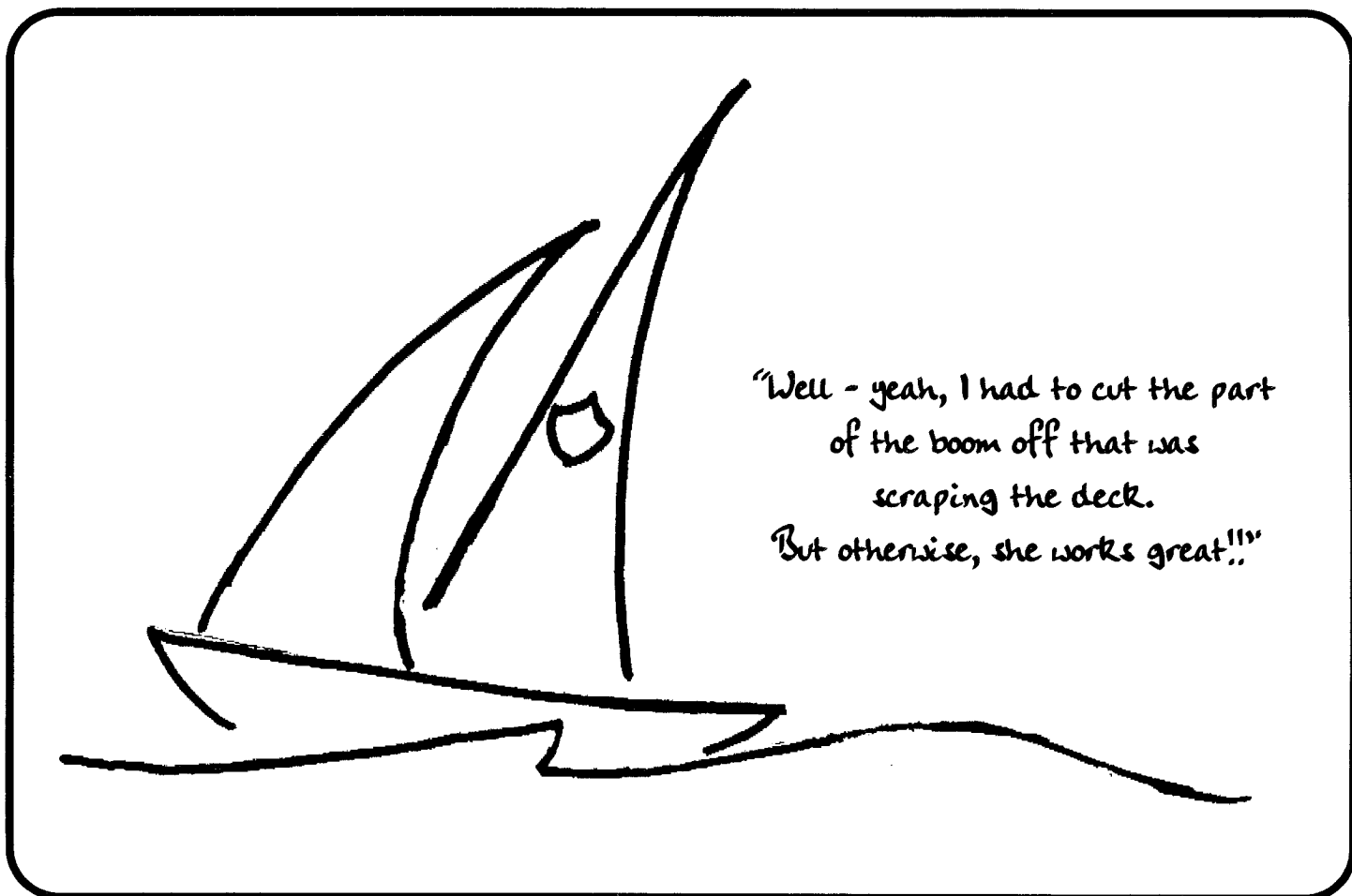


Table X : Shields Mast Step Location Guide: Defines Max. X

Max X - Maximum Allowable X Dimension (Limits Boats to Two (2) Degrees of Mast Rake with Partners at Max Aft Position).
 All dimensions in Inches
 Round off Bury and Y to the nearest .25". Round 0.125", 0.375", 0.625", 0.875" Up.

Y =	133.50	133.75	134.00	134.25	134.50	134.75	135.00	135.25	135.50	135.75	136.00	136.25	136.50	136.75	137.00
Bury															
33.00	138.63	138.87	139.12	139.36	139.60	139.85	140.09	140.33	140.58	140.82	141.06	141.30	141.55	141.79	142.03
33.25	138.70	138.94	139.19	139.43	139.67	139.91	140.16	140.40	140.64	140.89	141.13	141.37	141.61	141.86	142.10
33.50	138.77	139.01	139.25	139.50	139.74	139.98	140.22	140.47	140.71	140.95	141.20	141.44	141.68	141.92	142.17
33.75	138.84	139.08	139.32	139.56	139.81	140.05	140.29	140.54	140.78	141.02	141.26	141.51	141.75	141.99	142.24
34.00	138.91	139.15	139.39	139.63	139.88	140.12	140.36	140.60	140.85	141.09	141.33	141.57	141.82	142.06	142.30
34.25	138.98	139.22	139.46	139.70	139.95	140.19	140.43	140.67	140.92	141.16	141.40	141.64	141.89	142.13	142.37
34.50	139.05	139.29	139.53	139.77	140.02	140.26	140.50	140.74	140.99	141.23	141.47	141.71	141.95	142.20	142.44
34.75	139.12	139.36	139.60	139.84	140.09	140.33	140.57	140.81	141.05	141.30	141.54	141.78	142.02	142.27	142.51
35.00	139.19	139.43	139.67	139.91	140.16	140.40	140.64	140.88	141.13	141.37	141.61	141.85	142.09	142.34	142.58
35.25	139.26	139.50	139.74	139.99	140.23	140.47	140.71	140.95	141.20	141.44	141.68	141.92	142.16	142.41	142.65
35.50	139.33	139.57	139.82	140.06	140.30	140.54	140.78	141.02	141.27	141.51	141.75	141.99	142.23	142.48	142.72
35.75	139.40	139.65	139.89	140.13	140.37	140.61	140.85	141.10	141.34	141.58	141.82	142.06	142.31	142.55	142.79
36.00	139.48	139.72	139.96	140.20	140.44	140.68	140.93	141.17	141.41	141.65	141.89	142.14	142.38	142.62	142.86
36.25	139.55	139.79	140.03	140.27	140.52	140.76	141.00	141.24	141.48	141.72	141.97	142.21	142.45	142.69	142.93
36.50	139.62	139.86	140.11	140.35	140.59	140.83	141.07	141.31	141.55	141.80	142.04	142.28	142.52	142.76	143.00
36.75	139.70	139.94	140.18	140.42	140.66	140.90	141.14	141.39	141.63	141.87	142.11	142.35	142.59	142.84	143.08
37.00	139.77	140.01	140.25	140.49	140.74	140.98	141.22	141.46	141.70	141.94	142.18	142.43	142.67	142.91	143.15

Table 1 - MAST STEP MEASUREMENTS

Measurements taken prior to defining Rule – preliminary and unofficial.

"X" is calculated from a trigonometric formula based on Bury (Col. 2) and Y (Col.7) measurements.

DELTA: Rule states that if Delta is positive after official measurement, Step must be moved aft until Delta is Zero or Negative.

Example: For Boat No. 223, Aileen: Bury is 34.325" (round down to 34.25" per Table X), Y is 135.375" (round up to 135.5" per Table X); Table X says X = 140.916". Delta (Column 3 measurement - X) = -0.17". Step does NOT have to move.

Shields		Measured before the Rule				Calculated		Y	X	DELTA
No.	Name	1. Bow Groove to Aft Edge of existing Partners	2. Bury	3. AC to Aft Edge of Mast at Step	4. AC to aft edge of existing Partners	5. Mast Angle	6. Rake Angle	7. Calculated distance from AC to Pmax	Maximum Distance from AC to aft edge of mast at Step (see Table X)	Column 3 Measurement Minus "X"
5	Swamp Fox	133.250	36.750	141.500	136.000	91.01	1.01	133.500	139.70	1.80
226	Ult. Press. III	135.750	35.000	141.125	135.000	92.83	2.83	135.000	140.64	0.48
217	John Dory	135.750	33.625	140.500	134.875	92.64	2.64	134.875	140.29	0.21
220	MadamX	135.188	34.688	141.000	135.813	91.41	1.41	135.251	140.81	0.19
67	Nail-It	135.188	35.500	141.063	135.750	91.25	1.25	135.188	141.03	0.04
182	Lure	135.250	33.375	140.500	135.750	91.25	1.25	135.250	140.47	0.03
84	Altair	134.625	35.250	140.250	135.625	90.20	0.20	134.500	140.23	0.02
223	Aileen	135.375	34.325	140.750	135.750	91.26	1.26	135.375	140.92	-0.17
167	Challenger	134.875	34.250	140.500	136.000	90.44	0.44	135.125	140.67	-0.17
8	Good News	135.500	34.625	140.875	135.750	91.33	1.33	135.500	141.06	-0.18
6	Anduril	134.813	35.375	140.813	136.188	90.18	0.18	135.251	141.03	-0.21
238	White Rabbit	135.313	35.125	140.938	135.875	91.01	1.01	135.438	141.20	-0.26
87	Avatar	135.000	34.250	140.375	135.875	90.43	0.43	135.125	140.67	-0.30
228?	Avatar	135.000	34.250	140.375	135.875	90.43	0.43	135.125	140.67	-0.30
41	Havoc	133.750	35.250	140.375	137.000	88.18	-1.82	135.000	140.71	-0.34
221	Cornelia	135.125	34.375	140.375	135.750	90.59	0.59	135.125	140.74	-0.37
107	Grace	135.625	35.375	140.625	135.250	91.39	1.39	135.125	141.03	-0.40
70	Coquette	135.250	34.750	140.125	135.500	90.41	0.41	135.000	140.57	-0.44
245	Hawk	135.750	35.125	140.750	135.500	91.30	1.30	135.500	141.20	-0.45
201		135.625	35.250	140.500	135.375	91.03	1.03	135.250	140.95	-0.45
138	Envy	135.625	35.000	140.750	135.500	91.36	1.36	135.375	141.27	-0.52
141	Rebel	135.188	33.313	140.125	136.000	90.19	0.19	135.438	140.64	-0.52
239	Syrinx	135.375	35.188	140.625	135.813	90.55	0.55	135.438	141.20	-0.57
50	Rainbow	135.375	35.625	140.750	135.875	90.47	0.47	135.500	141.34	-0.59
25	Checkmate	135.125	33.750	139.875	135.750	89.99	-0.01	135.125	140.54	-0.66
248	The Grinch	135.375	34.813	140.375	135.938	90.09	0.09	135.563	141.06	-0.68
242	Viper	135.188	35.313	140.313	135.813	89.97	-0.03	135.251	141.03	-0.71
156	Icarus	135.875	34.000	140.375	135.563	91.07	1.07	135.688	141.09	-0.71
235	Nimrod	135.250	34.875	140.313	136.000	89.85	-0.15	135.500	141.13	-0.81
231	Mermaid	135.750	33.500	140.375	135.875	90.76	0.76	135.875	141.20	-0.82
140	Gang Agley	135.438	35.438	139.875	135.375	89.90	-0.10	135.063	140.78	-0.91
143	Folly	135.625	34.000	140.125	135.875	90.11	0.11	135.750	141.09	-0.96
	Amusing	135.313	35.063	140.125	135.875	89.66	-0.34	135.438	141.13	-1.00
	Gem	135.250	35.000	140.125	136.000	89.48	-0.52	135.500	141.13	-1.00
247	Kiskadee	135.500	35.313	140.375	135.938	89.87	-0.13	135.688	141.44	-1.06
22	Sambuca	136.125	35.000	140.000	135.000	90.91	0.91	135.375	141.13	-1.13
66	Juice	135.500	34.500	140.000	136.000	89.47	-0.53	135.750	141.23	-1.23

THE 2003 SHIELDS NATIONALS

By Carl Wolfeich

Chicago Yacht Club provided a warm welcome for visiting Shields sailors for the 2003 Nationals, and for the third consecutive year, a Newport boat took home the top prize. Robin Monk and crew aboard *Diversion* won the six race series sailed in light to moderate conditions on Lake Michigan. After the first day of racing was cancelled due to heavy weather, shifting winds dominated the remaining two days and provided a challenge for sailors not familiar with local Chicago conditions. Six different Shields fleets, from as far away as California, had boats participating in the regatta.

Strong NNE winds, gusting to 27 knots, forced the cancellation of the first day's racing. This direction, blowing down the lake, created a long fetch and built up six foot seas at the harbor entrance. As sailors waited ashore, the refrain of "too many broken boats" was heard often from race committee officials before they finally pulled the plug on the day's racing. There was some disappointments in the ranks, but many turned their attention to another sport and crowded into nearby Wrigley Field to watch the Cubs. One Shields sailor did distinguish himself for the day, however, by getting ejected from the ballpark. For the time being he should remain nameless, but he'll be back at the Nationals next year with his "lost boat".

Race #1

Racing conditions went from one extreme to another on Friday morning when calm prevailed and boats drifted aimlessly in the start area waiting for wind. After a couple of hours, a 5-8 knot breeze filled in from the southeast so racing

could begin. In lower Lake Michigan, a light easterly usually clocks as the breeze builds and this day was no exception. The right side of the course was heavily favored for most of the day. In the lighter breeze, there were numerous 10-20 degree right shifts with velocity that made playing the right side critical to success. This lesson was learned early in the first race when those who stayed right going upwind found themselves near the front of the fleet. Skip McGuire on *Lure* and Merrill Tutton on *Cahoos* were 1-2 for most of the six mile, six leg race. *Diversion*, however, caught a favorable shift on the last windward leg and pulled into second around the last mark. *Lure* held off a late charge by *Diversion* on the run to the finish to win the first race.

Race #2

Winds were 10-12 knots by the start of the second race and seas were building as well. Remnants of larger swells from the day before disrupted the normal wave pattern creating more of a challenge for drivers. Judging and maintaining speed through the waves became a key factor for the day's racing. The right side of the course remained the place to be to take advantage of the right oscillations in the still building breeze. Shoemaker and Mallory on *Hawk*, over the line early in the first race, got a clean start this time and sailed to an early lead that they never relinquished. Jon and Mike Schwartz on *Redfeather*, a local Chicago boat, finished behind in second place. *Diversion* was buried at the start and near last at the first mark but worked its way back through the fleet to claim fourth.



Karen I. Hirsch Photo



Karen I. Hirsch Photo



Karen I. Hirsch Photo



Karen I. Hirsch Photo

Race #3

Winds freshened to 12-15 knots for the third and final race of the day. The SSE breeze was more consistent in speed and direction with fewer shifts, making the right side less of an advantage than previous races. Success was dependent more on boat speed and diving the boat effectively through waves that had been building all day. *Diversion* got a clean start and powered to the front, staying there to capture its first bullet of the series. Bob Radway on *Sapphire* edged out *Hawk* on the run to the finish to capture second. Consistent sailing had now given *Diversion* a five point lead over *Hawk* and *Sapphire* after the first day's racing.

Race #4

On Saturday, a steady 6-10 knot westerly allowed racing to begin on time, although the start was not without incident. In a pre-start collision before the fourth race, *Obo*, a Michigan boat, lost its backstay and was out of the competition while *Diversion* fouled *Sapphire*. By the time *Diversion* completed its penalty turns, they found themselves buried and forced to the left side of the course. Although the shifts were not as prevalent as the day before, the right side was still favored, but change was certainly ahead. The right shifts were smaller with little change in velocity and, unlike the previous day, the breeze was lightening by the end of the race. *Hawk* got out in front early though, protected the right side and sailed away with its second win of the series. H. L. Devore on *Lady* followed suit and took second. *Diversion* never fully recovered for a poor start and finished in mid-fleet. The momentum had swung to *Hawk's* favor as they now led the regatta.

Race #5

The westerly lightened to 5-8 knots for the start of a fifth race that turned out to be the determining race of the regatta. *Diversion* fell behind *Hawk* at the start and was forced left as



Karen I. Hirsch Photo

most of the fleet banged the right side for more advantage. *Hawk* continued to cover halfway up the weather leg and was starting to take control of what was coming down to a two boat race for the national championship. The right side continued to be favored though and *Hawk* broke off cover to make contact with the rest of the fleet. *Diversion* continued left for a clear lane and also tacked back to the right but they had poor position on the fleet. What followed was perhaps the most critical single wind shift of the regatta, a 40 degree left shift that lifted *Diversion* up towards the windward mark to round ahead of *Hawk* and most of the fleet. The wind then dropped to a whisper and boats scattered downwind in the dying breeze. *Diversion* and a couple of other boats were able to slip over to the right side of the course before the wind almost died completely. A SSW breeze then filled in from right to left and three boats, *Cahoots*, *Stillwater* and *Diversion* were able to take advantage and round the leeward mark clear ahead of the fleet. *Diversion* eventually worked its way to the lead in a building southerly breeze and won its second race, taking back control of the series. *Cahoots* followed in second and Garth Hobson on *Stillwater* was third, the best race by a California boat in the regatta.

Race #6

The southerly breeze continued to fill in and was 12-15 knots for the sixth and final race of the Nationals. This race had perhaps the most consistent wind of the whole series with few shifts greater than five degrees. *Diversion* had its best start of the regatta and took an early lead that it carried all the way to the finish. The lack of shifts put a stronger emphasis on boat speed and *Diversion* kept up the pace while keeping a loose cover on *Hawk*. Robin Monk and his crew sailed to its third bullet of the series and the National Championship. The first six places in the final race mirrored the final placings in the overall series, with *Hawk* and *Lady* rounding out the top three places.

Shields Nationals 2003 Final Standings

Place	Sail	Skipper	Boat	Fleet	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	Total	Adj	Final
1	160	Robin Monk	Diversion	Newport,RI	2	4	1	6	1	1	15	6	9
2	245	C.Shoemaker/C.Mallory	Hawk	Newport,RI	8	1	3	1	7	2	22	8	14
3	106	H.L. DeVore	Lady	Larchmont,NY	6	3	7	2	6	3	27	7	20
4	130	Robert Radway	Sapphire	Chicago,IL	5	5	2	8	4	4	28	8	20
5	182	Skip McGuire	Lure	Larchmont,NY	1	7	DSQ	3	9	5	38	13	25
6	90	J.Schwartz/M.Schwartz	Redfeather	Chicago,IL	7	2	6	4	10	6	35	10	25
7	124	Merrill Tutton	Cahoots	Macatawa,MI	3	9	8	5	2	8	35	9	26
8	196	Gary Ropski	Insidious	Chicago,IL	4	6	5	RAF	5	7	40	13	27
9	103	Garth Hobson	Stillwater	Monterey,CA	11	11	11	7	3	9	52	11	41
10	94	B.Green/B.Thompson	Charlotte	Irvine,CA	9	10	10	9	8	10	56	10	46
11	152	Jon Tasker	Obo	Macatawa,MI	10	8	4	DNS	DNC	DNC	61	13	48
12	249	Tom Kennedy	Robin	Chicago,IL	DNS	12	9	10	11	11	66	13	53

THE 2003 PATRIOTS CUP - NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND - SEPTEMBER 20-21, 2003

by Jonty Sherwill

HRSC WINS AT THE 7th ATTEMPT & ACHIEVES A UNIQUE TREBLE

Too many British yachting challenges across the Atlantic have come to nought over the centuries. Sadly it was not Britain but one of its dominions that finally wrested the America's Cup from the New York Yacht Club in 1983, so do we remain a frustrated sailing nation? Well probably not considering the meteoric rise and world domination of our Olympic stars over recent years, but winning trophies in the United States still holds a special magic.

Okay, we are not talking about the America's Cup here, but the Patriots' Cup has built a firm reputation as a fine event, attracting teams from England, Scotland, Ireland, Canada, and the US. First run in 1996 it was conceived by NYCC members Peter Lawson and Russell Hoyt as a return event for the Sigma 33 Team Racing Championship run by HRSC on behalf of the Sigma Association. The very beautiful 30 foot Shields One-Designs are used for the racing each generously loaned by private owners. Every boat uses an identical set of racing sails which were generously donated just for this event by Russell Hoyt of the Storm Trisail Club. Spinnakers are not set and this helps to keep the racing close and less hazardous.

Initially six teams were invited to race for the Patriots' Cup, an ancient teapot reputedly dredged up in Boston Harbour (!) but such was the event's popularity that it has been expanded to eight teams, which includes the HRSC and two Sigma 33 Teams. Held each year since 1996 bar 2001 after the terrorism in the USA, the event has changed little in format over its seven years, which is a tribute to its originators. For the 2003 event four overseas teams arrived as the tail end of Hurricane Isabelle tracked through the Carolinas. Thankfully the wind never got stronger than 30 knots at Newport causing a cancellation of practice sailing on Friday, but no damage to the fleet, some of which had been hauled out to avoid catastrophe. Thanks to the irrepressible "Whitey" Russell these boats were re-launched and prepared for racing on Saturday.

The Hamble River Team under captain Jonty Sherwill was a largely new group with only five veterans from previous challenges. Buoyed up by their victory in the Sigma 33 Team Championship held in May this year at Don Loghaire, there was an air of confidence as the main group climbed aboard the British Airways 747. Firefly pundit Sean Barber was coming back for his second try as helmsman but one absentee was Philip Meakins who has been a regular Patriots' Cup competitor. A tireless organizer of team racing at Hamble he was also a winning helmsman in Ireland. Taking his place was 707 star Ian Southworth, previously seen at Newport in 2000 when HRSC were runners up. The rules state that only the helms must be members of the challenging club and although we try to take as many HRSC members as possible it has to be down to the skippers to pick their best hands, augmented if possible by a few team racing experts. Professionals are not welcome.

So with the hurricane petering out and heading north-west, racing got underway in glorious sunshine and a light breeze on

Saturday morning. With no practice possible on Friday, the rookie Irish team were permitted a practice start and a beat to sort out their trimming, but this hardly held up the racing which was ably managed by Bill Riesen. Two round robins are held over two days with the top scoring team taking the trophy; there are no semis and final. Each team therefore does 14 races and seldom if ever does a winning team relinquish more than two races on the first day. After the previous evening's draw HRSC were third race away in the first flight against New York Yacht Club. Things did not go well with Southie over the line and Jonty firmly trapped in dirty air below Shaun. NYCC trucked away to win and scowls were exchanged amongst the HRSC boats – the wake up call had come and it worked like a charm. HRSC dispatched the next four teams before coming up against the Canadians, only on their second Patriots' but up for a fight. They had been practicing and caught HRSC out. With the breeze holding the race officer decided to press on into the second round robin and after nine races completed and seven wins secured we headed back to the mooring. Our boat 'Meander' lives right at the top of the harbour well away from regular launch traffic and having furled the sails and fitted the cover we wondered whether anyone would spot us. It was a classic warm September evening and we hardly cared, but eventually a VHF message was passed and Dick Cheesburgh arrived in his RIB to ferry us to the dock.

Saturday night of the Patriots' Cup is traditionally swordfish steak night at the Storm Trysail's Newport HQ, actually Russell Hoyt's immaculate boat works just off Thames Street. A magnificent fish caught that day and carefully prepared by Whitey Russell fed the masses and Newport's answer to the Buenvista Social Club jazz band played. All agreed this was the best yet and after a thoroughly social evening the hardened campaigners headed for a few nightcaps at one or three of the local bars that are only too used to welcoming overseas crew. Pasty Vigus was clearly taking it seriously and fell asleep in the foyer of the intriguingly named 'Cheeky Monkey' blissfully unaware that several hen parties had used him as a photo prop during the evening. How many wedding albums does he now feature in as that mystery Englishman?

Sunday morning brought an intriguing invitation, one for a cooked breakfast up the road in Newport, accepted by three jolly tars in the Candy Store bar at midnight. A complete stranger took a shine to these charming Englishmen and promised to supply breakfast not only for them but their skipper too! We laughed at our luck all the way to the boat on another beautiful sunny morning agreeing that this delightful lady would be invited to our victory dinner. In determined mood the HRSC team went about their business only dropping one race to finish the series with 11 wins and 3 losses. The final showdown between the Storm Trysail and the Canadians was crucial to the HRSC's success and thankfully Rich du Moulin and his Trysail team held off the lumberjacks to secure their 2nd place overall and ensure Hamble's first win in the event, the first non-US victory, and the first team to secure wins on both sides of the Atlantic in the same year.

Ida Lewis Yacht Club played host for the presentations where Rich du Moulin stepped up to admit that the cup was not available to be presented to the HRSC team, but was still in

New York, clearly an indication of his confidence in retaining the trophy. Rich also pointed out that he is a paid up overseas member of HRSC, at which point we assumed he was about to make the acceptance speech! Despite this story having strong connotations of the Auld Maug's handover in 1983, the arrival of the beautiful Shields half model 'keeper' from Andy Burton's workshop put the proceedings back on track and prevented the tea from being tipped into the harbour for a second time!

Monday is a special day for Patriots' Cuppers with the traditional get together at the Lawson's home at Pojac Point up in Narragansett Bay where they proudly fly the HRSC burgee as a bastion of the old world in the new. Bloody Mary's and Lobster sandwiches are a perfect antidote to the weekend's excesses plus a little light exercise in the kayak or Alden shell exercise skiff. For most this is a stop over en route to the plane but this year my group decided to stay an extra two days. Our visit to Mystic Seaport was well worth the drive and found us returning for a second day to see the Rosenfeld photographic collection, the US equivalent of Beken of Cowes. At one point we thought Flash Gordon was about to go native so enamoured was he of the place.

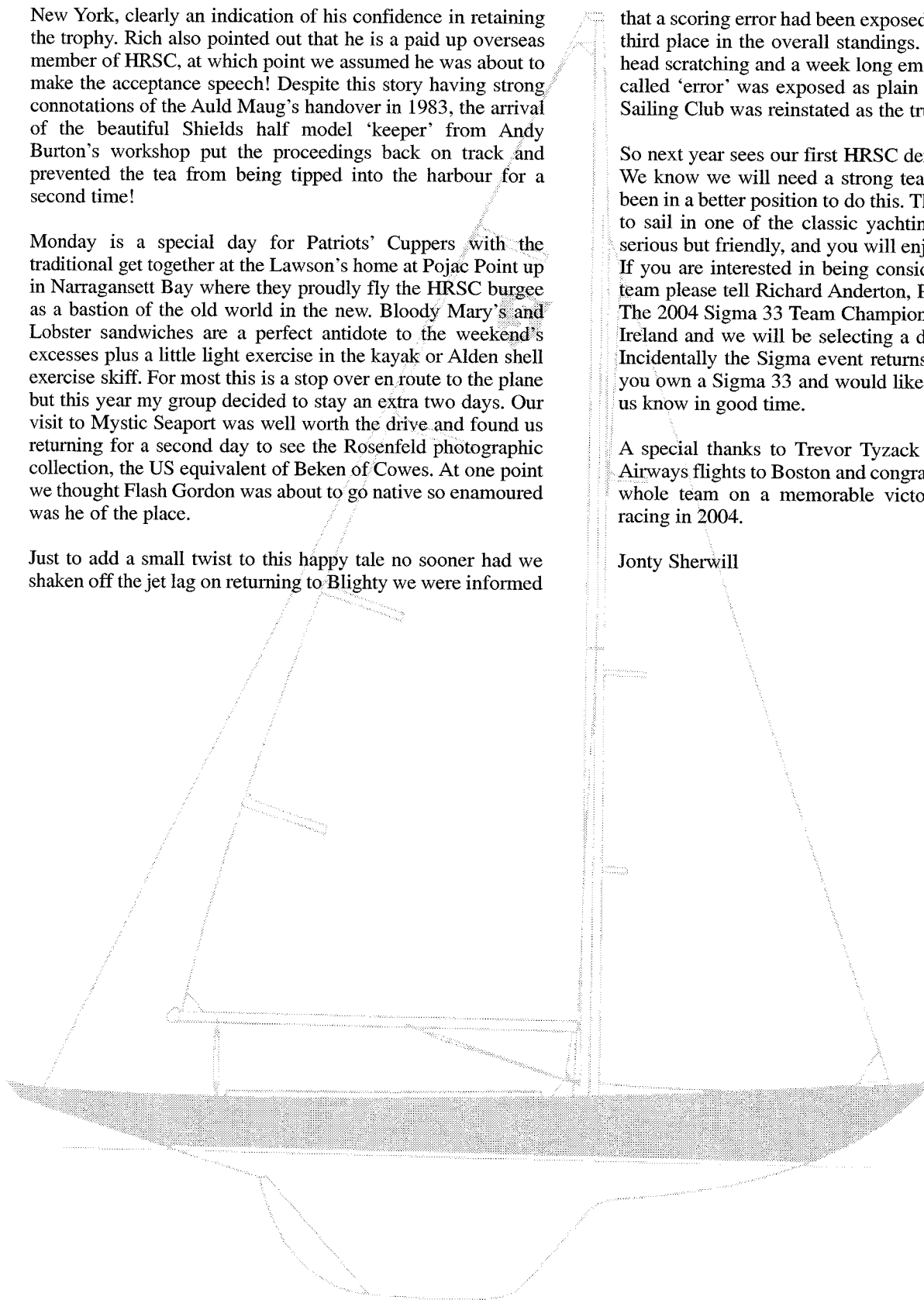
Just to add a small twist to this happy tale no sooner had we shaken off the jet lag on returning to Blighty we were informed

that a scoring error had been exposed and HRSC had slipped to third place in the overall standings. After a certain amount of head scratching and a week long email correspondence the so-called 'error' was exposed as plain wrong and Hamble River Sailing Club was reinstated as the true victors. Phew!

So next year sees our first HRSC defense of the Patriots' Cup. We know we will need a strong team and never has the club been in a better position to do this. This event is an opportunity to sail in one of the classic yachting locations, the racing is serious but friendly, and you will enjoy unequalled hospitality. If you are interested in being considered for inclusion in this team please tell Richard Anderton, Philip Meakins, or myself. The 2004 Sigma 33 Team Championship will once more be in Ireland and we will be selecting a defense team for this also. Incidentally the Sigma event returns to Hamble in 2005 so if you own a Sigma 33 and would like to get involved please let us know in good time.

A special thanks to Trevor Tyzack for arranging the British Airways flights to Boston and congratulations once more to the whole team on a memorable victory. Here's to good team racing in 2004.

Jonty Sherwill



HEAVY AIR SHIELDS SAILING with #226

By Chuck Allen-North Sails

Dock/Mooring Prep:

You know it is windy when you show up at the boat and the boom tent is flapping in the breeze. It is time to hunker down and prepare for a windy night of racing. We like to have each position of the boat double and triple checked by the teammate who is in charge of the area:

Bow-Geordie

- Tape all halyards
- McLube all hanks on the headstay, this should be done at least twice a month
- Double up on the spectra tack line: four wraps from the tack of the sail to the shackle and two forward around the headstay to keep it in line. We like to set the tack height around 1.5" for a breeze and 2-3.5" as it gets lighter.
- Check and McLube spin pole fittings, including the track on the mast.

Mast-Liz

- Tape the end of the spinnaker sheets with granny-over knots.
- McLube winches and Halyard exits.
- Mark up the Halyards for quick sighting at marks, etc..
- Secure all items that live below decks, we have life jackets, anchor w/line, bilge pumps, etc... Nothing worse than having this stuff move around into the jib trimmers area!
- Make sure all beer is secured to the mast-crucial!

Cockpit-Darris

- Drink huge iced coffee before going sailing.
- Double check to make sure the cooler was secured by Liz!
- Bilge area fully pumped out, including both ends of the boat.
- Make sure the jib tracks are marked because we will move the leads depending on the wave state. You want to be able to find that spot again for the following week.
- Make sure all the necessary tools are on board (and working)
- This has been a challenge with saltwater. We'll go through at least two sets of tools in a season. The most critical tool is Vice-grips to secure the leads down tight enough and vice versa.
- Have all the pump handles ready for deployment at any moment. It is a Shields after all.

Mainsheet/Traveler/Backstay/Driving – Pete / Chuck

Have I mentioned McLube yet? I always spray the control boxes for the backstay and traveler for all conditions each week. I try to hit all the blocks on the boom, outhaul and the traveler itself. Don't forget the backstay system below decks and above.

- Tightening up on the tiller bolts should be looked at occasionally.
- I also hit the boltrope on the main before hoisting.
- Check all the battens and don't be afraid to tape them.
- Make sure Darris had his huge iced coffee.

Gear-All

Very simple. Put the stuff on that you'll need and leave the rest behind, unless going out for the day where there would be multiple races.

On the Water:

We sail from a dock, so sometimes it can be challenging in a breeze while exiting. The best maneuver we have found is to preize the boat in the right direction, hoist the jib and sail out to a wide area before hoisting the main – seems to work for us. While sailing out to the race course try not to have water spilling into the boat which you just bailed. Keep the jib well eased so the water does not "scoop" inside. The crew will appreciate it too.

Pre-race:

I like to go through a similar pre-race ritual when it is breezy. Kind of like Nomar:

Step 1-

- Check in with the R/C, the standard "Ahoy" will do.
- Sail upwind to get a feel for the conditions, angles and numbers.
- Attempt 5 -10 tacks to get the crew warmed up and psyched.
- Come back downwind w/out chute (we would rather keep it dry and have a cold one), make sure to run the tapes if you choose not to hoist.

Step 2-

Hopefully the R/C is set up by now: Get a line sight using land markers (tree, house, etc..) With 30 plus Shields out racing on a Wed. night there tends to be line sag to capitalize on when approaching the middle of the line. It becomes a bit easier to sight the line when starting at an end. The land sight is more for a middle of the line start.

Step 3-

Do a layline approach to both ends of the line to get a feel for overstanding at the boat and falling short at the pin, you can use the land to help for a quick reference if you like.

Step 4-

Take a wind shot and point at the weather mark (they usually do not provide a bearing on Wed. nights) and record the number. Then run the line toward the pin or boat and record that number. This gives us the plus or minus to which end is favored. This technique is used when sailing a regatta where bearing and distance are provided, the same system can work when using Hammersmith or The Dumplings. The only factor, which may throw a wrench into things, is the current.

Step 5-

Current. I live by one rule, which I learned from my buddy T.Hotch, who sails down in the Stonington area (lots or current)-"start up current"! I watched him demolish a 97 boat fleet at the JY-15 NA's because of tide/current.

Anyway, take the current into effect, but when it's really windy it is more effective to concentrate on your boat handling and going fast.

Starting:

Hopefully by now, after going through the pre-race rituals, we have figured out where to start. You never know though, things tend to change with 1 minute to go if you know what I mean. I like to stay to weather of the line during the first 3 minutes. There tends to be too much wave action, filling up the boat with water. Never mind all the "close calls" that may arise. I tend to use the port tack approach 90% of the time, passing the pin with about a minute and one half. If we are favoring the boat end and see a herd forming we tend to tack and start

below the group, otherwise looking for a nice large hole on the herd's weather side. If we are thinking the pin to be more favored, the strategy is to end up a third of the way up from the pin. Most people tack, I like to gybe (especially if the current is pushing the fleet over). This sets you up, so when "that guy" tacks in front and to leeward, you have the choice of luffing or ducking in behind them. When tacking on windy days, the waves usually slow them down enough, giving you enough time to make a decision. The key when starting a Shields in a breeze is to have some room to leeward, they take some time to get rumbling so do what it takes to carve yourself enough room to help ease this process. Another thing to remember is to not pull the jib in too fast, you'll end up falling into the boat below quicker than you think. And the herd is off.

Upwind:

Three controls that matter the most:

1. Traveler. We basically sheet the main in as hard as we can in a breeze and forget about it. Playing the traveler becomes the key, assuming you have your vang, cunningham, etc. on. With someone calling the puffs (usually the bow person on our boat), the driver and mainsheet/traveler trimmer can work together to control the height, relative to other boats. We like to keep the traveler on centerline until the driver feels he is not able to keep the boat from stalling. It is a constant job up/down, up/down...

2. Backstay-the throttle of the boat. It is all a feeling thing, when the driver feels a bit slow, we are easing. We tend to crank it on when it is breezy but flat water and typically see it eased off a touch for waves. We are always playing the backstay, but not as much as the traveler.

3. Jib Sheet – I tell lots of Shields sailors about this one and they are usually surprised. Playing the jib sheet helps a bunch when the breeze is on. When the guy calling the puffs says, "puff in three, two, one..." the trimmer eases about two clicks or so. This seems to help the boat keep its height vs. being pushed sideways. When the lull comes we have three people lean in and physically pull it back on. This can happen quite a few times on a beat.

Another item to consider is weight: We move everyone back a spot in the waves (one person behind the driver) and move

towards the shrouds in flat water.

Here is a quick trick/tip that we like. When a port tack boat is approaching, and it is obvious they are going to duck, wait until they have eased their sails and a body is in before tacking onto port if you want the right side. They'll have to reset to upwind mode and tack because you have a safe leeward position – this can be a nice 1-2 length gainer with a starboard favor at the port mark.

Downwind:

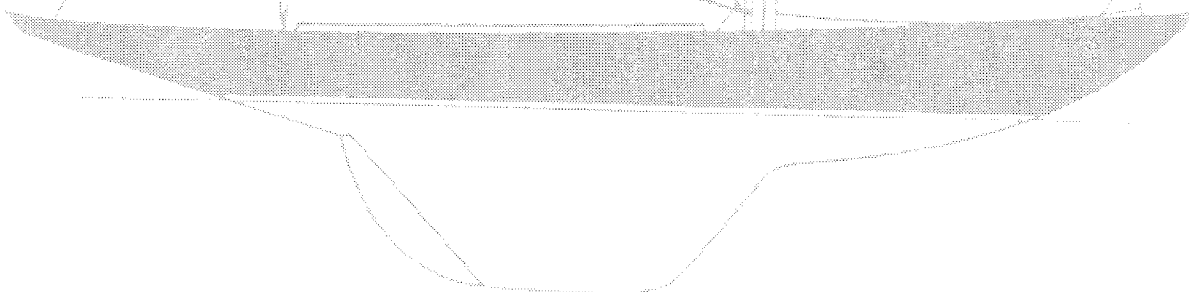
Nothing earth shattering going on here. I will tell you that something that has helped us in the past was to raise the jib part of the way up before gybing. This helps to eliminate any wraps of the kite on the headstay and also helps in stabilizing the boat. Don't worry you will not slow down. Otherwise, some basics are to twing down on the leeward side to help pull the tapes, this should help you from rolling a bit as well as over sheeting the main-has the same effect on rolling. Easing the pole forward a touch can help in controlling the boat too. We like to take our time during the hoist, making sure that the tack gets out toward the pole before it goes up. You can leave the jib up until things are under control for as long as you need, just pull the pole back and bear off and the kite will fly just fine.

When approaching the leeward mark-a good rule of thumb: "take it down early", no reason to go shrimping. A hero is only a sandwich!

Remember to take the mark wide and turn up to it- you'll shoot out better and be able to hold a lane off the guys in front of you for a bit longer. Some boats head right at the mark and turn to round it while it is right next to them, the result usually puts them about a 1/2 boat length to leeward of the others rounding.

Well, I hoped some of this has helped. For information on tuning visit www.northsails.com go to One Design and click on Tuning Guides or give me a call. We'll see everyone out in Edgartown, MA for the 2004 Nationals where it is usually breezy with flat water.

See you@ The Pin,
Chuck and Team 226



FLEET 9 NEWS/NEWPORT, R.I.

By Bill Doyle

The 2003 Shields season again proved why we are the most successful and growing fleet of racing yachts in Newport. The season blends serious, multi-race regattas on the weekends (Newport Regatta, Memorial Day Regatta) along with the family oriented, non-spin weekend series (Aloha Cup -3 Saturday's a year) and, of course, our ultra-competitive, Wednesday Night racing that runs from early May, straight through until October. Our schedule and SI's are available on our site, www.shieldsfleet9.org.

This year, more non-Shields Newport sailors than ever couldn't resist the temptation and have purchased even more boats and brought them into town, giving us a total of 61 Shields based in these waters. Keeping them all straight and organized has been a never-ending task as I continually rely on the many valuable volunteers to keep the behemoth fleet rolling in the right direction.

Our overall champions were again the team from #245, Charlie Shoemaker and Coles Mallory. Their habit of never missing a race all season and consistently doing well is a combination that is proving nearly impossible to beat. But, followed closely was a name that's been around awhile, Chris Withers, with his partners, Phil and Wendy Lotz on yacht #138. Jamie Hilton's team on #217 picked up a few trophies as did #226 (Chuck Allen / Peter Denton), 107 (John Burnham / Reed Baer) with yours truly, #222 getting a few of the "just out of the money" awards for coming in 4th place for the Fall series as well as the overall season. But, given the fleet size is generally about a

dozen boats each weekend and nearly 30 on the line every Wednesday, I'm pretty thrilled with a 4th!

The e-mail blasts started a few years ago by previous Fleet 9 captains has really taken a life of its own. Our recipient list has grown to nearly 400 sailors both in Newport and abroad and is starting to become the information source for all sailing related things going on in town. To join, feel free to send a note and I'll add you to the list. (bill@Performanceresearch.com)

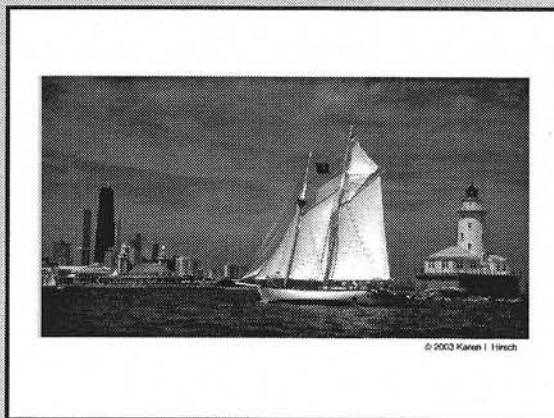
For 2004, we have even more exciting changes ahead. In addition to our eight parties throughout the season, The West Marine private shopping night, and possibly a ski trip, we planned a rules seminar with two America's Cup veterans to keep us clean on the leeward marks. In addition, we are planning to celebrate Sparkman & Stephens 75th Anniversary with a special regatta to be held in conjunction with their Rendezvous in Newport this July.

Lastly, I've had plenty of requests from my fleet early this year regarding the Nationals and hope that means we will be well represented when September rolls around in Edgartown.

See you on the water!
Bill Doyle
Fleet 9

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DIGITAL COMPASS

By Dr. Charlie Shoemaker

Although I have been a Shields co-owner for only the past 5 years, I have listened in on discussions on the use of a digital compass at annual Shields meetings dating back about 15 years. The class has rejected its use for multiple reasons – it was a change, it required electricity and it was expensive.

The first digital compass that I became familiar with was the Sail Comp developed by the Kits Van Heyningen family in their dining room in Newport. Mr. “Kits” was an employee of Raytheon, his older son Martin, was a Yale undergrad and the other son Robert, was studying at McGill. In 1978, they began developing on-board computers and software for Mr. Bich and the French 12-meter America’s cup syndicate. Out of this effort they developed the “Sail Comp”. This family went on to form KVH industries that now builds directional equipment for the military and television industry.

Soon after the introduction of the Sail Comp, the Ensign class and the J-24 class accepted the compass. The Ensign class added the proviso that it was to be used alone and could not be connected to any other function. I have used this compass for at least 20 years on the Ensign.

I think all of us are quite comfortable and facile with compasses, such as used on lasers, that you can look down on and read the forward edge of the circular card. When we are on starboard tack and get lifted, we immediately see higher numbers. The same is true for bulkhead or mast mounted compasses, which because of their location, usually require that we read the backside of the circular cards; however, there seems to be a problem. Perhaps I am dyslexic and seemed to have passed this trait on to my crewmembers, but we all have problems reading the compass. When we are asked “are we lifted?” or “are we down?” depending upon the experience of the crew we invariably, at least once during a race, get back the wrong answer. The problem with the bulkhead or mast mounted compasses is, because of their locations, we are reading the backside of the compass. I guess it is counter intuitive, and as a result of these occasional misreads, the yelling level within the crew rises. It is quite obvious the most experienced crews rarely make this mistake. Hence, if you ask the experience crews, they could care less about the controversy over digital compasses, perhaps because it adds to their advantage as experienced skipper and crew.

The digital compass provides a read-out that all on the boat can see, so there is less communication. Although the Sail Comp requires a 12 volt battery, the Tacktick utilizes solar power only. On the Ensign we are prohibited from using its memory to record lifts and downs, but that is easily solved, by writing down the median directions. **It does not indicate what the next shift will be. Also if you are lifted it does not indicate the lift is due to an oscillating breeze or a permanent shift.**

One great advantage I have noted having sailed in both the Ensign and the Shields relates to teaching young sailors about a compass. These young sailors have learned to use land sights, and hence understand “lifts” and “downers”. But when you ask them to focus on a compass that reads backwards or because it is located in a position they can’t read accurately, they make mistakes and get discouraged. On the other hand when using a digital compass, if they are sitting on the rail and hiking they can almost simultaneously see changes in land sights and the compass changes and really begin to understand the value of using a compass to assist in determining lifts and downers. I have had the good fortune of sailing with many sailors, some of whom have gone on to gain national stature. I am not saying that understanding a digital compass is why they did so well. Rather, I believe the reason is that instead of being yelled at, they were learning in a friendly environment and learned to give positive input while racing.

As for the cost, digital compasses are selling for about \$300 to \$700, and a conventional mast mounted compass sells for \$100 to \$200. If you compare these costs to your annual costs of a new sail, boat storage, repainting, mooring fee, yacht club fees, and regatta fees and costs, \$300 is a small fraction of these costs. Secondly you get what you pay for. We have all experienced our compass card spinning after the boat hits a wave or crew unable to read it correctly. Personally, for this price differential, I am willing to pay the extra money to get reliable information in all conditions.

Reluctance to change the one design concept is another reason for not wanting to accept the digital compass. One of the key elements in the Shields philosophy is incorporated in rule 1.3 “Any alteration of a Registered Yacht and the use of any item or equipment on a Registered Yacht, which is not expressly permitted here, is prohibited”. Over the years the class has accepted changes – hand held VHF radios, mid boom sheeting, internal strengthening of the boom, rope halyards, and other changes to keep up with modern trends. This basis of the “uniformity” provisions in the Shields blue book is to maintain a level playing field, so that winning is based on sailing skills. It is my contention that a young crew, who is new to a fleet, would have a much flatter learning curve, if the skipper and his or her crew did not have to learn to read a compass backwards and to keep communicating with the skipper.

In summary, I recognize that the introduction of digital compass would be a slight added expense and a change in the Shields uniformity. The negative factors, I believe, are offset by its accuracy, the decreased communication within the boat, the shorter learning curve for new crews and perhaps more importantly it is a friendly way to introduce the importance of a compass to our young sailors.

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Don't forget to visit
www.shieldsclass.com
for upcoming events
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