

2006 El Toro Pinecrest Worlds report

Yet another great Toro regatta has come and gone by this summer, 25 sailors their families, friends, and assorted supporters assembled on the beach at Pinecrest for two days of sailing. The weather was all you could ask for at the lake, balmy breezes, t-shirt and short pants, and lake water that was not too cold. Should be noted we always wish for better breeze, but the lake was covered with ripples (just more in some places more than others).

Our master of the lake Gil Gilluly was out early Saturday morning greeting everyone as boats were assembled by the "out of Towner's". One of the best quotes of the weekend was from John Pacholski remarking why he liked coming to this Toro race, it reminded him of the theme song of tv show Cheers "Where everybody knows your name". Seemed the case with Greg Morrill who spent his summers sailing here, Butch Michel a long ago Toro hot shot rejoining the fleet, Dave Vickland coming back, Diane Kroll sailing with us again, and many more connections going back more than 40 years! Not to mention the local talent of the SOBYC (Sitting on the Beach Yacht Club), headed up by Hank Easom and closely followed by Jim Haire and Jay Copeland & Dick Daunt, and Stacy Mettier. Somewhere in there fall Robert Hrubes, and Mary and George Morris bay area sailors who have moved up the mountain and become "locals".

There was lots of support to make the 2006 worlds happen, Robert Hrubes wife Lynn made a memorable set of trophies for the first 8 boats. Mary and George did all the R/C work and that included sign ups, \$ collecting, and score keeping. Race committee work is never easy and Mary and George worked hard both days so the rest of us could play, and had the scores ready for all at the end of each race.

Saturday began with our "Lake Master" Gil's opening remarks reminding us of the origins of this regatta (57 years and counting), explanations of the course and where the marks are and their names. Please remember that no mere numbers besmirch the titles of the Pinecrest racing marks, the names of Beach, Tunnel, Tower, North Shore, Stump, Cove, and Cross make the course sheet much more interesting. Along with each of the 16 courses available, have names to elicit moans or cheers depending on how much you like a certain order of marks. Tradition has that the winner of the 2005 Worlds picks out the first race of the day and the winner of the next race gets to pick their favorite course. So after our group picture, the race was announced to be "Senility with an extra Beach first".

Part of the challenge of starting at Pinecrest is that the start line is right off the beach we sail off and the wind shifts thru about 60 degrees during the start sequence, Gil counts down from 30 while sailing back and forth above the line in his Toro. So you have 24 boats with their sails luffing, and skippers trying to hear Gil, and the boats near Gil repeating his count, down the line you hear "25" repeated at least three times etc. until Gil reaches ONE and that takes about 45 to 65 seconds I think. With Gil's shout of "All Clear" the fleet was off with Dick Daunt, Art Lange, John P, and Butch Michel leading the way around Beach closely followed by the rest of us. A long downwind leg to Cove, with several overtaking puffs reshuffles the fleet and moves John Ducat and Dave Vickland into the hunt. From Cove we go to Tower, which is a long beat across the lake and up the canyon to the Tower (looks like the top of a castle) in front of the dam. This beat was made memorable by watching Hank Easom go ahead of Art Lange by going straight up wind for last 50 feet in lee of the tower. All this while many individual duels are going all thru the fleet both up and down wind. From Tower down to Northshore and then to Stump and a long beat up to Beach, here Art slipped away from the fleet and had the longest lead of the weekend. John P., Dave V., Hank Easom and I went after each other for the rest of the race. John Ducat, Robert H., and John Amen went high and almost got the rest of us. In the World's fleet there are very few boats that anyone could take for granted, and Pinecrest is noted for giving and taking away comfortable leads. First race ended with Art Lange the winner, myself barely holding off Hank Easom, then John Pacholski followed by Dave Vickland.

The winner of the first race calls the course for the next race, and Art choose the next longest race, which was Monarch. Yet another race with long beats and runs up and down the lake, same start but with new players first at the top mark. John P. getting in the lead followed by John Liebenberg, Dennis Silva, and Art, and once again the rest of us getting reshuffled as the puffs filled in from astern and almost catching up with the leaders. It sure is fun to see the boats in front of you keep turning around and looking since there is no such thing as a stealthy El Toro coming up from behind with a fresh blast of wind. On the Beat from Stump to Tunnel, local sailor Stacy

Mettier briefly took over the lead by sailing in middle of the lake away from the shore while the rest of the fleet faded. But Pinecrest gives and takes away and Stacy took one more tack just to "beat us a little more" and the wind filled from the shore and 15 boats swooped over the top of the top in his red and white Toro "Ketchup". I watched at Tunnel as Art came from way back with a blasting puff along the shore going into the mark and coasted thru John Amen and Dave Vickland and around the mark and gone. Next leg took us down to Cove and up to the Tower, John P. lead us all around the tower just ahead of Dave Vickland, Dick Daunt, myself, Hank Easom, and Art. Speaking for myself it looked "OK" sailing away from Tower I was catching John and stretching from the rest of the fleet, and then we all stopped as Pinecrest reshuffled the wind cards. John P. somehow caught the tiniest puff and went from 5 feet in front of me to 50 yards and the sound of charging Toro's filled the canyon. 10 other boats joined me at the transition zone waiting for the next puff and the rest of the fleet and as Dave Vickland was over taken by at least six grinning skippers he was heard to shout, "I'm just lucky to be here". That cry was repeated the rest of the weekend whenever someone was "Pinecrested". John P. covered the fleet the rest of the way to Cross to the finish and took the win, and John Amen finessed a second in the last 100 yards. I was happy to even have a third out of that race, John Liebenberg learned why you have to stay in phase with the shifts, and Dave Vickland ended up fourth followed by Hank Easom. Rest of the fleet came in over the next 10 minutes all happy to be back ashore.

In less than half an hour after last boat finished a terrific potluck took shape just up where we kept out boats, chicken strips, beef strips, Caesar salad, lasagna, fresh veggies, fresh fruit, and cookies crowded the two tables. Gil brought special home made "Bull chips" (crackers in the shape of a bull). A nice time was had by all, and no one went home hungry.

Next day promptly at Noon Gil lead our skippers meeting and allowed John P. and his son Mike to announce the course for the third and last race. Reportedly father and son spent sometime picking out the course that would take full advantages of all of John's sailing skills. Zig-Zag was declared to be race of the day, and at one o'clock Gil called the course and started the count. John Liebenberg started on the far port end of the line when the rest of us knew that the middle starboard side was favored. Needless to say John was first boat to Beach followed by Art, Butch, Robert Hrubes, and Greg Morrill, those five boats got a nice stretch on the rest of us. A short run to Tunnel followed by reach run across the lake to Cross (hence the name Zig-Zag) and then a reaching beat to canyon leading to Tower with Art leading the way followed by Greg, myself, and Dave V. The beat was not nice to Art, and Dave lead the rest of us around Tower and the long run to Cove, and once again the cry "I'm just lucky to be here" was heard thru the fleet as we all got a restart on the run. Art and John P. went high to the fresher wind with at least 7 other boats, and I decided to follow Greg on the low side of the fleet. Good call to follow Greg as he and I rounded Cove just ahead of the thundering herd of Toro's. Dave showed us how to play the long port tack lifting shifts and was first boat to Northshore and was fleet leader almost all the way to Stump for the final beat reach run of the day to the finish. At that mark it was still anyone's game you just had to pick, high road, middle, or low road all the way to finish line. Any one of eight boats could have won that race. Jim Haire went low and fast and almost had the lead, Art was highest and fastest boat (he claims that it was an intellectual call and not desperation), John Amen, Hank Easom, Greg Morrill, and Dennis Silva took the "high middle" route. At the end of the leg high middler Greg almost took first but was confused where the line was and Dennis flew in for the first followed by myself, John Amen, Greg, Dave, and Hank.

How tough and tight was the racing? Out of 24 boats and three races only 5 boats got three single digit finishes and most boats had at least one top ten finish position. No one won more than one race.

Trophy presentation was prompt and Lynn's trophies were great, Gil had them displayed in true Pinecrest fashion on a big stump on the beach. A special award was giving to Gil for all his hard work keeping this regatta a top event every year.

Final results: Jay Copeland 10th (36pts) John Dukat 9th (31 pts), Robert Hurbes 8th (27pts), Greg Morrill 7th (27 pts), Dennis Silva 6th (19 pts), John Amen & Hank Eason tied for 4th (15 pts each) Art Lange 3rd (12 pts) John Pacholski 2nd (11 pts) and Fred Paxton 1st (7 pts).

Next year the worlds will be the weekend following the North Americans, which are coming back to Pinecrest August 6th thru the 9th, with the Worlds August 11th and 12th 2007. Put it on your calendar for a full week of great sailing in a beautiful setting.

Regards Fred Paxton 11649