

Lake Merritt Sailing Club mid-winter series report; Art Lange

On the second weekend of the winter months El Toro's are raced on Oakland's Lake Merritt. This past Sunday, January 13, 2008, we had sunny and warm weather with light air from near zero to 10 mph, from the North East! with some surprises, yes, large wind shifts up to 90 degrees. A North East wind on Lake Merritt is quite rare, but if it happens, it will be in January when a large high pressure system passes to the north of California.

There were 12 seniors and 8 juniors, the largest EL Toro turnout on Lake Merritt this year. Paul Tara brought many of the juniors from Santa Cruz YC. In a first "outside race Mike Pacholski made his debut. He was racing a famous "Red" El Toro, formerly raced by Max Fraser. It was great having all those juniors out enjoying the nice sailing.

Vickie "RC" Gilmore ran two races before lunch and one race after lunch.

In the first race John Pacholski led from the first mark to finish first. Art Lange was second at the first mark and got caught by the fleet at the end of a long run when the wind filled in from behind and finally finished third behind second place Walt Andrews.

In the second race, Art led at the first mark and extended his lead to finish first. Greg Morrill finished second. Art Lewis was third, Dan Cook finished fourth. John Pacholski was fifth after getting buried at the start and working up from seventh at the first mark. Walt Andrews missed the first wind shift and chose the wrong side downwind and dropped a few more places to finish seventh.

In the third race after lunch, John P finished third, Art second, followed closely by Walt Andrews.

For the day Art 3-1-2, John 1-5-1, Walt 2-7-3 In the junior fleet Mackenzie Cook had a 1-2-3.

This mid-winter race was one of the nicest days we have had sailing in many months. Many sailors could be seen peeling off sweaters on the downwind legs because the weather was almost too warm! The shifty winds made it important to plan to cross the starting line on the side of the course that you thought, or guessed, was going to be the most advantaged.

For instance, two minutes before the start of the third race, the port end was heavily favored, but the timing was right for a starboard tack shift which did materialize just about 15 seconds after the starting gun. This guess or good planning say John P and Art L take the starboard end of the line. This positioned John P and Art L to take advantage of the shift and propelled them to the top of the fleet. More next month, on Saturday February 9th.