

# Tracy Usher Looks at the Year Ahead

# The Secrets of Boat Handling

# Laser World



March 2013

*Tracy Usher comments on championships for 2013, sail measurement issues and Robert Scheidt's return to Laser sailing!*

*Jon Emmett explains how boat handling can help you win races!*

It seems that 2013 is rushing by, spring is nearly upon us and it's time to start planning for this year's world championship events. I'm happy to report that ALL of the notices of race for the 2013 events are up on the website at [www.laserinternational.org](http://www.laserinternational.org) with all taking applications for entry. The Laser 4.7 and Standard Under-21 Championships are up first this year, to be sailed in July in Hungary and applications for these events have already topped 450 sailors! At the opposite end of both the age and date spectrum is the Master Worlds, this year in Oman and with applications there already exceeding the entry quota. In addition, there are the Radial Women's Worlds in China in September, the Standard Men's Worlds in Oman in November, the Radial Youth Worlds also in Oman in December, etc. The good news is that it's still not too late to get in your application for entry!

and "R", in turn making it impossible to differentiate between "RUS" and "AUS". To address this issue the Technical and Measurement Committee has posted to the website a diagram showing what measurers at regattas will and will not allow. Look on the "Information" menu at [www.laserinternational.org](http://www.laserinternational.org). The second issue is the new requirement for sailors participating in ISAF events to display their national flag on their sail. This requirement begins at the Trofeo Princess Sophia regatta in Palma and extends to the rest of the ISAF World Cup series. The ILCA Technical and Measurement Committee will take this up at its next teleconference in March and aims to provide guidelines for future events. Note that this will apply to events organized by the ISAF and will not be a requirement for sailors attending ILCA World Championship events.

Well it is no secret that boat speed can win you races: this is why we are always trying to optimise our boat speed for the expected conditions of a regatta, but boat handling can also help you win races. Just think how many tacks and gybes you do during the course of a regatta and how close the points at the end of a regatta often are!

When we are trying to maximise our speed when we are not planing or surfing then we are concentrating on two things.

#### 1. Boat balance:

This means the windward/leeward angle of the boat. By constant good use of body weight and correct trimming of the sail then we can keep the boat completely flat. This means we do not need to use our rudder (for example pulling it hard towards us if the boat heels to leeward) to keep going in a straight line.

The reason that this is so important is that pulling the rudder when the boat heels, so as to keep the boat going in a straight line, is just making the rudder act as a brake. It slows us down.

If you want to prove this to yourself launch the boat and put the foils all the way down and then walk the boat up and down the slipway, it is relatively easy. There is very little resistance to moving the boat. Now push the rudder as hard over one side as it will go and try walking the boat up and down the slipway. I think you would be amazed at how difficult this is.

#### 2. Boat trim:

For maximum boat speed we also need the boat to be flat forward/aft.

If you had two yachts that were identical in design but one boat was bigger than the other, then the larger boat would be faster as the maximum boat speed is determined by waterline length.

So when we are racing we are always trying to maximise waterline length for speed which generally means having the weight around the middle of the boat, although this of course changes with the waves. As we need to move our body forward and back so as to keep the boat in contact with the water rather than "diving" into waves (which may well give you a cockpit full of water) or just as bad "flying" over the waves which makes the boat

slam down as it comes back in contact with the water.

However we are not always trying to go fast in a straight line. Sometimes we need to turn corners and we want to do this in the most efficient way as possible.

Remember the aim is not to tack or gybe as fast as possible (unless you need to for rule reasons) or to come out as fast as possible (regardless of angle) you are simply trying to maximise your progress towards the next mark of the course. Therefore the speed and angle that you tack and gybe may vary considerably with the conditions.

So the secrets to boat handling are very obvious, using the two fundamental principles we use for boat speed:

#### 1. Boat balance:

Now we want the boat to turn. So we simply use the heel of the boat to turn the boat and let the rudder follow along behind, using as little rudder movement as possible. When we are going in the direction we want to then we bring the boat flat again to maximise straight line speed.

So to bear away we heel the boat to windward and to head up we heel the boat to leeward, simple.

We can also use the sail to help us by letting the sheet out to help the bear away (although you may need to sheet in rapidly so it is set correctly for when you complete the gybe) or by sheeting in to help head up (although you may need to let the sheet out rapidly if it is really windy, so it is set correctly for when you complete the tack).

#### 2. Trim:

In light to medium winds we need to keep the trim forward. Not only does this keep the maximum water line length but by keeping the bow in the water it emphasizes the curve of the boat, making the heeling more effective at turning the boat.

However as it gets windy you may like to move backwards in the boat, so the boat is sailing on the flat back section. This will slow down the turn in the upper wind range and downwind will help keep the boat planing if it was already.

The rule of thumb is to keep the trim the



Mark rounding using very little rudder



Good trim + no rudder = speed



Tom Slingsby at London 2012 Olympics

same as when you were sailing in a straight line (although it is often tempting to move backwards).

The only exception is in absolutely survival conditions, then you keep the weight as far back in the boat as possible to keep the bow well clear of the water (and in terms of boat balance you would also want to keep it completely flat!)

**As with any skill, practice makes permanent!**

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## SCHEIDT RETURNS TO THE LASER



ILCA Class President: Tracy Usher



AUS or RUS??



'R' in it's correct format

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JON EMMETT LOOKS AT THE SECRETS OF BOAT HANDLING



MEKA TAUBEE'S HOLISTIC APPROACH TO POWER DRINKS



TRACY USHER COMMENTS ON SAIL NUMBERS

# Robert Scheidt returns to Laser Sailing

# Power Drinks: The Holistic Approach

by Meka Taulbee

## A minute with .... Robert Scheidt

**After the 2012 Olympics you announced that you plan to campaign the Laser for the 2016 Olympics. Was this an easy decision?**

No not really, but as the Star is now out of the next games it was one of my only options to keep sailing an Olympic class.

**Why the Laser again? Did you consider other classes?**

I love the concept of sailing on equal boats and to really test the talent of each sailor. It is also an easy campaign in terms of logistics. I did consider trying the 49er.

**How would it feel to compete in the Olympics in your home country of Brazil?**

It would be a unique experience to compete at home with all the crowd and the whole country behind you.

**With the World Cup in 2014 and the Olympics in 2016, can you tell that Brazil is getting more excited for sports?**

Yes, definitely a great opportunity for other sports (besides soccer) to be seen at a high level. Two big events in just 2 years time will be great for our country. I hope it will inspire a lot of young people to do sports.

**Do you have sponsors?**

Yes, I have a long-term relationship with Banco do Brasil, who have supported me for more than 10 years. I also have GOCIL, a security company, Rolex and Prada.

**Your wife Gintare is an excellent Laser Radial sailor and an Olympian. How does she feel about your decision for another Olympics?**

She supports me a lot, which is crucial, otherwise I would not do it again. With the kids, priorities change and family becomes the number one goal!

**Do you have the support of your family?**

Yes lots! My father was the one that got me into this and still follows me closely. Gintare, as I mentioned, gives lots of support as well.

**We see that you recently won the Brazilian National Championship. How does it feel to be competing in a Laser again?**

I felt good on the boat again. Not 100% yet but the feeling is slowly coming back. Most importantly I still enjoy it!

**Since you were last competing, how do you find the level of Laser sailors in Brazil?**

Now in Brazil it is kind of a new beginning for the class. Lots of new faces and at the Nationals we had 60 standard rigs, a number that hasn't been seen in years. Bruno Fontes is very talented and he's a very experienced sailor. There is also Matheus Delagnello and Joao Hackerott who are younger and hungry to get to the top.

**Have you been training in the Laser?**

Not really as much training as I used to do. I did some sessions in Lake Garda (Italy) last fall and now in Brazil I'm doing some events.

**Is the training different than for the Star?**

Yes, very different in the Star - the sheet loads are much bigger so we focused more on strength training and not so much aerobic work.

**Do you have any special goals with sailing that you have not achieved?**

Not really, I have had ups and downs like every athlete but with 5 Olympic medals and 12 Worlds titles (Laser and Star) I can't complain. I just want to keep sailing at a high level and hopefully do one more Olympics.

**What motivates you to keep competing in sailing?**

It is the thing I like most in my life besides my family.

**Have you ever competed against Tom Slingsby in a Laser?**

Yes, I sailed against him in 2004 and 2005 but then he was too young and had not achieved his best yet. What he has done lately is amazing and I respect him for that. He's also a very nice and friendly guy.

**Who else are you looking forward to competing against in the Laser?**

I really don't know all the new faces and that is a good thing I guess, but I know the Laser is a tough class and very hard to win a big event.

**How much did you weigh at the Olympics for the Laser vs. the Star? For the Laser, in 1996 and 2000 around 80kg and in Athens I was down to 78. For the Star I weighed 83-84kg.**

**Do you still need to lose weight for the Laser?**

I'm now 82kg which I think is a good weight to start so I will not throw myself into a diet yet.

**Will you continue to sail the Star? Yes occasionally at local events.**

**Most people would say that the Star is a more tactical boat and the Laser is a more physical boat. Is this true? I disagree. The Star has changed a lot in the last years - the guys are very fit and the skippers hike a lot, but of course they are different boats and the way you have to sail them is different. The Laser is more dynamic I would say.**

**Are there things you have learned in the Star that will make you a better Laser sailor? I think my tactics are better now. In the Star you have to think more before you tack or jibe because a wrong one costs you a lot - it's much harder to recover after mistakes or a bad start. You also have to organize your equipment better, learn about sails and hull shapes and deal with a crew.**

**How does it feel to be old enough for Laser Masters regattas? It's fun! Even more fun is the fact that I can still sail against the young ones...**

**Do you think that your age and experience will give you an advantage over younger sailors? In some situations experience can count for a lot, so I hope I'm able to use it in my favour.**

**Can we expect to see you at the 2013 Standard Worlds in Oman? Yes let's hope so... I'll probably also sail Hyeres, Garda, Medemblik, the Europeans.**

**Have you taken your son Erik sailing yet? Yes, in the same family boats that I learned to sail 35 years ago.**

**When can we expect to see Erik win the Laser 4.7 Worlds? We just hope he will enjoy sailing and experience the sport that we have done for so many years.**

**If you raced against your wife Gintare in a Laser Radial, who would win? Under 12 knots she would beat me. Over that probably me. But I hope we never have to do that...**

**What is your favourite place to sail? Why? Ilha Bela in Brasil - it's a beautiful place with a nice sea breeze and hot all year!**

**Top three things you would take to a desert island? My family, some food and a nice bottle of red wine!**

**Who is the most influential person in your life? My father who has always guided me through all the tough decisions in life.**



"In The Star - the sheet loads are much bigger"



Robert back in the Laser at the Brazilian Nationals

To read the interview with Gintare Scheidt see the June 2012 edition of LaserWorld at [www.laserinternational.org/info/laserworld](http://www.laserinternational.org/info/laserworld)



Robert says he will continue to sail the Star occasionally at local events

Meka Taulbee from SailFit shows you how to make an educated decision when choosing what drink product is right for your body!

Since I am always pushing water on sailors over other popular "energy drinks" I decided look at some of the more popular products that I see sailors take out on the water with them. It's not my practice to tell you which product to choose but rather to educate you on what some of the facts are. Then you can make a more educated decision when choosing what product is right for your body.

Gatorade, POWERade and Propel Fitness Water are among some of the top choices. All of them say that they will help you reach your "A" game. With the exception of Propel, the majority of these drinks advertise themselves as a Carbohydrate-Electrolyte beverage. Propel Fitness Water describes itself as a lightly flavored water. They all claim to be packed with an array of additional B vitamins, sodium and potassium. B Vitamins are found in milk, cheese, meat, green vegetables and whole grains. In my last article I touched on staying away from meat and dairy. You can get plenty of B vitamins from leafy green vegetables and grains. Sodium is simply salt and one of the more commonly known sources of Potassium is bananas. Electrolytes are easily replaced with coconut water.

During practice for a big regatta a few years back I watched a sailor place a bottle of one of these drinks on a picnic table before he went out. When he came back a few hours later the red drink he placed there was now clear in color. Personally I vowed to never put that stuff in my body because the reaction it had to the sun just wasn't natural, but I did investigate what was in there that made it do that.

I can't place enough emphasis on reading labels and being educated on how to do so. When looking at the ingredients the ones that are listed first are the most abundant and the ones that are listed last are the least abundant. When taking a look at what is in these sports drinks this is what I found. The first ingredient is water. The human body is made up of between 60-70% water so it makes sense to replace lost water with more water. Next is high fructose corn syrup or sucrose syrup (simple sugars). Since ingredients are listed from the most abundant to the least that would make sugar the second runner up to water.

Now we have glucose-fructose syrup and citric acid. Glucose is the primary source of fuel used by our muscle cells and tissues in the body. Sucrose in its most common form is table sugar. It can be broken down into glucose but that is giving our bodies an extra step to get what it needs most, energy. All of this sugar is followed by citric acid which is a chemical most often used as a flavoring or as an acidifier. Natural flavors were most commonly next. While yes, it does have the word natural in it, marketing can be a very scandalous thing. Most often "natural flavors" are key words for MSG. If it's so natural why don't they just put the actual ingredient in there? Seeing as salt followed these flavors there is more natural flavor than salt. Wait sodium citrate came after salt! Isn't that what these drinks are meant to do. Replace lost salt? How come they are almost at the end of the list? Let's see what's next. Monopotassium phosphate. According to Wikipedia "Monopotassium phosphate (also potassium dihydrogen phosphate, KDP, or monobasic potassium phosphate, MKP) -- KH2PO4 -- is a soluble salt which is used as a fertilizer, a food additive and a fungicide. It is a source of phosphorus and potassium." I think I'd rather get my potassium through a banana. Anything that can be used as fertilizer is not what I am looking for in an athletic drink. It looks like they have saved the best for last. Yellow 6, blue 1 or red 40 (depending on the color of your drink) ester gum and brominated vegetable oil. Brominated vegetable oil? Do you really want to drink that?

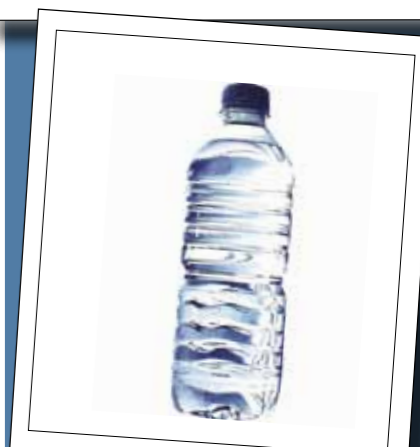
Drinks like these do have their place for some athletes and some sports. I don't mean to completely knock them, but for sailing I don't believe these are what is best for the sailor. I don't feel that one generic drink can help every athlete from every sport refuel and stay at peak levels. Each individual is different and each individual should have a drink that is tailored to them and what makes their body perform the best. There are many products out there that you can add to your water to help you recover faster, stay energized and stay smarter on the race course. I know that going through all the information and products can seem a bit overwhelming and time consuming, but that's what I'm here for. Ask away and I'll help you out.



Meka Taulbee



Brightly Colored Energy Drinks



Why not try water instead?

When choosing your on-the-water cocktail keep in mind the reason you are choosing it. Look at the ingredients and see if it will help you achieve your goal. If you can't pronounce the ingredient chances are you probably don't need it! If you are really partial to one of these drinks try diluting it, half and half, with water. Better yet try mixing all natural fruit juice with water. Most importantly stay hydrated. It will lead to less injury and better decisions on the racecourse. Therefore better results!



Robert Scheidt (BRA)

Age: 39  
Height: 188 cm  
Weight: 82 kg



Success at the Brazilian Nationals 2013



The Star - "much harder to recover after mistakes"