

Water Fronts for Dec. 30

The Ventura County High Point Standings for racing sailboats enters its third decade in January and will include a significant change.

Instead of being a marathon type series, the 2011 High Point Series will be more like a sprint. Since 2000, the champion in eight of the 10 seasons has been the boat that sailed the most races. In 2010, the winning boat sailed 38 races, while the second place boat sailed only 16. For the 2010 season, the scoring for the County High Point Standings will be the best 10 races of each boat. Ties, if any, will be broken per Appendix A-8 of the Racing Rules of Sailing, except using high point scoring instead of low point scoring. Boats which sail more than 10 races will have an edge because they have additional opportunities to score higher points and "toss out" lower point races.

After much discussion with racers and the sponsor of the series the past couple of years, I decided that the emphasis should be on quality, not quantity.

Last year only three boats sailed in more than 20 races. But a total of 16 boats sailed in 10 or more races and another four sailed in nine races. Over the years there have been a number of really good boats which haven't been a factor in the High Point Standings because they didn't sail enough races.

A couple of top level boats quickly come to mind -- the J-35 Rival, co-skipped by Dick Velthoen, Dave Boatner and Paul DeFreitas and the J-30 Pangea co-skipped by Mike Leary and Dena Mercer. Pangea sailed in 11 races last year, scoring 69 points and averaging 6 points per race. Rival sailed in 9 races, scoring 66 points and averaging 7.

The Rival and Pangea crews may be inspired to take a run at the county championship in 2011, knowing that they only have to sail at least 10 races, not 20 or more. No boat since 2000 has won the county championship while sailing fewer than 20 races.

In 2008, Perfect Balance skippered by Richard Sharpe, won the championship while sailing in 20 events. In 2006, Alex Blankfield's Santa Cruz 50, Deception, won the title while sailing in 20 events. All other winners sailed in 22 or more races -- more than a third of the year's weekends. Trophies for the High Point Series are provided by sponsors Richard and Paula Sharpe, co-owners of Intelligent Weighing Technology, Inc. They have sold Perfect Balance and will be racing a newer, smaller boat in 2011. It's a good bet they will be taking a shot at winning the perpetual trophy they sponsor -- again.

Skippers vying for high point trophies will want to aim at the six double point races -- one by each area yacht club. They are CIYC's Midwinter Regatta, VSC's Frenchy's Rum Run, PBYC's Yachting Cup, AYC's Golemon Memorial, PBYC's Tri Point Race and VYC's Santa Barbara Channel Challenge. The six blue chip events are a mixture of buoy and offshore races.

SOLID BOX

Upcoming Sailboat Races

* Saturday, Jan. 15, VYC Regatta Series 1. This is the first of three regattas in a series, hosted by Ventura Yacht Club for J-24s and PHRF spinnaker and non-spinnaker boats. The next two regattas are on April 9 and Sept. 10. Skippers can enter the whole series or individual regattas. Skippers meetings are at 8:30 a.m. on race days and racing begins at 11. Entry fee for the series is \$60. Entry fee for individual regattas is \$25. There is a discount for early entries. Entry forms can be found on the VYC website at venturayachtclub.org. For more information, contact race chair Stan Whisenhunt at 659-1464 or e-mail him at Swhisenhun@aol.com.

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2011 ocean sailboat racing schedule

Jan. 9, AYC/PCYC, TGIS Series 1.

Jan. 15, VYC, PHRF & J-24 regatta (J-24 Series)

Jan. 23, PCYC, Race Management Seminar

Jan. 30, AYC/PCYC, TGIS Series 2.

Feb. 12, PBYC, Spring Se

Feb. 19-20, CIYC, Midwinters (Double points; J-24 Series)

(Fax your race announcements, results and other information to Stan Whisenhunt at 659-3058 or call him at 659-1464. His e-mail address is Swhisenhun@aol.com).