

# 4Play

Winter  
issue  
**2003**

## Features

- 4000 sailing - the female perspective
- Spacial awareness tips
- Alternative top tips!

## Events

2004 - don't miss out!

**Plus lots more!**

Voice of the Laser 4000 class

## Editor's chat

**Hallo and welcome** to the winter issue of 4Play, once again brought to you via the wonders of email.

This issue is packed full of features designed to combat waning motivation levels, commonplace among sailors at this time of year.

In particular, having accepted the bribe of half a pint of shandy, Peter Barton, National and European champion of 2003, surrenders top-secret racing strategies. (Also, don't miss his tactics on getting quick service at the bar...) Fiona Ramus looks into why the 4000 is such a great

boat for both sexes and just so you don't think we're getting too serious, Louse Alder and Nick Barnett give some more light-hearted advice for getting round the racetrack. Not to be missed!

Happy sailing!  
Richard Mayo  
**Editor, 4Play**



## Laser 4000 WINTER PARTY

Who says money can't buy you happiness? Well, whoever it was, they were wrong because for £40 you can fend off those winter blues by coming along to the Laser 4000 Winter Party. With plenty of eating, dancing and drinking to be had, it promises to be a great evening. Send your cheques to Jo Sutcliffe, Social Secretary, (made payable to UK District Laser 4000 Class Association), to 162a Putney Bridge Road, London, SW15 2NG. Details below:

*Smart/black tie  
Dinner and ceilidh  
London Rowing Club, Putney  
January 10th  
7pm for 7:30pm  
Bar runs dry at 12pm*

[www.n-d-k.com](http://www.n-d-k.com)



Once again, a big 'thanks' goes to Nick Kirk who kindly granted permission for us to use his photographs throughout the newsletter. Nick is a keen snapper so why not check out his site - [www.n-d-k.com](http://www.n-d-k.com) - to see if he has caught you in action?! His photographs can be purchased over the net.

## The fairer sex

**Following another highly successful season, Fiona Ramus reflects on what attracts a large proportion of women to the Laser 4000 fleet.**

At the last meeting of the season – Datchet – I enlisted another Fiona, a regular helm on the RS 400 circuit, to crew for me. As a newcomer to the fleet, she commented on how nice it was to see so many female helms and all-girl teams in the Laser 4000 fleet. And yet, so many articles we read in the yachting press show that women are under-achieving in the sport, particularly at Olympic level.

Without wanting to portray myself as a raving feminist, it would seem to me that the ladies of the Laser 4000 class are doing a good job of putting the record straight. Results from Jules Richards, Penny Mountsford, Mini Summerhayes, Gemma Frier and others at the front of the fleet prove that the Laser 4000 is a manageable and competitive boat with a

**Women are under-achieving in the sport, particularly at Olympic level.**

female in the driving seat. Top 470 sailors, Helena Lucas and Jenny Heeley, were also able to show the fleet a thing or two in the latter part of the week at the Mounts Bay Nationals despite having not spent much time in a Laser 4000.

But it certainly isn't all about the helm; some of the best crews in the fleet are females. We've never seen Greg Eaton go so fast without CC in the front of his boat. Vanda Zadorozny and Hilary Baker are also well known for their style and speed on the wire. So how can we sell the class and encourage even more women to join this highly competitive fleet?

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to make the mainsheet loads manageable, as well as the addition of righting lines – a great idea, especially for lighter-weight crews.

We are a friendly fleet and people are always willing help out with rigging/sailing tips and a couple of big strong lads are never far away to help. This encouraging atmosphere is lost in most other classes and especially the solely female fleets such as the Europe and 470. Emma and Jody Warner should be noted here; they never fail to impress me with their rigging technique, getting their mast vertical Laser 5000 style!

It has been very encouraging to see several of the regular girls returning to the fleet after a 'year out' to have babies. Andy Richards was on the shore all week at the Eurocup in Garda, taking care of his son, enabling Jules to sail for the

Firstly, the weight equalization system works very effectively. This is demonstrated by the fact that Doug Baker and Gemma Frier both had excellent results in the windy conditions at the Lake Garda Eurocup in 2003, despite being very different shapes and sizes. And while Gemma has a bigger crew, you don't have to compensate for being a slighter helm; Jamie McEwan and Jo Sutcliffe sail on maximum racks and happily won a race in the breezy conditions at Lake Garda.

Some other obvious tweaks you can legally make to the boat include the 5-to-1 purchase system on the mainsheet, invaluable

week, where she had some impressive results despite having been off the circuit for a while. So take note Charlie Thompson and Rob Andrews - we hope to see Jane and Carole back on the water next season!

One of the attractions of sailing as sport to me is that young or old, couples or random pairs, males or females can all compete on a level playing field. The Laser 4000 class in particular is an excellent example of this, so go on girls, come and join us!

**The encouraging atmosphere of the Laser 4000 fleet is lost in the solely female fleets**

## Spacial Awareness Strategies



**Having laid claim to the 2003 Euro-cup event in Lake Garda, the Nationals and a host of other prizes this year, Peter Barton knows a thing or two about driving a 4000 quickly. But as he is soon to embark on an 18-foot Skiff campaign, he was happy to divulge his secrets in this article. (Please note, however, that all this success comes at a high cost – Peter manages to burn out crews at a rate of approximately one per event, so I didn't ask him about his thoughts on crew retention strategies!)**

### **THE START**

#### *Know your transit*

First you must get one! Having done that, you need be familiar with how it moves on your final approach; it's no use having a transit and then having to throw out the anchor at the last minute because you know you are too close. Do a practice run watching the transit move and watching your clock.

#### *Don't run out of acceleration space just before the start*

Don't burn off your runway too early. Try to keep enough space to be able to start

the boosters with about seven seconds to go rather than putting on the emergency brakes just before the gun.

#### *Which end? Stay loose*

In a shifty breeze when the favoured end is dependent on which shift is coming through, keep your options open by deciding which end to go for from the middle of the line at about 90 seconds to go.

### **UPWIND**

#### *When heading into a corner, be the first to lead the pack out again*

This is especially true when pinned out on the left-hand side on the first beat. It's invariably worth giving away a few boat-lengths ducking starboard tackers to lead others out of the corner because -

- You don't go all the way to the layline
- You are more likely to get clear air than tacking with everyone else
- You have some space to tack on to starboard if the wind shifts against you
- It is easier to tack onto the starboard layline from further out, avoiding the two boat-length danger-zone
- You avoid 'head-ons' with boats hoisting!

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## **DOWNWIND**

*Spreader mark - to gybe or not?*

Rule - if you were lifted on the starboard layline approaching the windward mark, you have to be 'eyes wide open' considering a gybe at the spacer. This is also true if a gust was coming through the right-hand side (looking upwind). I find hoist-gybe-then set works really well although this is not so good on the first run due to bad wind from boats on the starboard layline, but it will at least get you away from other running boats' wind shadows.

*Looking for gusts*

As a helm you need to spend a large amount of time (say 50%) looking backwards (and sideways) for gusts and lulls. To do this well, helming fast in a straight line must become like picking your nose. Don't give yourself the extra challenge of trying to balance standing up as well (you know who you are!). The crew can't look for wind because the kite WILL flap.

*Wind Shadows*

Know where your and others' wind shadows are pointing. This varies with wind speed and is normally much further aft than expected. Knowing this will help you pick your way downwind, gybing in avenues that are not so likely to become affected.

*Soaking low*

In conditions when it is a tough call as to whether a high, fast course or a low, slow course produces the best VMG (Velocity Made Good) downwind, a low course is normally tactically superior because;

- It keeps you nearer the centre of the course and out of the corners
- When in a line of boats coming away from the windward mark, it gives you options to gybe, and then to enable clear wind if the boat behind gybes simultaneously
- If you are behind, you can immediately get onto the wind of a boat in front if you have soaked to leeward.
- When ahead of a bunch it can keep you positioned snugly between the chasing pack and the leeward marks, offering damage limitation from unexpected gusts or shifts.

*High and fast*

One advantage of a high and fast course is that you can cover distance across the course quickly. This can pay if there is significantly more wind on one side. You can get over there quickly and 'sail around' bogies.

*Leeward marks*

The straight drop-and-round-up approach has to be quicker in the absence of other boats. However, in traffic the gybing around the mark option is good for getting the inside berth in crowded situations provided you are up for the stunt. The least crowded mark is often the best option, even if a little further. Make sure you hail your intentions early if necessary.

*Last run*

Don't get the first gybe in too late. Looking downwind, the finish is to the left of the leeward marks so you need to gybe earlier than on previous laps. On a short course it is easy to over-stand the gybe angle. Also, if the boats behind get their gybe in first they can get their bad gases between you and the finish and their next gybe is back onto starboard, right back at you.

## **FINISH**

The fastest angle at which to cross the finish is nearly as broad as a run. Time your bear-away so that you are just nearing a run as the front of the pole crosses the line. Don't tell the crew; they might swing in and spoil it. If they hit the surf, it's all part of the fun, but watch out for boats behind!

## **BAR**

Always go for the middle, never the ends. Time your approach to arrive, note in hand, as a gap opens up. If queuing in second row, get behind a person already being served so about to make space, otherwise behind a short person to order over. Smile pleasantly. Get into big round so don't queue too often. In emergency queue situations, buy double rounds. Order the pints first, in case the world ends. Plan B - send your crew!

## Alternative top-tips

***It's the taking part that counts, as that famous old saying goes. Whether or not you actually subscribe to that maxim, indulge yourself in these top 'alternative' tips from Louise Alder and Nick Barnett. Warning - these will NOT necessarily make you go any faster but they will help you have fun trying. Enjoy!***

1. Avoid port/starboard incidents on the first beat by starting ten minutes behind the rest of the fleet.
2. Avoid getting caught in a rack of boats at the windward mark by over-standing the layline by at least 100 metres.
3. Use all your tape for securing your Mars Bars to the racks; don't worry about any last-minute rigging! Remember that spinnakers can always be repaired when you come ashore but you can't buy snacks out on the water.
4. Ensure optimum performance downwind by asking your closest rivals to rig (?) your spinnaker because you are 'running a bit late'.
5. Aim for top speed at the start gun by leaving your crew ten yards behind the line.
6. Don't bother buying a speedboat if you want to learn to water-ski; simply jump off the back of your 4000 while holding on to the kite sheet.
7. Avoid embarrassing results by capsizing just before the line.
8. If you can't beat 'em, kill 'em; poles make excellent jousts!
9. Ensure good harmony and clear communication with your crew by remembering their name.
10. Avoid getting cold between races by ensuring you finish each race with just enough time to spare to start the next one.
11. Never rely on a 'mate' to give you room, especially on the finish line.
12. Ensure a hot shower and no bar queues by getting black-flagged in the final race of the day.
13. Don't turn up for the first day of the Nationals, or don't finish any races on day one and you're guaranteed a top-rate 'buddy'.
14. Take out your rivals by capsizing your boat on top of them.
15. Avoid problems with hoists and drops by leaving your kite in the boot of your car.
16. Limit your chances of success at every event by sailing with a different crew for each (Peter Barton).
17. Test the strength of your tiller extension by forgetting to tie on your toe-straps and doing a backward roll over the side.
18. Get a little extra weight on the wire by getting your crew pregnant three months before the event!
19. Don't join an inland sailing club for winter sailing after the hottest summer for years!
20. Hiking makes the boat go faster, but not that much, really.
21. The camera boat is more important than lay-lines and gybe points.
22. When sailing in West London venues with restricted launching facilities, always remember to launch at least an hour before the start to compensate for over-officious race officers.
23. Get clear air on the first beat by starting five minutes behind the fleet.

## Calendar 2004

Date	Type of Event	Location
<b>FEBRUARY</b>		
7th - 8th	Open Event	Tiger Trophy, Rutland SC Rutland
<b>MARCH</b>		
20th - 21st	Open Event	Hamble Warming Pan, Hamble, Hants
27th - 28th	Newcomer Training	Grafham Water, Cambs.
<b>APRIL</b>		
3rd - 4th	UK Series	Draycote Water, Warwickshire
10th - 12th	Open Event	Lymington Easter Regatta, Hants
10th - 11th	Scottish Series	Helensburgh
24th - 25th	UK Series	Stokes Bay, Hampshire
<b>MAY</b>		
1st - 2nd	UK & Scottish Series	Derwent Reservoir, Co. Durham
29th - 30th	<b>Scottish Championships</b>	Dalgety Bay - Bank Holiday Weekend
<b>JUNE</b>		
12th - 13th	UK Series	Felixtowe Ferry, Suffolk
23rd - 26th	<b>European Championships</b>	Riva del Garda, Italy
<b>JULY</b>		
10th - 11th	Scottish Series	Royal Findhorn
<b>JULY/AUGUST</b>		
31st July - 1st August	UK Series - NOT clashing with Cowes	Lymington Town SC, Hants
<b>AUGUST</b>		
14th - 15th	Scottish Series	Peterhead
21st - 24th	<b>National Championships</b>	Pwllheli, NW Wales
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>		
4th	Open Event	Round Isle of Sheppey Race, Kent - 40km
11th - 12th	UK Series	Hayling Island, Hants
18th - 19th	Scottish Series	Royal Tay
<b>OCTOBER</b>		
16th - 17th	UK Series & Inland Champs	Rutland Water
30th - 31st	UK Series	Datchet Water, Berkshire