

UK Laser Association

2010 MASTERS' EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS - CYPRUS

Report from Ian Rawet

Ancient Brits on Tour

Cyprus Diary – Thursday, 29th April

Today is important, there maybe three races and tomorrow's forecast is for light winds. Good results are an imperative. The wind had clocked over to the SW by 10h45 but the committee boat was late and the start sequence did not begin until 12h30 in winds of nearly 20 knots. The prospects of getting all the races in were not high. Rumours that the race committee had to wait until they could set a windward mark at 220 because of deep water were laid to rest when the setting for today was 230. Watched the standard rigs as usual and as before it looked like the drag race up the shore.

A clean conservative start from the middle of the line gave clean air for the tack onto port and the grind down to the starboard lay line. Think boat speed. Get to the lay line and the BRA boat who has consistently got the tactics right appears to be a long way past. Tack to get the lift but the over standing boats were faster into the mark. The wind appears to be dropping in strength as we drive down the run looking for the best waves. Charge through the gate around the starboard mark, set the rig and tack onto port for the long hike. Pop out at the windward mark close to the front, hold it down the reach and the run. Gybe for the last reach at the gate just behind the consistently leading Brits. Whoops. The mainsheet has wrapped around the end of the boom and I drop two places. This is tight. Get a fantastic reach and get a place back to finish behind John R and one down on Mike K.

The second race start is again from the middle as the wind starts to build again. Can not quite clear the elements of the fleet who are wanting to go out to sea and have to wait for the opportunity to go onto port. Work hard on the boat speed to get to the lay line but do not get there as the followers have tacked too early and I have to get onto starboard. Shame. Wait for the opportunity to get back onto to port to get over to the lay line. See it and tack. What happened? The boom just locks in the middle and I am stuck. A glance towards the stern identifies a phenomenon that I have not seen before. The main sheet has fallen away from the boom between the flexible eye strap and the block at the end of the boom and wrapped around the tiller in a tight knot.

The boat rolls over and I am upside down in the water. I have not done this for a long time. Grab the plate and pull the boat up but the boom and sail is in tight and it rolls straight over again. Try again – leave the boat on its side whilst the vang is released but the boom is still locked to the tiller and over we go again. Try and release the mainsheet from under water with some success and I get the boat up. It takes what seems like an age to unwrap the tiller from the mainsheet. Look up to see where the fleet is and the leader are nearly at the end of the run – this race is run for me.

Time for some practice; let's see how close to the back of the fleet I can get. Really push down the run – too hard – I would not normally sail with this degree of risk. Round the mark at the gate and practice some more boat speed for the beat. Get right into the back of the fleet by the windward mark but push beyond the limits for the run and crash out. At least the water is reasonably warm. Get up straight away and thrash down the reach and catch up with the fleet at the finish line. At least the reaches were great and the limits on the run have been tested.

As expected there was not a third race. The leaders from the British front runners had another good day – they are all buzzing from the adrenalin – then tales of missing toe straps and going overboard start to appear. Ah such is life!