

Multihull!

1991 Notebook

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Photo by Paul Kennedy

Role of the USYRU Multihull Council

In the past, multihull sailors were homogeneous with the rest of the sailing community within USYRU. Their representation was mainly through various one-design class associations, not multihull sailors as a whole. With the formation of the Multihull Council, multihull sailors as a group now have a more visible position within USYRU. The Multihull Council has a seat on the USYRU Board of Directors, and even though it is only one vote, we can be heard.

The Council is made up of multihull organizations and other interested groups; the direction the Council takes is largely determined by the input of the member organizations. The Council is not an arm of USYRU telling sailors how things are going to be; instead, it is their forum to determine the multihull position on all USYRU affairs and convey that position to the Board of Directors. So, now that multihull sailors have a voice in the Union, use it! ■

Cat Converts

Four Hot Monohull Sailors Turned Multihull Sailors Share Some Insights on the Challenge, Excitement and Competition of Speed Sailing

BY TODD SMITH

It is well understood that one of the key objectives of sailboat racing is to get around the course as fast as possible. And what better way to go fast than to sail a high-aspect ratio, lightweight multihull. Many of the finest sailors from monohull ranks have recently recognized that they can combine the challenges of yacht racing with that added excitement of adrenalin-pumping speed.

This recent trend of accomplished monohullers turned multihullers has taken place in the land well known for trendsetting, Southern California. Perhaps the most recognized name to start racing cats is Dennis Conner, who made the switch in the world's most prestigious yacht race, the America's Cup. Many other popular names in the racing community have also started racing multihulls to quench that "need for speed," including Pete Melvin, Pease Glaser, Steve Rosenberg and Craig Leweck.

Pete Melvin

Pete Melvin has mastered many different classes during his sailing career. In his younger years growing up in Florida, Pete won the Optimist Nationals on numerous occasions. He then moved into the 420 class where he won the USYRU Youth Doublehanded Championships in consecutive years. Then, at the ripe old age of 14, Pete raced in the 1976 International 470 Trials. It was here that Pete started a long campaign to represent the U.S. in an Olympic class.

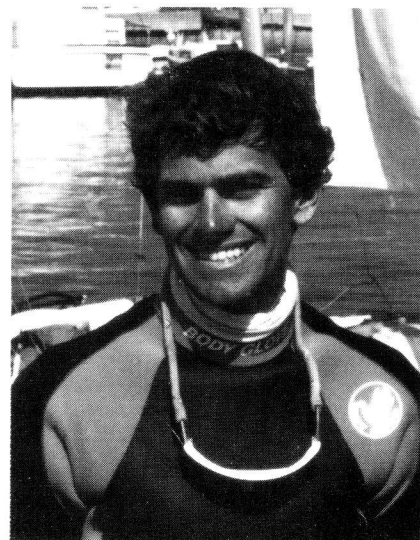
Despite two very successful U.S. Trials in 1980 (second place) and 1984 (third place) in the 470 class, Pete continued on his quest to reach the Olympics. After graduating from Boston University, Pete moved to Long Beach, CA, to begin his professional engineering career. And it was also at this time that Pete made the switch from high performance dinghy sailing to master a new breed of cat — multihulls.

In less than two years, Pete accelerated on the learning curve of multihull

sailing much like his Olympic-class Tornado sprinting off the starting line. In 1988, Pete, along with his crew, Pat Muglia, won the Tornado trials and represented the U.S. in Korea. Since that time, Pete has won the Tornado Nationals, the 1989 ProSail circuit on Hobie 21s, and competed in the Little America's Cup on perhaps the highest technology catamaran afloat, the C-class Catamaran.

During *American Sailor's* interview, Pete expanded on his involvement with multihulls.

AS: What attracted you to the Tornado versus the other Olympic-class boats?



Pete Melvin

Photo by Todd Smith

Pete: After racing the 470 for so many years, I wanted to try something new and exciting. I had always liked the Tornado; she looked fast and fun. What also turned me on to multihulls were the people sailing the boats. Everybody seemed to have a good attitude.

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After moving to California, I started sailing the Tornado with my crew Pat Muglia. We both had the opportunity to sail the boat three to four times a week, often after work during the summer. We went to the pre-trials in Newport, RI, and came in second behind Gary Knapp (another monohuller turned multihuller). We were very encouraged after that regatta. At the 1987 Tornado Worlds in Kiel, we were the top American finisher. We had come this far, so we decided to go for it and campaigned the boat hard the next six months in preparation for the U.S. Trials. We peaked at the right time and won the 1988 Trials, representing the U.S. in the Tornado class.

AS: What advice would you give to other multihull sailors?

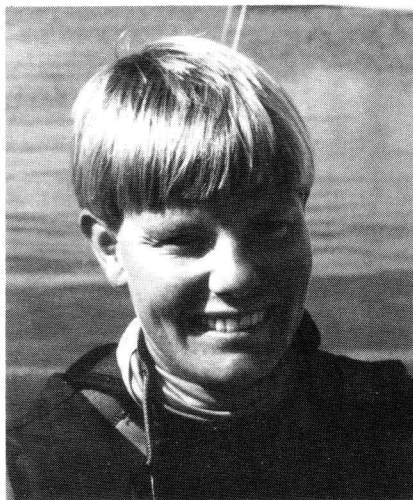
Pete: Most people switching from monohulls to multihulls have little problem getting the boat to do well upwind. What really separates the cat sailors from the monohull sailors is downwind vang.

In dinghies, you usually vang the main closed like a barndoor. In multihulls, you have to induce the proper twist along the entire sail. This is where the experienced multihuller has the advantage over newcomers. Downwind sailing is totally different in cats with the way you sheet the main, the twist of the sails and the angles on which you sail the boat.

The best way to become proficient in multihulls is to spend a lot of time on the boat. And one of the best things about multihulls is that other cat sailors are very open about sharing advice on boatspeed techniques, tuning tips, rigging ideas, etc.

Pease Glaser

In 1988, women sailors became the hot topic of discussion among sailboat racers when Allison Jolly and Lynne Jewell brought home the gold in the Women's 470 Olympic class. Women have long been excellent sailors, but the stellar success of Allison and Lynne brought women sailors to the limelight in the yachting community. And in this booming era of more women competitors, yet another woman has made a mark for herself by becoming the first woman from the U.S. to be ranked #1 in an open (co-ed) Olympic class: Pease Glaser.



Pease Glaser

The boat that Pease has mastered just happens to be another trendsetter, the hot-rod Tornado. But just how did Pease go from a high-performance dinghy sailor to a high-performance multihull sailor? As Pease recalls, "After the 1988 Trials, I wanted to start racing a Snipe, which sports a strong fleet in Southern California. My boyfriend at the time, Jay Glaser, didn't want to hike and bought us a Tornado instead.

Pease and Jay have since married and have been tearing around the course on multihulls ever since. In fact, at their first major regatta, the 1988 Tornado Nationals, Pease and Jay came in second. The combination of Pease's driving skills (honed by 470 competition) coupled with Jay's vast

Photo by Jayne Smith, courtesy of Santana Magazine



Pease and Jay Glaser jam on board a Prindle 19.

crewing experience on the multihulls (world champion Tornado crew and multi-time Tornado national champion and Prindle crew) have propelled this team to the #1 U.S. ranking in the Tornado class. Along the way have been two Tornado North American titles, a Tornado Nationals title, a second-place finish at the 1990 USYRU Alter Cup on Prindle 18-2s, and many firsts on the Southern California Prindle circuit.

Pease shared some thoughts regarding women in sailing and multihull sailing.

AS: You have shown that women can compete on a level playing field with men in multihull sailing. Not only are you the #1 U.S. Tornado skipper, but you are also the first woman to be a top-ranked U.S. skipper in an open Olympic class. Do you think that this will help entice other women into multihull sailing?

Pease: Women have been competing successfully for awhile; I'm hardly the first. But yes, women can compete equally with men in multihulls (and many other classes for that matter). I think that the recent success and positive response of dinghy sailors who have begun sailing catamarans has encouraged other dinghy sailors to branch out. I would hope that my success would similarly encourage other women.

If anyone had told me three years ago that I would be helming a catamaran, I would have laughed. But the boats are really fun to sail — not frightening. Women can be effective skippering or crewing. For us, it works well to have Jay, who is stronger, stand on the side and trim the main. On the other hand, one of the top-ranked Tornado crews in the U.S. in the past few years is a mother of teenage children, and she trims the main from the wire. The issue isn't necessarily strength, but technique.

AS: You have experienced the best of both worlds: the formality and tradition of yacht club organized sailing through the Olympic classes and the casual off-the-beach sailing through the Prindle classes. How do these two types of sailing compare?

Pease: Once you get on the water to go racing, it really doesn't matter if you're sailing out of a yacht club in Europe

Photo by Todd Smith

or off the beach in Southern California. It all looks and feels the same. Off the water, though, it is different. I've enjoyed both. We are fortunate in that we belong to yacht clubs that are very supportive of our Tornado sailing. We also belong to a very active and organized Prindle fleet.

Each group is focused on racing — in the yacht club that focus is a little more varied. Several weeks ago we were on the race committee for a 70-footer regatta. In production cat sailing, the focus is directed at only a few classes, and there's more energy directed at making events fun and including events for new sailors. The off-the-beach groups don't have facilities to attract new members, so they have to work a little harder on growth. Both organizations offer a chance to get involved and give something back to the sport — the basic tasks of race management, social activities, etc., are the same. The main thing is to get involved.

Steve Rosenberg

Steve Rosenberg has made a mark for himself in the sailing community as a hot crew. Whether crewing to first place at the 1990 505 North Americans, winning the 1990 Congressional Cup as Chris Dickson's tactician, or campaigning in the Flying Dutchman Olympic class with his brother Ron, Steve has proven himself a top-notch crew on any type of sailboat.

Steve has also demonstrated his prowess for crewing on some of the most exciting boats to race on — multihulls. In 1989, Steve crewed for Pete Melvin on the Hobie 21 ProSail circuit and dominated the series, taking first place and winning thousands of dollars! And in January this year, Steve crewed again for Pete on *Freedom's Wing*, the Little America's Cup C-class Catamaran, against the Australian defenders. Even though the American syndicate did not wrestle the Cup away from the Aussies, Steve and Pete pushed the defenders harder than any other challengers of recent years.

We asked Steve to share his thoughts on multihull sailing from the crew's perspective.

AS: How did you become a multihull addict?

Steve: I first got hooked on cats in 1984 when I was invited to the Inter-Class Solo Championships in Barrington, RI. Competitors were required to sail three types of singlehanded

boats, one being a Hobie 14 Turbo — main, jib and trapeze for one guy. I won the cat division and had a ton of fun.

I didn't really sail a catamaran until Pete Melvin and Pat Muglia, two very close friends, won the Tornado Olympic Trials in 1988. I began coaching them before the Olympics and was able to sail the Tornado a bit then.

After the 1988 Olympics, Pete and I hooked up and campaigned the Hobie 21 on the ProSail circuit. After the rigors of an Olympic campaign, cat sailing (especially for money) kept me in sailing and gave me a renewed interest in the sport. Now I have a very hard time sailing "slow boats."

I'm now a speed freak and only gravitate towards multihulls and speed machines. And I am a multihull owner!

AS: You have crewed extensively on many different types of boats: Hobie 21s, Flying Dutchmans, International 14s, C-class Catamarans, etc. Which do you find the most exciting and why?

Steve: I have sailed many of today's greatest "speed" boats except Aussie 18s. My favorite boats are

FDs, 14s, 505s, Open 30s, sport cats and large multihulls, but all for different reasons. The most exhilarating, intriguing and fastest boat is the C-class Catamaran that Pete and I raced in the Little America's Cup. The technical aspects and intricacies of the C-class are what makes it so special. It was the fastest boat I'd ever sailed and by far the most complex. But what makes it special is the experience I gained during the campaign. As frustrating and difficult as it was, it was also extremely satisfying. The thrill of competition during that event was high and emotional.

AS: What advice can you give other sailors as to how to get involved with multihull sailing?

Steve: Multihull sailors as a group tend to be a lot more laid back and relaxed about their racing and recreational outlook. While multihull sailors are competitive racers, there is more of a relaxed, "have fun" attitude found at beach cat regattas. I can't remember ever being in a protest or even a hassle at a cat regatta. I have always found multihullers to be very friendly and helpful.



Photo by Jerry Levy

Steve Rosenberg



Photo by Memo de Boer

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These Prindle 19 sailors enjoy a fast reaching leg on the trapeze.

My advice to someone looking to get involved in cats would be to try a local cat regatta. Come with a relaxed attitude, ready to have fun. Let your hair down and enjoy some speed burns. I have found cat dealers to be among the most service-oriented boat dealers in the country; they're always at local and regional regattas, ready to assist in any way. Take your time and try a lot of different boats and find a size and make that fits your needs. There is one out there for everyone.

Craig Leweck

Well known among dinghy sailors, Craig Leweck is one of the latest to add another hull to his sailing program. Craig has enjoyed a successful career in many dinghy classes, including two back-to-back National

and North American titles in the highly competitive Snipe class, two National titles in the Lido 14, and a National title in the Capri 14.2. Craig earns his living making one-design sails at the San Diego Sobstad loft and is mounting an Olympic campaign.

One would think that with such a strong background in dinghy sailing that Craig would opt to campaign an Olympic dinghy. But Craig elected to go for speed and race the Tornado. And, if Craig continues on his present learning

curve on multihulls, combining his proven tactical prowess and potential warp drive multihull speed, other Tornado Olympic hopefuls, including Pease Glaser, Pete Melvin and Randy Smyth, had better watch out.

Craig first started sailing multihulls in mid-1990. With some expert coaching from Pete Melvin, Craig caught on very quickly. Early accomplishments included a first at the 1990 ABYC Labor Day Regatta on a Tornado and a first at the USYRU Championship of Champions on a Hobie 18-SX.



Photo by Todd Smith

Craig Leweck

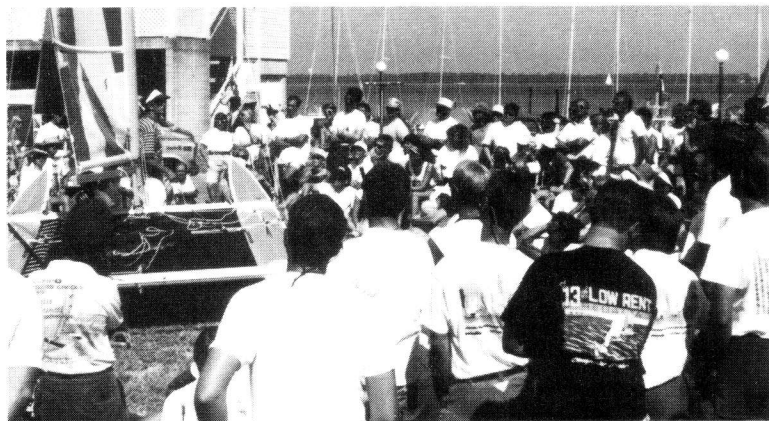


Photo by Todd Smith

Multihull sailors are known to be very open about sharing information. Prindle National Champion Randy Smyth shares tuning tips with a large and enthusiastic audience.

Craig has since been racing his Tornado and sailing Prindle 19s on the popular Southern California circuit. His hard work has paid off as he placed fifth (despite some equipment breakdowns) at the Tornado Olympic Pre-Trials held at California YC last April.

Craig shares some thoughts on what it has been like to go from one hull to two.

AS: As one of the most recent converts to multihull sailing, could you describe the biggest differences between dinghy and multihull sailing?

Craig: The speed that the multihulls generate affects a few areas. More communication with my crew is needed as there is less time for me to look around. I must keep the boat going fast, so I need constant chatter about mark location, laylines, fleet position, etc. Initially, I had trouble planning for new course legs since so much would happen so quickly in approaching marks. Another problem is the adrenalin increase in a big breeze (due to the high speed), which can be fatiguing. Mast rotation was another new concept, wherein we learned to basically control the mast to keep its leading edge into the wind on all points of sail. As for boat preparation, there were now two hulls to fair, two sets of centerboard gaskets to install, and two sets of blades to align, shim and fair-- definitely more time consuming.

AS: You still race your Snipe in addition to your Tornado; do you think that other sailors would enjoy sailing both monohulls and multihulls?

Craig: Definitely! I have found that there are a number of multihull sailors who are very fast, but not strong tactically (boat positioning and windshifts). While boatspeed is top priority in cats, you still have to know when and where to turn. Sailing low-to-medium-performance, small, monohull one-designs will help in this area. As for the monohull sailor who is confident tactically, cat racing will force him to study the elements that contribute to speed. When superior speed and tactics meet, success is the result. The problem is not the concept; it's the commitment. Cat sailors sail cats because they like the speed thrill, and the thought of committing time to a slow boat to understand its tactical virtues may be tough. Dinghy sailors may also get frustrated with cats by the stifling few tactical options that exist. The important point to realize is that the fun will come from gaining new knowledge.

Now that you have seen what the world of multihull sailing is like through the eyes of these cat converts, why not hitch a ride on a cat? Come and experience the thrills, fun and friendly world of multihull sailing. Who knows? Maybe you, too, will become addicted to speed sailing. Sheet in! ■

Introducing Multihulls to Youths (or "Cat Sailing 101")

This summer, with the help of a grant from the U.S. Olympic Committee, the Multihull Council has a program for youths to enjoy the fun and excitement of multihull sailing.

At one or more locations in each of the ten USYRU Areas, we are planning a multihull day. Youths will have an opportunity to see what multihulls are all about. With the help of volunteer fleet and club members, we hope to give them a hands-on experience.

It is our hope that some of the participants in this program will become part of the U.S. Olympic Sailing Team in the future. ■