

## SD-PV – 2018

SD-PV was setting up to be a great event. A reasonable forecast, a solid fleet and good class. After a “way too stressful start for such a long race” beginning (a slight miscalculation of 2 kts of outbound current vs. time and distance, but we managed to sneak in at the pin), our Class jib reached out San Diego Bay towards Puerto Vallarta. Throughout the first day, we all sailed a similar angle with Fast Exit (John Raymont’s beautifully refitted Andrews 40; previously Bien Roulée), us and the majority of the other Friday starters up high and Fractions (Ivan Batanov’s



turbo charged 1D35) and Timeshaver (TS) taking to slightly lower route. A nice night with some rain followed and we awoke to the first sked showing the lower route paid with TS, and a few Class 4 boats (Dennis Pennell’s Blue Blazes and Bob Pethick’s Bretwalda 3) leading the charge.

Following the forecast, we invested Day 2 soaking in shore of Cedros setting up for more breeze and a headed starboard midnight-pass of Turtle Bay. As the evening breeze grew, we were able to put the bow up and start making trees on the boats to weather. Two boats (John Shulze’s SC50 Horizon and Dave MacEwen’s SC52 Lucky Duck) were also working to the inside and closely crossed our path (half a boat length with Lucky Duck...thanks again for the great pic’s Karl!). With this tactic, a strong night of building breeze and solid mid-teen sailing, by sun-up we were able to regain the Class lead.



Day 3 was a great day! Partly cloudy, mid-60’s, good following swell and 18-25 kts of breeze. For anyone who has sailed a J125 in breeze, two things are engraved certainties: 1. It will be fast; and 2. It will be wet. Two other things are certain: 1. The kids lose interest in watch schedules and just want to haul ass; and 2. The old guys fix leaks, bail the boat and try to sleep. Sunday was no different. So here we are, first in Class after a few days, planing conditions, lots of sustained 18’s and 19’s with a few touches of 23. All is going well

when one of the kids learns that the boat on our weather hip (about 2 miles off) is a Beneteau. With zero disrespect intended, Jeff Linden (bow extraordinaire) flips out! “How can we be going so fast and not shake a Beneteau?” For hours: “We can’t shake those guys”, “Beneteau!? How are they doing that?!?” Etc. Etc. Of course the boat was TS, but it was too much fun letting Jeff stew. TS was solid all day. Jeff was right. We could not shake them, but they also were not gaining on us. All day we pushed and matched each other, through jibes and long stents, no change...until late that night...what turned out to be one of our two tactical fatalities.



Day 4, early AM hours, seeing the next day’s forecast being light inside near Cabo, with TS directly astern (about 2 miles), and in lifting breeze, we elected to take one more bite at the offshore apple. We reasoned that TS had matched us jibe for jibe until then and worst case, if they did not follow we would jibe back to cover. Being offshore with more breeze, we’d be safe. As you already guessed, they did not follow. However, no worries. The inside breeze will be less and we’ll be fine. Until it didn’t and we weren’t. A slow realization that we knew it in our bones, we now had our work cut out.

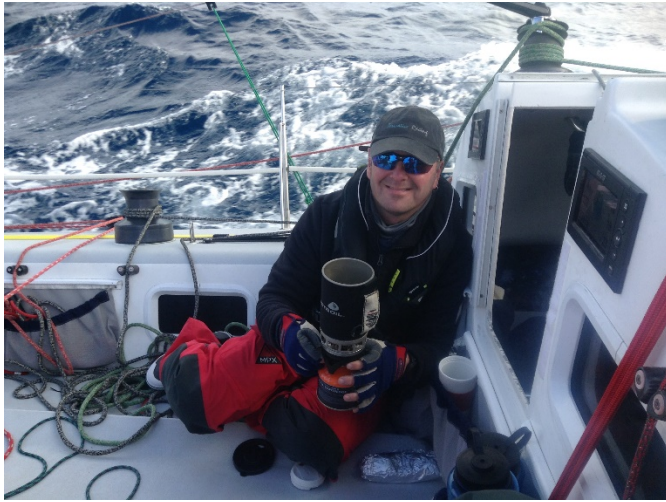
As the Day 4 sun set, we had a tough decision to make: Where to cross the South of Cabo Pacific-to-Gulf transition? We had long considered crossing someplace between 40 and 60 miles South of Cabo would be the best option. However, forecasted good Gulf breeze and a larger exit angle towards PV were driving Expedition to route us close to Cabo. Given the forecasts were not our buddy, we elected to ignore and focus our attention on the TS match race at hand. The plan was to jibe in earlier than our planned crossing point. By this we would force TS’s hand. If we crossed their transom and they followed, while maybe too early to cross the transition, at least we sailing in the same water. If they did not jibe, we would jibe back and maintain the inside (albeit stern) cover for the ultimate move towards PV. As we crossed, they did not jibe, we continued another



mile and jibed back to match. While the plan seemed to go well, although it was an exceptionally dark and flat-sea night, we never saw their running lights and lost them in the dark. We assumed a technical difficulty, gave them a courtesy notification, then proceeded again on our own. Good for us, the uncertainty of their position was quickly negated by a right shift which



shortened the jibe timeframe to our targeted transition cross point (45 miles South of Cabo) and the time where they too would have to commit.



Early AM Day 5 saw a quick and painless passage through the Pacific-to-Gulf transition and we awoke to a beautiful sunrise with several boats insight...to our relief, one was TS to the South and a few degrees ahead. I want to step aside for a second. This was my first time sailing past Cabo. I had always imagined the Gulf to be hot, have warm water and sail to PV on beautiful broad reach. Maybe this was one of those odd years, but while I striped into my shorts and tee shirt for the first time (yes, 3+ days in full foulies and the same under gear), my dream was rudely

interrupted with a few hundred waves of cold water and beam reaching in 16-18kts...not J125 conditions and certainly not how I imagined! That said, we got the blast reacher and genoa staysail working and spent the day cruising along at 10-12 kts. Cold and wet, but good times. Being in the well-to-weather position, this combination was also good enough to slowly roll over the top of TS. By night fall we had about 100 miles to go and had closely drawn ahead of TS.

As another side note, for those who know Scott Harris, he has a propensity of being hit with flying fish. Well, conditions were right this night. Lot's of those little bastards flying around. Scott was trimming main and I the kite. As a I rotated into the main position, wham! I got hit. Full fish goo stew. What a stench! Due to the time it takes for a fish to take off and hit someone on board, I knew he had planned to hit Scott. I was just unlucky. Scott, you're welcome!

Our last night at sea was to some extent bitter sweet. We have a great group of guys on board. Scott Harris, his son Pike and myself, all Coronado YC members since we were kids. Rob Edwards, our navigator and long-time friend and colleague, Ian Trotter (SWYC), our boat guru and all around good guy, and good friend, Jeff Linden (BYC). No pros, no BS, no issues. People who work for a living on vacation with friends. The best of times. We were also excited because we planned to stay for MEXORC and this was only the first few days of a much longer trip. Still, knowing an epic "hundred's of miles" match race against other friends was also ending made the whole thing tough to let go. However, we had our final tactical decision at hand and we had to focus...hard to do when at this point sleep was a luxury we had long lost and knew we had to dig a deep for a strong finish.

As mentioned, when the sun went down we were in the weather position, a few degrees ahead and about 5 miles to weather of TS. The forecast (I hate the forecast) says it is going to maintain pressure through the night, but head as we enter Bandaras Bay. So, we saw this as two possible plays: 1. Get out of the BR/GS combo, go the A3 and blast down across TS's bow to hold the forward controlling position; or 2. Put up the C0 and maintain line to the finish. As part of this decision, we felt TS also had two options: either 1. Avoid going upwind in light AM air by setting a jib and coming to our line now; or 2. Keep blasting along on their current line and hope for the

best as they enter Bandaras Bay. With this in mind, while us sailing low and fast with the A3 and taking the direct forward position was inviting, we felt the forecast was in such a way that we owned the best position and TS was the one being forced to make the move. With that, we elected to put up the C0 and head directly to the finish. About the same time, TS appeared to have taken their second option as they began to move forward. We knew this was possible but felt comfortable that the forecasted right shift and dying breeze would leave them low while we would finish straight in...until it didn't.



As the sun rose on the last day, the wind indeed died, went left more than 90 degrees. Doh! Our port-astern weather advantage on TS evaporated quicker than Jeff's reaction to the surfing Beneteau! Doing the saloon "hand-boat" gesture, we were right about here (left hand) and they were right about there (right hand...just forward of the left, with both hands pointing to the finish). Then it lifted (hands turning to the left) and then TS was directly between us and the finish. Double doh. From there it was academic. We pulled out the match race book and did the best we could to take it to them (albeit as best one can from 2 miles astern). However, in the end TS got the Class win and was second overall (with us second and fifth). Not bad for our first trip to PV, but still



bittersweet. Hard to lose, but how long can one be upset after such a tactical, close-proximity race? Sharing congrats and stories with Jon Shampain and Viggo Torbensen (TS owner) after the race, we had very similar last nights. Tough decisions and good calls. In the end, we were probably both right, but they had a secret weapon (damn it!). Factional A5. With this and a reef they were able to sail faster and at a higher angle than we projected. (Yes. We also ran routing for their position/polars/inventory...I think we'll now add in that fractional

A5!) With that combo they were able to trim the leeward disadvantage, and as it turned out maximize their position during the AM left shift. Great work guys. That was a very hard last night. You deserve the hardware!



## MEXORC, 2018

Arriving into PV Wednesday gave us a few days to clean the boat, enjoy the pool (and cooler contents), and relax before jumping into MEXORC. Given the house we rented, all three were easy to accomplish. Nothing like a dock in the back, a large lawn to lay out sails and gear, and a pool to wash off the salt! Jeff, unfortunately had to leave (Wife's 40<sup>th</sup>. Seemed legit). So, Rob moved to bow and Summer (*Rules Guru*) Greene (SDYC) came in from Blue Blazes to run the mast. Also joining from Coronado Yacht Club were Mike (*Grey Goose*) Rockoff, Chuck (*Listo? Button-down, clock-wise*) Eaton, and Tim (*Doker*) Harris. Stoked they were able to come down!



MEXORC was set-up a little different than in years past. Most notably no lay-day and a Saturday start. Days 1, 3 and 5 were single race, distance days, while Days 2 and 4 were each two-buoy race days. Day 1 began with a skipper's meeting roll-call (Yes! We had to wait for all boats to be present before beginning). They gave us a nice run down on the week's events, and more importantly the details of the first race. Given this MEXORC was being run during Puerto Vallarta's 100-year anniversary, the first race was going to run up the Malecón city front for all on-shore celebrators to watch. As with all MEXORC races, the start/finish was placed very close to shore. Class A started first (TP52's, 70s, Pac52) in 5-7 kts of breeze. Our Class B started



second (Swan42, J125s, Thompson38, J133, Andrews40, J145), close tacking the shoreline on a very scenic first beat. This was a great start for us as we were able to stay in phase and control the in-shore advantage. After a 2 mile beat, we headed back to the S/F area for a leeward mark, then a 5 mile fetch to a further offshore mark before heading downwind to the finish near the PV Marina. We were able to round in good position and hold advantage to finish. Never really paying attention to ratings (especially when sailing ORR and time on

time...anyone else get confused by this?), we felt we finished well in Class, but no clue against the other boats. Thus, we were happy to learn we had won our Class, but totally surprised to learn we also won overall! Very cool. Even cooler was the trophy ceremony where they awarded in the middle of the PV Malecón city party! MEXORC was a big deal ashore, with many locals and tourists alike were on hand to help cheer us on!



Day 2 was somewhat of an atypical Bandaras Bay day...more South, and less pressure. That said, the race committee got off two good buoy races, made the necessary mark adjustments and everyone was happy. After a disappointing 6th in Class the day before, TS was ready and did a great job getting up the first beat, rounding ahead of the Swan42 with us and the J145 following. Bummer for them, their kite went up upside down allowing us and the Swan to jibe without cover and pass. We were able to pass the others downwind and round in first. Being first down, we were able to select the correct gate, and control the fleet the rest of course. TS made a great recovery finished right behind us in second. The second buoy race began similar to the first. We had a solid start just to weather of TS, but elected to follow the Swan42 who tacked first. Sure seemed the right would pay, but instead behaved more like the IRS and sucked us dry as this beautiful lefty put us on the never-ending port-tack merry-go-round, watching joyfully as TS wound-up inside to the mark. Well, there was no catching those guys, but at least we held off the Swan. (A quick shout out, Carlos and his team sailed a fantastic regatta. Five of his guys are



road cyclist who recently decided to learn to sail! With Bruce Cooper aboard, they sailed very well, Carlos did a great job getting the boat around the course and they were solid throughout. Very cool.)

Day 3 was the Las Marietas distance race. A half-mile beat, followed by 15 mile fetch/beat to the Northern edge of Bandaras Bay, then a 15 mile run to the finish. Beginning in 6-8 kts, we were again started just to weather of TS, but being



evolved humans who learn from their mistakes, this time let the Swan take the right. Same story, different race. This time the wind did go right and we sat on the starboard tack merry-go-round watching the Swan wind up inside to the mark! Doh! Well, rounding second was not a bad



concession prize, but it was going to be tough sledding to catch them on the long fetch/beat. Being fairly-close to the Swan, we took up a weather-stern position to keep clear air. We reasoned, with the breeze going right and growing on the upper-half of the beat, we could hold that position and keep TS behind until the beach short-tacking began. As typical, don't bet against TS. Being far enough back and out of bad air, they took a lower route and were able to grind abeam before the beach rightly. Compounding this was our need to get out of the L/MJ1 as the Bandaras breeze was quickly ramping into the high teens. No biggy. Everyone else needs to change too. Buuuut, we have our second halyard rigged for the GS (run through a lashed ring lower on rig), so we were forced to do it bare-headed. Rob, Summer and Chuckie did a great job riding the blind,

bucking bow-bronco to get this done, but both the Swan and TS pulled forward. The good news was we switched to our J2, while TS went J3. This difference was allowing us to claw back as we short-tacked the beautiful white sand beaches near Los Veneros. At the time, in about 16-18 kts of breeze, on starboard tack, and about 50 yards directly to leeward, we heard a loud bang and looked up to see TS crew scrambling and dropping sails. Looking higher up, we could see the masthead crane dangling from wires, with the rest of the rig intact. We hailed them on VHF to offer assistance. While they did not respond, it was clear all was well (as can be expected, given it was clear they were out of the regatta) as they motored back to port. Continuing up the beat in a dying breeze, the Swan was still well-ahead and things were starting to look bleak as we rounded the top mark in the A1 and 6 kts of breeze (I believe my wife was starting to doubt her race day selection as we starred at a very long and slow drift home). Looking left, the coast sure looked like Pt. Dume (a windy spot just North of Los Angeles). Anyone who has sailed the Santa Barbara-King Harbor race knows when you round Anacapa, you head directly to windy Dume. With that, we jibed and moved into our A2. On que, the wind grew to 18-20 with puffs of 22-24. Off we went, solid 16-knot stents with the occasional 18. No swell to surf, so just keep the bow rocked up and haul the mail! We hit a perfect lay-line and jibed to the finish. (As a



note, letting off the vang before a windy jibe, with no surf is probably the worst thing to do. As Madro once said: "It's bad. Don't do it!"). After a near death jibing experience where the main was twisted around the old leeward shrouds and by far last to come across, we zoomed off to correct 21 seconds ahead of the Swan winning our Class and again first overall. Good times!



After the race, I sent a few notes over to Eric Shampain and Viggo on TS. All seemed under control, but true disappointment. It would have been a great ride against those guys to the finish. As we learned in PV, we are very closely matched and it would have been epic! (As an important side note, one of the things I enjoy about Viggo is, while he is a fierce competitor, he is also a gentlemen. He loves his guys, loves this sport, and even though they were out, he still came to the after parties and cheered us on. Good guy!)

With TS out, the remaining races came down to us and the Swan. After the Day 4 Buoy races, we were assured the Class win. So, with one distance race to go, we set our sights on the overall prize...which was going to be very close as while we had two overall wins, the Swan had two overall seconds (MEXORC only counts the three distance races for the overall). Needing to finish with no more than two boats between us and the Swan, and not too deep (the third-place boat was 9 points behind) we had a clear picture of what needed to be done.

I don't think I can choose my favorite, because all three distance races were exemplary reasons to do MEXORC. Beautiful coastal sailing, nice breeze, warm water, whales, turtles, you get it.



However, because of where the last race ended, I think under duress I'd choose this. The race was a pursuit start, with the slowest boats starting first. A 10-mile fetch/beat (same as Day 3) to a mark off Los Veneros, then a 15 mile reach to the finish at Las Caletas. You cannot access Las Caletas by car. Only boat. After the finish, ponga's come out to transport teams to shore for cocktails, beer, cool apps and then a beautiful dinner on a torch-lit beach. (Given our program lacked a Maranara, hats off to Rob and Ian who



jumped on the delivery grenade ...although a full cooler and 40 kt ride back to Las Caletas seemed to soften their burden.) After a fantastic tropical dinner, a drunk-sailor ponga-loading process followed in moderate surge (very high entertainment value), and then a fast power-cat ride back to PV (more high entertainment, with 50+ middle aged dudes dancing with three girls...good times!).

I digress. Long story super short. The Swan handed us our hats in the last race. We were able to keep our Class win and second overall but lost first. That said, as the top US boat, I'm pretty happy with our performance! Hats off to Carlos and his team! Speaking of which, there was one "Mexico moment". At the awards ceremony, the organizers decided last minute not to include any of the four buoy races in the Class outcome (Really? exclude 4 or 7 races??), giving first in Class to the Swan. However, before we could even address the situation (which was later corrected), Carlos and his team found us and gave us the first-place trophy. I am still blown away! No BS, just Corinthian spirit. You guys are the best and we look forward to sharing a race course with you again soon!

All in all, it was a great two weeks. Great sailing. Great people. Great memories. We will be back in 2020. We hope Viggo and Carlos will be too. Thanks again to our sailing team for their tireless work on and off the water, and shouts out to Brad Fitzgerald, SD Boatworks, Artie Means, Trevor Baylis and Patrick Murray of North Sails. You guys are all the best and did a great job setting us up and making us competitive! Thanks again!



#### **Tally:**

##### **San Diego to Puerto Vallarta – 2018**

2<sup>nd</sup> in class, 5<sup>th</sup> overall

##### **Centennial Puerto Vallarta Race**

1st in class, 1st overall

##### **Las Marietas Race**

1st in class, 1st overall

##### **MEXORC Regatta**

1st in class, 2nd overall