

May 14, 2007

To: Pat Bendict

From: Chris Perkins

Re: J-105 sails for SF

I have been sailing with Tom Coates around the country a bit this year and have been talking up the 2008 NA's. It seems like there is a lot of interest but sails are a real concern.

We have sailed in Key West, Annapolis, Newport, San Diego and Long Beach and most of the top boats in these fleets are sailing with light AP sails. These AP sails are designed to be optimal in under 18 knots of breeze. The jibs are full with drafts relatively aft and are all built at the class minimum weight of 23 lbs. The mains are also designed on the fuller side and built entirely with the class minimum cloth weight of 7.5 oz. Spinnakers are all _ oz with small patches and minimal sewing. The spinnaker shapes are also 'VMG' oriented with large foot lengths and smaller shoulders. These light spinnakers should not be flown in over 20 knots of breeze without risk of damage.

The SF Bay fleet has migrated to heavy air sails which are significantly different than the AP sails. The jibs are much flatter with the drafts well forward and straight leeches. The jibs are heavily reinforced to minimize stretch and typically weigh 26-28 lbs. The mains are extremely flat compared to the AP design with added luff curve to accommodate mast bend. Since only Dacron is allowed, 8.6 oz cloth is used though out the sail to control stretch. The heavy air main is physically a much heavier sail than the AP main. The spinnakers are typically constructed out of _ oz material, but often have 1.5 oz material in the shoulder and or tack and head. The shape of the spinnaker is also a 'Runner' shape with a relatively smaller foot and a larger shoulder that projects to windward when sailing low.

As described above the difference between light air and heavy air J105 sails is significant. Heavy sails can not be competitive with light air sails in under 10 knots and light air sails can't compete with heavy air sails in over 20 knots. Light air spinnakers can not be used in over 20 knots. The San Francisco Bay fleet usually sails in 18-25 knots of breeze with some mornings less and some afternoons more.

In order to get boats to come to SF for the 2008 NA's, we are going to have to find a way to let visiting boats buy heavy air sails. If we don't they can't come and be competitive and their AP sails will not physically survive a windy regatta. Speaking with many boats around the country I believe it will be very difficult to come to a consensus on a National level to allow visiting boats heavy sails just like it was difficult last year to allow visiting boats light air sails in Marina del Rey for the 2006 NA's.

I think the SF fleet should allow any visiting boat the opportunity to buy and use three heavy air sails that are not tagged by the National class in the 2008 NA's. I also think that to make it more fair, any member of the SF fleet that sails in the 2008 NA's should be allowed to buy one more sail than their current year allowance.