

Henry Filter on Snipes

I must agree that Snipe sailing helps you figure out other boats in terms of boat handling, sail shape, rig tune and tactics. I've been thinking a lot lately on why I love Snipe sailing so much. Sometimes I think "for Gods sakes I have to start sailing something else, after all I've been sailing Snipes for almost 20 years." I keep coming back to the fact that dinghy racing is what keeps you sharp.

So, of all the dinghies, why the Snipe. Then it hit me. For me its the combination of the bendy rig and hard chine hull. The bendy rig challenges you to squeeze every ounce of speed out of it possible, whether trying to power up in light air or depower in heavy air. The hard chine hull can be more forgiving than the rounded hull of a Laser, Vanguard 15 or any other dingy for that matter. Sailors in there 40s, 50s and 60s (70s if your Old Man Diaz) can give any 20 year old a run for their money and not be held back by physical conditioning.

After much contemplation, its really pretty simple. If you want to race One Design and stay sharp, you have to race a dinghy. If your over 30, not an Olympic athlete, have a career, family etc... and can only spend so much time in the gym, you need a hard chine. If your any age and want to get better at sail shape and rig tune you need a bendy rig. And no matter who you are, if you want to get better at tactics, you need to sail a Snipe.

Henry Filter 5/2004