

RACE REPORT JULY 14TH 2012, LAKE OF ZURICH

Yesterday was the toughest race we did with the Q28 so far. It was „quite windy“ (30kts plus in gusts) but not also windspeed was up, it was f.... gusty and shifty. Lake of Zurich typically – not enough wind or too much. All in all not a pleasure and it was horrible for the boat but especially for the sails. My crew forced me to do this race - and in the end I was glad they did. We really learnt a lot also for further developments, not only for the Q28 but also for the Q30.

In the end we didn't finish as first boat this day - a Longtze did! Very well done Jarmo. No discussion! They did very well and windspeed in the gusts was high enough to get the Longtze really out downwind – then this boat can do also 17kts plus – even in flat water. Not constantly but sometimes. This time we ended as second boat over all but nevertheless way in front in our division of Racing class 1 in which all fast lightwind boats are gathered. The rest of this division didn't even start, capsized, left the race with gearfailure or lost a lot of time on us. It is not very important but a nice detail: With this victory in the class, we already won the annual championship of our region - after 5 races out of 9.

But back to what we learned. I first have to mention that we didn't just do the race, which was comparably short, we had to sail to the starting line and then back home again. Towing with the powerboat and hoist sails on the water like we use to do normally, was not possible. So we were sailing in this horrible conditions about 5 hours or even more.

First: With the right set up you can sail the Q28 (originally and intentionally made for decent windspeeds!) in almost any conditions. I mean what i say. Put in one reef in the main – very helpful. And then you take a relatively flat and small jib. As we do not have such a sail, we took the basic jib, which showed to be way too big and full for these type of conditions. The result: We really were overpowered most of the time and this means opening and closing the jib all the time. As you are too late in hard gusts with letting the sheet go and then giving too much or less of it – you end up with too much heel angle or a sail batting. As soon as the rack goes into the water you loose a lot of boatspeed and due to the small fin area and too much heel angle you get washed to lee without end. Upwind vmg this day was spoiled totally. Sailing more often in conditions like this you definitely need a jib made for this and then you can control heel angle with the main (the self tacking jib planed for the Q30 could be a good size). A much better control will be the result with much quieter sailing, ending in a optimised vmg. As soon as the wind dropped a bit between the gusts, we sailed faster and at the same angles the conventional boats did. But in spite of the poor upwind performance and a short downwind leg (about one third of the whole course) in this race, we managed to beat all the boats but one, thanks to an unequaled downwind speed for a monohull of this size.

Second: The small and (boat-)crowded race area together with incredible windshifts forced us to tack and jibe often and without beeing prepared really. Having two foils out (as planed on the Q30) would have helped a lot. All the more as the waves were not big enough to really be a problem (drag) for the foil sticking out on windward side of the boat.

Third: Sailing with one reef is definitely the right thing in conditions like this and it could be even much easier not being obliged to operate the runners/backstays. “Stretch them a bit and forget them” would be a very good thing to benefit from. We have to think about this also, although I do not have an idea how to do at the moment.

Fourth: We took a little fractional kite (left from my former Onyx). This sail of course should be designed specifically for the Q28, but it worked surprisingly well and it gave the boat a very good balance downwind. Sailing round the triangle the first time, I was afraid of bearing away going downwind after rounding the first mark, as I thought the boat would be very much overpowered downwind also, capsizing, flip over like a catamaran, losing the rig whatever - but in fact going downwind was the least of a problem this day. It was stable going steadily and it was funny to see that we not only sailed much faster than our competitors but safer, quieter and with more comfort. In the meanest gusts we did over 21kts and around 18 constantly – as long as the wind was there – amazing. The downwind strip was about one third of the whole distance and having the upwind set up described before, this race would have ended like all the others - first over the line in front of all competitors and not only in the class.

Conclusion: DSS-Boats work whatever the conditions are – definitely. It is a question of dosing all aspects of boat-physics the right way. I am very happy with what we learned and also with the result regarding the circumstances of this race-day although people who do not understand how DSS works called us “losers” because we were not able to sail away from the fleet like we normally do. But they ignore that DSS is not offering the same advantage upwind as it does on reaches and downwind (a fact I explained and described a hundred times), they ignore that we are at the beginning of the learning curve and they forget that sailing conventional boat means to benefit from a huge treasure of experience...and I ignored that doing something really new sometimes can be a little frustrating© The only thing for us, is to work on the right set up and balances for the perfect lakeracer: Sail sizes and profile, fin area and ballast, layout of the boat for easy handling and stuff like this. I know now that we are already quite close. And during this race sailing a Quantboat with all the items described could even have been fun – although I hate those conditions. The task for the Q30 is realising the first sportsboat, which is fast(er) in any type of wind. It is possible thanks to DSS. So lets go for it. It is worth it all.