

REPORT ON THE ST.PETERSBURG, FL 2023 HELLY-HANSEN NOOD REGATTA

There are some things this sailor must do; like in the morning; make coffee, hug the wife, pet the puppies, fetch the newspaper; every day. Another must-do every year is race the mid-February, St. Petersburg NOOD regatta! Been doing it at least 20 years.



The terra-cotta-colored St. Petersburg YC nestled in St. Pete city background.

The St. Pete public launch area always presents a challenge raising the mast among the pesky palm trees. And it's always a grind finding a slip for the boat (with over 200 entrees, not an easy task for the already full St. Petersburg yacht club dockage).

We had the luxury of practicing twice on Thursday so we felt pretty good about the troublesome mark-round gymnastics. Since our boat, a S2-7.9 sloop, *Scratch*, is as rapid as the others, the money is likely in the mark rounding!

Below is a cluster of S2-7.9 at “dock” (if that’s what its called!) at SPYC



Above, PPYC Commodore Curtze and Scratch tactician Dooley motor to the race course on Tampa Bay, St. Petersburg in the background.

On **Friday**, the first race-day, swells were not-so-much, maybe 1-foot, that's "flat water". Our race starts were good, but we just could not motor to-weather as well as the more experienced crews and ended the day mid-fleet. **Saturday** was more of a challenge with higher morning base wind mid-teens and a few gusts to 18mph. So we raised the 105% jib for the first race which was a best-choice for us. However, a negative to that decision were waves of 3-4 feet which challenged the smaller jib. Most other competitors also shifted to the smaller foresail but the experienced top-teams, some pros, stayed with the 155% genoa and still motored a bit faster upwind. Our practiced mark roundings were very good, but a few tactical goofs here-and-there cost a boat length here-and-there too. However, multiple good starts and improving to-weather performance gradually leveraged our improving score. Winds moderated by noon so we changed up to the 155%. By **Saturday**, we were a better "machine" and with a 3rd-place finish were feeling positive again and at least in the mix with the best sailors. Four races in those conditions was seriously fatiguing and we returned to dock aching and spent but the up-side to that is the beer taste better!

The race committee managed eight races over both Friday and Saturday which was good planning; **Sunday** was a dud; the early 6-mph wind disappeared altogether. To their credit, the race committee started two other-class races but neither could finish and all was abandoned. Our 5th place finish was disappointing but adequate to propel us to practice harder for next year's NOOD!



Nashville's HIYC S2-7.9 skipper James O'Dell



Nashville boy, Cody, of HIYC on his Melges 24 at The NOOD



Respectfully,

Paul Latour
S2-7.9. "Scratch"
2/24/23

I use every inch of the Ford Expedition XL!