

LASER

If one is looking for a model of how to develop a successful racing class, one needs to look no further than the Laser. Designed as a high performance, inexpensive, one-person boat, the Laser was launched only a few short years ago and since then has experienced the most phenomenal growth of any class in the history of yachting.

What has this boat got which others lack? Nothing! It has a class organization, a class publication, a dealer association, equipment rules, competitive sailors, competent builders, etc. The difference is that this boat has them all.

Who owns Lasers? It is easier to ask who doesn't own a Laser at RYC. The old, the young, the experienced, the inexperienced, the boy, the girl, the racer, the cruiser, the rich, the poor, the heavy, the light, the strong, the weak.

Racing was started in 1976 with Bill Kaiser, Fred Cook and John Karpf running Saturday morning races. There was a mixture of participants, about as varied as that listed above; however, the predominance were from the Junior Yacht Club. Frost-Biting, tried in 1975, was reinstated in the fall of 1976 and lasted until the mainsheets froze and made boat handling impossible.

As this report is written, it looks like the Laser Fleet will grow in the years to come. It is possible to visualize 30 to 40 boat starts for local races and 100 boat fleets at Centrals and other major regattas.

As one sits at the Club and views the Laser thrashing about in the river, sometimes losing out to a puff of wind, we older ones cannot help but be a bit jealous of a younger generation which has the Laser.



Bob Castle on a beat in his Laser in 1976.



Nancy Kaiser on a downwind leg in 1976.