

California Circuit
Mission Bay Yacht Club – Fleet 194
San Diego, California
February 17–20, 2005

Pos		Marathon Bay	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	Total
1	Finkboner	1	1	6	1	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	20
2	Brewer	2	4	3	3	5	4	5	3	4	2	2	37
3	Coppens	6	3	1	2	1	1	1	4	2	10	10	41
4	Neuburger	3	2	4	4	2	3	6	2	5	4	10	45
5	Gravatt	7	6	5	5	4	5	7	6	6	3	3	57
6	Johnson	5	8	7	6	9	9	3	5	3	10	10	75
7	Bellin	4	5	2	9	9	9	10	10	10	10	10	88

Day One

Greetings from sunny California. Wait a minute, greetings from rainy California. After going more the 350 days without rain, we are having an El Nino winter and rain was scheduled for yesterday. Moving in with a southwesternly breeze, this clashed with a desert onshore breeze. The result was drifting conditions on Mission Bay for the noon start. The storm breeze prevailed and twenty minutes later we started in 10 knots from the southwest.

Yesterday's race was our marathon race, probably the longest lightning race sailed yearly in the US. It originated when the circuit was held both in Coronado and Mission Bay. After two days of racing in San Diego Bay, the third day would be a 17 mile race from the Coronado Bay Bridge to MBYC. The last marathon race had the top three finishing within one minute of each other. This year, we sailed a modified course from MBYC out to the ocean and then a diamond shaped course totaling 15 miles.

So back to the race. Tight racing ensued out the channel with Pete Bellin, Scott Finkboner, and Jeff Coppens leading the pack in close racing. A right turn spinaker reach of 3.2 miles started the ocean portion. We made a port rounding to weather and the breeze shutoff completely as the storm system stalled. After two hours of painful sail flapping agony, the top six boats finished and three boats were collected just outside the surfline by one of the tenders. We all enjoyed a rain filled tow back to the club. Spirits were lifted as we all met at the Cass Street Grille, a famous Pacific Beach haunt for burgers and beverages

Day Two

Day Two at the California Circuit featured five races on Mission Bay. A strong storm system moved in overnight with heavy rain. To our surprise, the club was dry with a weak easterly breeze. The first race was sailed under light conditions and featured close racing in shifty conditions typical for the bay. Within fifteen minutes, the southernly storm breeze filled and the last four races were sailed in a strong, 12-15 knot wind with gusts to 20+. The circuit features a special trophy, the "bowling trophy" to the sailing team with the most troubles. Our first candidates for the trophy started as Edna Johnson flipped out of her boat after a line she was pulling snapped. Pete Bellin's boat capsized at the reach mark while they had a four length boat lead in the third race.

Day Three and Final

The heavy weather system continued on Sunday with a strong southern wind at a consistent 20 knots with gusts exceeding 30 knots. The Coast Guard opened the Mission Bay Jetty so we headed to the ocean course for the final day of racing. The circuit is down to a match race situation between Scott Finkboner and our boat with Scott leading by three points. Scott secured the win as our main halyard snapped in a gust up the first leg of the day. We limped back to the club under jib only. Carnage was the theme of this year's circuit with over half the fleet missing at least one race due to breakdowns. Pete Bellin won the coveted "bowling trophy". On Friday, he capsized while leading a race and eventually retired. Saturday, he snapped his forestay in the first race. Sunday, he snapped his vang on the sail out.