

Stanford (NSW) who sails Harem Scarem with an all-girl crew — wife Rhonda, daughters Nicola (14), Prudence (10) and Fleur (5) has this light-weather distraction: "You will be concentrating like mad and from below will come Fleur's voice: 'Mum, where are the biscuits?' She is ignored but becomes more insistent, 'MUM ... MUM'."

The only questions race seven, next day, has to answer are whether Yeomans can win seven straight heats and who will be second and third overall.

The 4-6 knot nor'easter veers east in the last five minutes before the start and all the front runners are buried. Ohau Rua, with the helicopter blade drop keel, leads early from Radical Lady, a very twitched-up boat sailed by Jack Lucas from Eden with Dump Truck third. On the second windward beat, Dump Truck's speed takes it to the lead.

Dump Truck finds a hole on the third beat. George Backhouse works a streak of wind from the north to overhaul the leading bunch then take Sequoia around them to comfortably win the heat from Radical Lady with Dump Truck third. George survives a protest from Jack Lucas to take second overall with Warren Walters third.

I take up Yeomans' offer to sail Dump Truck home and marvel at the way he has its rig set up. You can make the wing-like main be any shape you want it to be by pulling the appropriate strings. The boat is beautifully balanced on the helm and feels fast.

Yeomans tells me this is his fourth RL24. He got onto the flexible, fully-battened line five years ago when he put a Hobie 16 rig into his RL. "It was all I could afford at the time; I got it at the right price."

He is a banker and crewmen Mall Morris and David Stone work for the same bank. Yeomans taught them sailing; they enjoy it and putting the boats together. Michael Coxon, a "heavy" from North Sails, helped Yeomans develop the rig and joined his crew. Coxon finds sailing in the trailable scene a little more relaxed than skiffs and one-design keelboats but enthusiasm at an equally high level. After every race at Southport he was surrounded by a clump of competitors, young and old, wanting to talk over the boat-speed and tactical lessons of the day.▲

1, Dump Truck (P. Yeomans, NSW), 1-1-1-1-1-1-3, 0; 2, Sequoia (G. Backhouse, Qld), 8-5-2-4-4-2-1, 32; 3, Sundance (W. Walters, Qld), 2-2-3-3-9-8-10, 47.4; 4, Radical Lady (J. Lucas, NSW), 4-6-12-2-10-4-2, 49.7;

5, Pegasus (B. Castles, Vic), 3-3-4-6-8-6-6, 54.5; 6, Lowana (M. Shannon, Vic), 14-11-7-5-2-10-8, 73; 7, Safari (J. Berry, Qld), 7-8-9-11-3-16-4, 73.7; 8, Ohau Rua (J. Walsh, Vic), 11-7-14-9-7-5-5, 78.8; 9, Marilyn M (A. White, Qld), 5-4-6-8-13-14-11, 79.7; 10, Splice (K. Rainey, Vic), 6-10-5-7-12-9-12, 83.7.

The Yeomans rig

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The mainsail was a large 14.3 sq m area with a short loose foot, high roach with only five full length battens to keep the sail light. The draft of the sail was situated 45% to 50% aft, cut flat in the bottom developing depth towards the head of the sail to support the large roach. This power could be controlled through mast bend via an efficient boom vang. The depth in the lower third of the main could be controlled by foot tension. Mast bend, through altering boom vang, sheet tension, foot tension and Cunningham eye, gave the sail a tremendous wind range. The large mainsail with small jib improved downwind speed.

The jib measured 5.7 sq m with short foot so there was no mainsail overlap. The design was for a flat sail with fine luff entry for high pointing, which suits the narrow-beam hull with thick centreboard of 12% cord depth. A clewboard was fitted to the jib which sheeted to a track running across the boat on both sides rather than fore and aft (not a self-tacker). This was a great aid to tuning as it gave the sail a full sheeting range for both fore and aft and inboard and outboard.

Street Car won the 1980-81 national RL24 championship. Since then, there have been only small developments in the working sails, however the spinnaker design has changed considerably both in shape and profile. Street Car carried a low-ratio full-cut spinnaker, which I felt was too overpowering for a trailable yacht in reaching conditions. The spinnakers have developed considerably to a flat-cut high-ratio sail that has large presented area yet is still easy to control with the use of barber haulers.

As well as class racing the RLs are often sailed competitively in open trailable yacht events. This has led to the development of a larger, light Mylar genoa and a 24 sq m 1/2 oz spinnaker, which are designed to be carried with the skiff mainsail. These sails, oversized for class sailing, improve the boat in light air.

To Peter Yeomans and myself the big test of the rig we had developed was when we trailed his third RL Calibre (No. 303) to Victoria for the Marlay Point

overnight race. With more than 600 entries, this race is considered the prestige event of trailable yachting. The third member of our crew was Peter Holmes, well-known dinghy sailor and manager of Holmbros, builders of centreboards and rudders for most classes. The race was sailed in a variety of conditions and I feel our result of first on handicap and third over the line against boats previously regarded faster was a credit to RL class development.

Holmes was a major contributor to Peter Yeomans' latest RL development: an efficient, low centre-of-effort drop keel, replacing the RL's previous swing keel, which had much greater drag and made tuning difficult as the board's centre of resistance would move back and forth as it was raised and lowered.

Peter's fourth RL Dump Truck, winner of the 1982-83 nationals, is a combination of all his successful ideas of the last four years. It was pleasing to note that the majority of the fleet carried skiff type rigs, including the first four boats. Many of these sailors were the "conventional-rigged" sailors who laughed at Peter's first Hobie 16 fully-battened rig on Lorna Dee four years ago. Many older boats have now been successfully converted from conventional rigging and sails to skiff rigs, using the standard RL section mast enabling them to remain competitive within a reasonable budget and drop keels.▲

Laser lurks

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the block on the traveller). Increasing the vang tension will give you more leech response when you pump to catch waves. Only when there is too much power to handle should you consider easing the vang from this setting.

Easing the vang allows: the upper leech to lay off so you have less heeling moment; keeps the boom out of the water on a reach when you can only just keep the boat upright; reduces pressure in the rig which minimises the chance of breaking a spar in a capsized; makes gybing easier.

To maintain a fine entry for sailing upwind, the vang must be on at least block-to-block (mainsheet) all the time. In a breeze under two knots slightly more than block-to-block should be used to flatten the sail so that the low-speed airflow will remain attached more easily.

In 3-8 knots, when you are sitting on the side deck and beginning to hike, the vang can be eased to give more power if you need it to get through a chop. Vang tension flattens the sail, reducing