

Half-way and Third Overall

Qingdao, China - August 11, 2008 - After two more races today we are at the halfway point of our Olympic Games and we're tied for third overall, although the tie-breaker puts us in fourth place. We are 16 points behind the leaders but there are a lot of races ahead of us, including the double-points Medal Race.

Everyone has speculated about drifting conditions here in Qingdao but so far it hasn't happened. It's been every bit as difficult as we expected, with light shifty breezes and strong current to contend with but we've got off the first six races with only minor delays. Now we've got a day off to regroup and analyze our first-half performance and bounce back for a strong second half.

The scoreboard makes interesting viewing and shows how similarities in boat speed and results mixed up by small weather changes have compressed the fleet. Only two boats have managed to get out in front. After the two lead boats, there are nine of us in a narrow band between 32 and 36 points.

We spent more time today in the middle of the pack. None of that nice warm feeling of looking over the transom at the fleet spread out behind you. We finished 6th and 11th. One bonus; the discard rule kicked in and we able to drop the 14th place from the opening race that has been dragging us down.

We had a beautiful strong breeze in the morning for the two hours we spent tuning up and we were really excited. However it didn't last and sagged off from 15 knots to an average of 7-8 knots dropping off to 4 knots while we were racing the second race. It was more of the same easterly we've been seeing, with the thermal tugging at the easterly gradient and making for subtle and inconsistent shifts that were impossible to read. There was tide to contend with, of course, and a kinda sloppy sea state left over from the fresh breeze in the morning.

In the first race we pulled off a pretty good start near the pin because our game plan called for us to work the left side of the course. And like yesterday, a boat coming out of the pin end eventually tacked under us and forced us to tack away from our promising lane of breeze and off to the right. Despite that we settled down and sailed a nice first beat and got to the top mark in fifth place and stayed in fifth on the run. We lost one boat on the second run and finished the race in sixth.

The breeze had dropped off by the time we started the second race. It was reported at six knots but it felt more like a patchy four knots. It seemed to be clicking right a bit so we made the call to start up the line, closer to the committee boat to take advantage of that. However when the gun went we were right at the committee with a boat to leeward of us that

was just nose-out and slowing us down. There was nothing to do but tack away and play the right hand side. It looked OK at times but we had a difficult top of the beat managing traffic. We trailed two thirds of the pack around the top mark in ninth place and then lost another boat on the run. We did better on the next beat, pulling back into ninth, and then dropped two places on the final run trying to gain an advantage.

Tomorrow we rest and regroup and work on strategy for the second half of the event with our coaches Gary Bodie and James Lyne. Nobody seems to have a speed advantage in this fleet. A number of different boats have taken the lead on the first beat and retained it. That tells us that there is more weight than usual on tactical calls and a premium on making strong starts.

Until the Olympics are over, the format of our reports is changing a little in order to comply with International Olympic Committee requirements for all athletes. The IOC wants to protect the commercial interests of its sponsors and thus we're not permitted to post photos of sailing action or provide you directly with official results. However, we have all the links to official photos, results, and other items of interest on our special Team 7 Qingdao Olympic Blog page. If you want to tell your friends and family about our reports, they can find them at <http://www.team7sailing.com/content/blogcategory/20/36/>.

You can also watch a slideshow of the eight photographs in the archive from Day One and Day Two. Go to <http://www.sailing.org/olympics/news/24681.php>. Sorry, there are no photos from Day Three.

For results go to <http://www.sailing.org/olympics/resultscentre.php> and click on Yngling Women in the left-hand column. This site will also let you follow leg-by-leg results during each race.

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for Team Seven Sailing -

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