

Light Winds, Nice Win



MIKE ELIASON / NEWS-PRESS

Shisayo, left, and FOB Tony head for the first turn in their Melges 24 fleet race on Wednesday in the waters off Santa Barbara.

Bjorkman, crew guide Shisayo to win in calm waters at this week's race

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With winds dipping below five knots for the Santa Barbara Yacht Club's weekly running of Wet Wednesdays, it appeared as though many boats were sailing through swells of thick caramel and not a relatively calm Pacific Ocean, but not Shisayo.

The boat, skippered by Glenn Bjorkman, used some skilful spinnaker work to come from behind and take first place in the Melges 24 fleet over a shortened course.

"We had a good start and then the kelp bed is a real strategic thing here," said Bjorkman, who acknowledged that the race would have been different had the fleet's top competitor Kent Pierce and his Average White Boat been in the fleet instead of travelling up north to San Francisco. "The wind was out of the south and it was a little tougher to work the kelp. Actually, we got passed by two boats on the way to the first weather leg. Then we got one of them back, and rounded the first weather leg."

Travelling with the wind, Bjorkman relied on the talents of Tara Hunt on the spinnaker.

With just a gentle breeze, Hunt had to work to maximize the wind, while Bjorkman focused on keeping Shisayo out of the kelp.

"Making sure you don't strap it essentially," said Hunt when asked what the key was to handling the spinnaker in low-wind conditions. "If you get it too tight you go nowhere, so there's a constant in and out of trying to keep it right on the edge."

"There will be wind shifts, or suddenly it will come from behind, or if we throw in a jibe it

Please see **SHISAYO** on C3



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The crew aboard FOB Tony makes the first turn during Wednesday's Melges class race

SHISAYO

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might get sloppy."

Thumper, which finished in second place, was ahead of the pack after the first turn, but Bjorkman took Shisayo on a higher course and managed to get the most out of the wind while avoiding the kelp that would have killed any momentum in the weak breeze. The boats that did get tangled in the ample forests off Santa Barbara's shore appeared

to come to a complete stop, and with only a gentle wind pushing them it took a long time to regain any semblance of speed.

"Today's big thing to watch really was the kelp," Hunt said. "There's a lot of kelp out there and the kelp can stop the boat completely in the water, so it's kind of a kelp game."

That one wise choice and Hunt's work on the spinnaker was enough for Shisayo to claim first by a sizeable margin, as the course was shortened by a lap by the race committee

when it was done was not enough to regain the original course.

"Well, the message is that they do what they did," shortening. "You do another lap, we could have a race committee watching the video, it's doing. They

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