



What is Predicted Log Racing, Why it is Important, and How is SDPS Involved?

By Cdr Bob Hubbard

Predicted Log Racing consists of running a predefined course on the water for which a time prediction has been made in advance by the contestant and the results are calculated using the contestant's time error as a percentage of his or her overall predicted time. Participation in these events provides a way for skippers to build self confidence in the knowledge of their boat while sharpening their piloting, speed control, and boat handling skills under a wide range of conditions, including wind, fog, or limited visibility.

As a member of the San Diego Cruisers Association (SDCA), the San Diego Power Squadron participates in monthly SDCA predicted log contests and annually hosts the October race (event summary appears in Jan.-Feb. issue of *The Ship's Mail*).

Although we customarily refer to them as predicted log races and each participating boat displays racer numbers, these events could more accurately be referred to as predicted log contests. They are very much like road rallies on the water, where each contestant is competing against the accuracy of his own prediction and the accuracy of the predictions of other competitors.

Each event, under the sanction of the North American Cruiser Association, consists of running a predefined course composed of a number of legs, each ending at a specific control point, referred to as a "mark." The skipper must follow the designated course passing within 100 yards of the specified port or starboard side of each "route point" and "mark." Local races, which are held on Saturday mornings, typically cover 13-15 miles in approximately 2 hours.

Assisted by a navigator of his or her choice and using only compass, tachometer, and fathometer, the contestant runs the course under the scrutiny and clock of an onboard "observer" assigned by the San Diego Observers Association. The "observer" makes sure that all rules, including general restrictions and specific rules for that race, are followed by the contestant while providing the official time keeping and scoring. Advance practice on the designated course is a violation of the rules. Errors in each leg are cumulative so that if a skipper runs the first leg one minute fast and the next leg two minutes slow, the cumulative error to that point becomes three minutes. The total error minutes and seconds for all legs are divided by the contestant's prediction for minutes and seconds to run the entire course to generate a cumulative percent error for the race. That error is compared to the similarly calculated error for each of the other contestants to determine winner of the contest.

To give all contestants an opportunity to win trophies, contestants are divided into Class I, experienced racers, and Class II, novice racers. By accurately factoring winds, currents, tides, and boat performance eccentricities into their predictions, winning contestants often achieve cumulative errors of less than one percent.

San Diego Power Squadron has several members who regularly compete in these races, as well as many members who, as trained observers and members of the San Diego Observers Association, ride with the competitors and do the scoring. Each race is sponsored by a local yacht club or boating organization, which provides a luncheon and awards ceremony following the race. If you are interested in becoming a racer or an observer, contact Squadron Predicted Log Chairman Dave Weimer, or Observer Training Chairman Bill Bridge. You will find that this is an easy sport to get hooked on.



Under the capable direction of squadron member David Weimer, the San Diego Power Squadron organized the Predicted Log Race held on October 20. The top four finishers were (front row, from left) Cal Daane (Division II, 1st Place); Dave MacCullough (Division I, 1st Place), Garry Adalian (Division I, 2nd Place); and Paul Pettit (Division I, 3rd Place). Back row: Bob Hubbard, Commander, San Diego Power Squadron.