



## **Sailing on Lake Norman**

Sailing at Lake Norman can be fun, exciting, and drudgery. We expect winds from the North, Northeast, Northwest, South, and Southwest. It is typical lake sailing, and the more the wind drops off, the shiftier it gets. Winds will probably be 5-10 knots, but with a front they can reach 20 knots with white caps. The air temperature will be in the 80s to 90s during the day and 60s to 70s at night. The water temperature will be in the 80s. During the week, power boat traffic will be down, so motorboat chop should not be a problem.

North – Northeast Winds – Normally this happens with the passage of a cold front. It offers an opportunity for nice long courses as the lake tends to lie on a Northeast –Southwest axis. There will be shifts, and one side of the course, often the left, is favored until about 2/3 of the way up the weather leg. Towards the end of the leg, approaching the marks from the starboard side sometimes seems more favorable.

Northwest – This, like most Northwesters, is a test of wits. There will be many shifts and no one side seems to prevail for any extended period of time. The legs will be shorter since space for racing is a bit more confining. The weather mark will most likely be out in front of the club, and the final approach will test your wits.

South - Southwest – Wind from this area is warmer and more stable. There will be shifts but not as noticeable as those from the Northeast and Northwest. The left side seems to be more favored especially with the weather mark more to the lake's center. If the mark is set more to the right, there is often a starboard lift coming off a point just to the south of the Clubhouse. Be cautious as you cannot always take that to the bank. This is lake sailing!

Navigation - There are shallow spots to be aware of, but they do not normally come into play while racing. When leaving the club's cove, it is best to favor the right side along the keelboat docks and clubhouse. The point on the opposite side can begin to get shallow at this time of year.

On the opposite side of the lake there is a shoal marker and a channel marker T-1. It is best to avoid this area. You can sail inside the channel marker, but you should avoid going inside the shoal marker.

Around the club side to the south, there is another channel marker D-7 off of a point. Sailing inside this marker is okay if you stay well off the shore. The race committee will try not to have this area come into play. However, sometimes it is hard to avoid especially if a mark is shifted during a race.

The water conditions are typical of lake sailing and there is no current. White caps will start at about 10 knots of breeze, and the wave heights seldom exceed 1-2 feet. From the starting area there is about a two mile fetch coming from the Southwest, one mile from the Northeast, and about ¾ mile from the West. We seldom see wind coming out of the east unless there is rain and a front off the NC Coast. With light winds from the East, we frequently see it go right and die, especially in the mornings.