

Orange Bowl 2021

This year, I decided to switch things up at the Orange Bowl International Youth Regatta. I decided to sail the Laser. I think the Laser is currently the most competitive youth class, and I see a lot of potential personal growth, both on and off the water, in this class. Before the Orange Bowl, I flew out to do a clinic at Key Biscayne YC. We had great wind the whole week and I learned a lot from my extraordinary coaches, Steve Mitchell and Nick Thompson.

However, by the time the regatta started, there was no wind. In fact, on the first day the Race Committee was only able to run one race, which in my opinion they should not have run. There was no wind and a terrible power boat chop. I struggled and ended the day with a 19 in the 91-boat fleet.

The next day there was slightly more breeze. I managed to bring myself back to 15th. I was able to get a couple top tens and even a third. However, the wind was still about 4-5 knots and very tricky.

I had an incredibly rough third day. I was doing well on every start, but I could not figure out the boat speed. It was even lighter than the day before with even more chop. My coach Morgan Reeser said, "This is not a usual Laser regatta..." I had gone into the event focused primarily on windy conditions and the fitness required for it. I had not spent much time in chop and it was showing. It was one of the toughest days of racing in my life.

On the last day I got up at 5am for the 7:30 harbor start only to arrive at the boat park to see there was no wind. Race committee still sent us out, and we sat and waited for the wind. We spent the whole day on postponement and didn't get a race off. I was glad to be over this event. I needed a break to reflect on the event. Fundamentally, I was sailing pretty well, but I would make one small mistake that would lead to another, and on top of the mistakes, I did not have

any boat speed. My dad always says, "Speed makes you look smart." Sometimes you can get away with speed and tactical errors, but with this Laser fleet, you have to be smart with every move or you bleed boats. I am hoping this event doesn't reflect my Laser ability, as the entire event was sailed in under 6 knots, but I know there are many applicable lessons I took from it. I figured out the pre-start boat handling, how to hit the reset button after a mistake, and I got slightly faster as the event went on.

Overall, the event was one of the most frustrating events I have ever sailed, but I took a lot of small and large lessons from it. I would like to thank the BSRA for supporting me in this event, and I am looking forward to testing my grit in the next Laser regattas.