



'Another half a degree would have done it,' commented Dean Barker after Emirates Team New Zealand got their AC72 to 44.3° of heel after fluffing a late tack during Race 8 of the America's Cup match. The Kiwis had brought a spare wing to San Francisco – but the disruption to their Cup challenge had the boat rolled would surely have been terminal. 'Today, God was a Kiwi,' Barker added later on

## MEANWHILE

– Terry Hutchinson



Sitting on Swiss Air flight 38 from Zurich to San Francisco. The end of a long tour that included the Rolex Farr 40 world championship, Rolex Maxi world championship and the final event of the TP52 series. Needless to say, feeling a bit whipped! The last three weeks have been a mixed bag. We went second (Farr 40 pre-worlds), third (Farr 40 worlds), fourth (Maxi worlds), 2nd (TP52 Audi Week) and first (TP52 Super Series championships). Potentially that explains the feeling of being whipped.

The Rolex Farr 40 worlds had a 15-strong fleet from seven nations. Looking at my prediction last month I was reasonably close. The usual suspects showed up ready (*Barking Mad* and *Enfant Terrible*) and Kevin McNeill's *Night Shift*, defending champion Helmut and Evan Jahn's *Flash Gordon 4* and Nico Poon's *Charisma* were all going to be contenders. *Charisma*, three bullets from three races, owned Day 1 but struggled mid-regatta with a DSQ. Day 2 *Nightshift*, Day 3 *Enfant Terrible*, and Day 4 *Plenty*. Interestingly enough, no boat could find the consistency required to pull away and much of that I think speaks for the calibre of the racing.

In the end Alberto Rossi's *Enfant Terrible* and Kevin McNeill's *Nightshift* tied on points (41) with Jim Richardson's *Barking Mad* rounding out the podium. Oddly enough, *Enfant Terrible* beat *Barking Mad* in only three races. But in those three races *Enfant* went 1,1,1 and *Barking Mad* 6,9,11! Consistency wins regattas.

Onboard *Barking Mad* I think we were the best battlers as we had solid finishes from middle-of-the-line starting (conservative). I would also say that we broke a cardinal rule: we did not win the races that we led. Twice we coughed the lead to finish 4,2. That points difference puts us where we like but as always 'if my aunt had you know what she would be my uncle'!

Post-Newport it was on to Porto Cervo for the Maxi worlds onboard Hap Fauth's *Bella Mente*. This event and racing with *Bella* was a first, and from the get-go an absolute pleasure! Hap has a very simple approach of no stone left unturned. Which is awesome,

as you know that when push comes to shove you will have everything you need. The interesting side is that this was back to handicap racing in IRC. It has been quite some time since I have done 'handicap racing' and it definitely requires a different mindset. It also requires a complete understanding of the boats you are racing. Pretty critical to know when you will make gains – and not – so as to sail smart races.

This event is also unique in that it carries two coastal races that you cannot drop. On *Bella* we had a shocker in the very first race of the event, which was a coastal and could not be dropped. From there on we were on our back foot. However, we battled, and in conditions that I would characterise as not *Bella Mente*'s conditions (6-9kt TWS) we came back to a fourth. Niklas Zennström's *Rån* Racing won the event.

*Rån* is a five-year-old Judel-Vrolijk design, which speaks volumes for the longevity of the fleet, the design and IRC's ability to rate boats. I would also say that while *Rån* may not be the fastest boat all the time the team are slick. *Alegre*, which is a new Mills 72 and a sweet-looking boat, finished second after leading the event for the entire week. The strength of *Rån*'s team was too much to hold back and, while I would have picked *Alegre* as the boat for performance, it was tough to overcome the *Rån* team.

Finally, it was closing time for the *Quantum Racing* at the final event for the TP52 Super Series. We went into the event with a 25pt lead over *Azzurra*. But like most things in sport, no lead feels big enough especially against a team like *Azzurra*. This week was the exact opposite of the Maxi worlds. The entire regatta was *fresh*! I think on two beats we used a J1.5 and the rest of the time J3.5 or J4. The highlight was the 35-mile coastal race which saw *Quantum Racing* and *Azzurra* swap the lead nine times. Fortunately, *Quantum* came out on top in this battle but for the week *Azzurra* was slightly better. Much like the Farr 40 worlds, though, we had two tricky races early on that made the difference; two leads in the first two races coughed and points given away! Congrats to *Azzurra* for their win at this event.

Overall *Quantum Racing* won the season with solid consistency, great speed and a great team. I am always amazed what