

## Prepare for Pixelation

Bruce Kirby is at it again. The prolific designer of the Laser sailboat has thrown his hat into the ring once again to enhance the sport of dinghy sailing and racing. Kirby looks to be on track for introducing a new trainer with the youth sailor in mind. With over 182,000 Kirby-designed Lasers sold, one must not ignore the possibilities of this new easy to rig, easy to sail, easy to right sailing dingy. The latest boat is designed for beginner and intermediate junior sailors.

Pixel is a modern word that describes the smallest picture element of a digital image. The word Pixel is also pronounced the same way universally (as is the Laser). Having completed its maiden voyage in late October from the Norwalk Yacht Club, in CT, Kirby noted that the boat was extremely fast, planing upwind in around 20 knots of breeze the day of its sea trials. With its conventional spinnaker, planing off the wind should be no problem at all.

The boat is 13 feet, 9 inches long and 5 feet 3 inches wide, and weighs around 185 pounds, nearly 90 pounds lighter than the Blue Jay. The transom is open for easy bailing and the cockpit has cut-out "Lockers" amidships, both port and starboard to aid with capsize recovery and hamper a boat's tendency to turtle itself. "With the cut-outs, the boat, when capsized, sits lower in the water, making it harder for the boat to turtle," said Kirby, who also noted that while sailing, the "Lockers can be used as hand grips." An additional anti-turtle aid is a

*The Pixel during sea trials performed "better than expected."*



3/8" thick section of foam that has been sewn into the head of the sail. Although not intended by Kirby to replace the Blue Jay, it is this age group of sailor that the designer had in mind for the boat. Kirby noted, "There is no need to be one or the other here, I designed the boat as an 'alternative' to what is currently being used." It seems, however, that the replacement of the antiquated Blue Jay would be the natural pro-

gression of the youth trainer sailboat trend.

The Pixel, with a (watertight for added floatation) tapered carbon mast designed to de-power in heavier winds and decrease the heeling moment of the boat, is yet another innovation that sets the Pixel apart from other club trainers in use today. The boat is slated to sell for about \$6,000, keeping the boat in the "more-than-reasonable" price category.

Aside from designing the Pixel and Laser, Kirby, a Rowayton, Connecticut resident is an Olympic Finn and Star sailor and America's Cup yacht designer. Kirby has been testing the prototype boat at numerous area yacht clubs with junior, college and adult sailors to get a well-rounded opinion of the capabilities and the limits of his design. Thus far, the reviews have been extremely positive. When Kirby completes the final changes to the vessel post-sea trials, look for *WindCheck* to perform a full-scale boat test and review. ♦

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