

SCCOOS WIND FORECASTS & OCEAN SURFACE CURRENTS ENABLE WIN

2008 NEWPORT TO ENSENADA YACHT RACE



Ray Huff and John Ugoretz, co-captains of the 34-foot chartered yacht, the *Getaway*, plotted their course using SCCOOS wind forecasts and surface current web-based data products in the 61st Newport to Ensenada Yacht Race on 25-26 April 2008, and they won. Competing in the Cruising Gennaker C category, the *Getaway* finished first before the 21 other boats in their category. This year's event, sponsored by the Newport Sailing Ocean Association, had 391 entries in 25 categories. The race's egalitarian requirements attract professional sailors skippering multi-million dollar yachts, as well as amateur sailors like Huff and Ugoretz, who chartered their boat the weekend of the race.

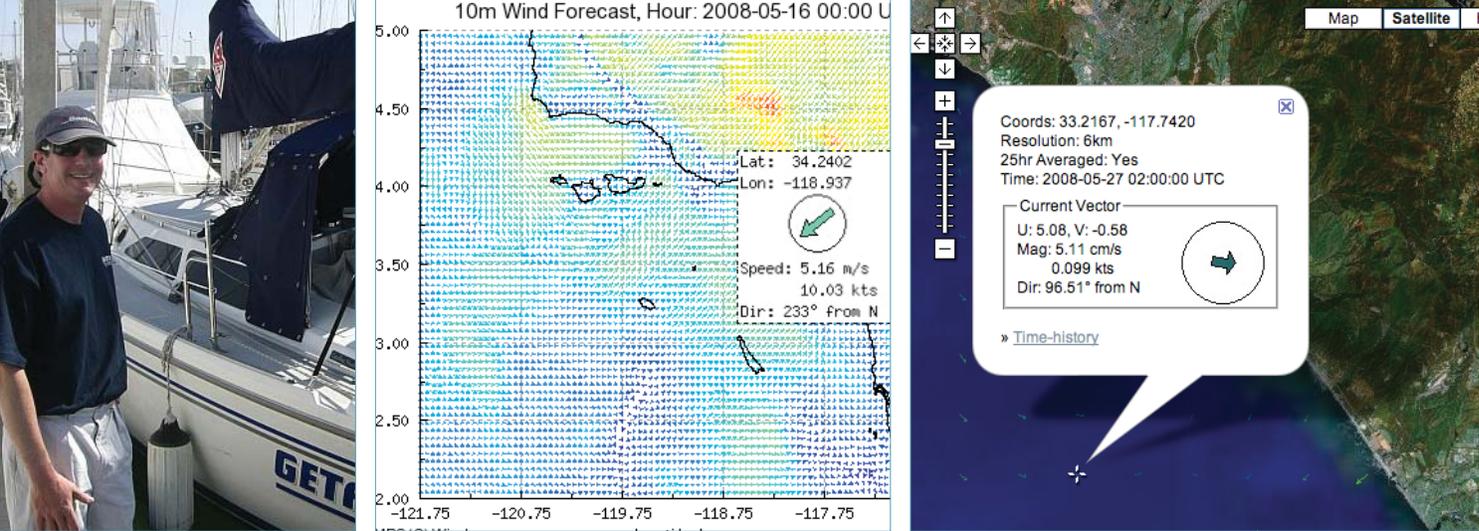
Co-captain John Ugoretz writes, "I used both wind forecast and ocean current information to help plan my route for the race. I reviewed the information for about one week prior to the race, right up until the morning of the start. Perhaps the most important factor in our strategy was a decision on where to be at night, when the winds are the lightest. Using the plan derived from SCCOOS information, we were able to average 2.5 knots of boat speed all night long. This may seem slow, but I've had years where we drifted backwards at night with no wind and a counter current. This year the boat never stopped, with steady progress towards Ensenada throughout the night."



Wind Data
www.sccoos.org/data/winds/48hr

Surface Current Data
www.sccoos.org/data/hfrnet

May 2008



Because the *Getaway* was chartered, the race team had little time to prepare before the race. Participants aren't allowed to access outside information during the race, so race routes are planned using forecasting tools. Ugoretz, the official team navigator and tactician, used SCCOOS-provided wind forecasts and surface current maps to plot the team's winning route. Ugoretz commented that his proposed route nearly matched that of a competitor's that had been developed using complex sailing models. The *Getaway* finished 1.5 hours ahead of the number two boat in their category on corrected time.

The SCCOOS wind forecasts are provided free of charge as an easy to use web-based data product. Forty-eight-hour forecasts of wind direction and speed for the Southern California region are available in three-hour increments. SCCOOS-supported programmers use output from COAMPS* provided by the Naval Research Laboratory to generate a map of the region. Users can click any point on the map for forecasts of wind direction and speed at that latitude and longitude.

The surface current mapping product provides near real-time surface currents derived from high-frequency (HF) radar sites throughout Southern California. Data collected from HF radar is used to compute the speed and direction of ocean surface currents, and is processed and displayed to the user as surface currents maps in near real-time. In addition to helping sailors plot their course, the SCCOOS surface currents display tool has been used to help determine the fate and transport of oil from an oil spill, track freshwater outflow from diverted sewage lines or river sources, and can be used to track movement of a harmful algal bloom (or red tide). Mariners, swimmers, surfers and recreational boaters can also use SCCOOS web-based data products to check on conditions in the surf zone and coastal areas.

SCCOOS operations are funded by the State Coastal Conservancy through the California Ocean Currents Monitoring Program, and through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration as one of the 11 regional observing systems comprising the Integrated Ocean Observing System.

* *Coupled Ocean/Atmosphere Mesoscale Prediction System*

Images: reverse, background: Regatta off the Coronado coast, courtesy of TallCJ; inset: John Ugoretz (far left) and team on the *Getaway*. This page, top, left to right: John Ugoretz and the *Getaway*; 5km modelled 10m wind fields of the Southern California coastline; surface current map of the Orange County coastline,

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