



International 420 Class

and the

**Singapore Sailing
Federation**



Press Release

26 November, 2008

Asian 420 coaches get to work with Singapore's 420 sailors and Jim Saltonstall



Twenty-six coaches from countries of South-East Asia have spent an intensive four days at work together in Singapore from 21 – 24 November, developing their skills and sharing their experience. At the same time, they put fourteen of Singapore's 420 squad through their paces. The **1st Asian and Oceania 420 Coaches' Seminar** was part of a long-term development programme established by the International 420 Class to facilitate the development of the 420 across the world and to strengthen race coaching capacity generally.

The Seminar, involving coaches in a multitude of practical exercises, both on and off the water, was led by the former ISAF Youth Trust Coach, **Jim Saltonstall**.



Jim Saltonstall MBE Q.P. ('Queen's peasant') was GBR National Racing Coach for 23 years, where he built the Youth Programme through which Ben Ainslie, Iain Percy & Nick Rogers developed, and was GBR Olympic Team Coach 1996 - 2000. As ISAF Youth Trust Coach 2000 - 2008 and coach to the ISAF Athlete Participation Programme, Jim has continued to support and influence the development of young sailors, and his de-brief sessions at the Youth Worlds (as well as at 420 International events) are renowned. He was honoured at this year's ISAF World Youth Championships, having been involved in the last thirty!

The twenty-six participants in the Seminar were from Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, and Hong Kong, as well as Australia, the Netherlands and Poland.

Delegates were welcomed by the President of the Singapore Sailing Federation, **Low Teo Ping**, recently re-elected as a Vice President of ISAF, who commented that "...this is a very important event for the Asian and Oceania countries, and I hope that all the coaches attending will profit as much as they can from the seminar with the lead coach, the well known, Jim Saltonstall".



Held at Singapore's National Sailing Centre, the event was hosted, and provided with excellent support, by **SingaporeSailing**



The four-day **programme** included sessions covering: 'Leadership Actions – Coaching for whom?', championship preparation, self preparation – physical, boat preparation, boat handling, boat tuning, race strategy, starting, tactics, the new Racing Rules, protests, compass work and meteorology.



Each afternoon was spent on the water, with fourteen willing 420 sailors.....



.....providing the coaches with ample opportunities for practical, hands-on coaching and to refine their observation skills.



Former Optimist Women's World Champion, **Griselda Khng** & her crew, **Cecilia Low**, recently back into the 420 after the 2008 Youth Worlds, manage an occasional laugh!



The reigning Asian and South East Asian Games 420 Champions, **Justin Liu & Sherman Cheng**, were out to help with the Coaches' Seminar. But then, they are veterans of Jim Saltonstall's video de-briefing and know the value of reflecting on their tactical decisions. After all they went to Europe in 2007 to compete in the 420 Junior Europeans at Medemblik in the Netherlands...and won!



A reunion (above) on home territory for Justin Liu and Sherman Cheng with Jim Saltonstall, recalling their head-to-head at Medemblik in 2007, when Sherman and Jim discussed tactics, with the video evidence in view (left)



Rachel Lee, 2007 Optimist Worlds Women's Bronze Medallist, sailing with Peter Wong

The daily on-the-water exercises were followed by detailed de-briefs, led by the coach-delegates and using the trade-mark Saltonstall video footage.

This sounds like a lot of free coaching for the sailors, exposed to a variety of styles and insights.

It was great experience for the coaches, developing their skills and confidence



So we are assured of happy ferrets!



But what about the coaches?

We spoke to some of the delegates during the Seminar.

We met up with Wong Chung Sang of the **Hong Kong** Sailing Federation, Cheung Ho Yan John, who coaches with Hebe Haven Yacht Club, and Lui Kam of the Hong Kong Sea School. We understand that Hong Kong currently has six pairs of 420 sailors who form the National Squad.

Wong Chung Sang said: "Jim's delivery was very clear and easy to understand (sometimes it can be difficult, especially when English is not your first language). The seminar provided an excellent opportunity for coaches to share and discuss their ideas; those who did not participate in the exercises learned as well through observation". **Lui Kam** commented: "The knowledge and techniques I've learned from this seminar can also be applied to coaching classes outside of the 420. This was a good opportunity for me to upgrade my coaching skills, and I hope to be able to transfer the knowledge to my sailors".



Cheung Ho Yan John Wong Chung Sang, Jim, Jose and Lui Kam

Coen de Koning from the Netherlands, who had travelled to Singapore just for this seminar, which he saw as a career investment, spoke of the "good course structure, comprehensive, picked up different styles in delivery". He mentioned that he would like to learn more about effective delivery as a coach, the psychology side of things, skills for teaching youth, etc. - perhaps a follow-up seminar to this would be good! He commented that, through Jim's seminar, he had learned to prioritise what's important to teach. "It was an eye-opener to hear different perspectives at the seminar. When I need advice in 420 coaching, Jim is no doubt the best man to go to!"

The Philippines were represented at the Seminar by Maria Remedios Fidel and Bernard Floren. They told us a little about the youth sailing at home. The Philippines currently have eight pairs of boys and girls team in the National Squad, most of these sailors being graduates from the Optimist Class.



Bernard Floren, Jim, José & Maria Remedios Fidel

The government funding for sailing is focused upon performance at the South East Asia Games, Asian Games and Olympic Games, and thus the focus for 420 sailing is also aimed towards performing at the major games (SEA and Asian Games). The main challenge they face in getting more women sailing is that the ladies do not enjoy getting a tan! The coaches have not received formal coach training before - they coach from their own experience as sailors – and it was evident that the Seminar had awakened a demand for more!

Said **Bernard Floren**, "the exercises, which were conducted in the afternoons, were very useful, I certainly will implement similar exercises when I coach in the future". **Maria Remedios Fidel** confirmed, "this is the first time I am receiving formal coach training; this seminar is awesome. I have learned a lot and hope to see more of such training seminars in Southeast Asia".

Singapore's Head Coach, **Craig Ferris**, and former coach to some of Australia's most successful sailors, had been a constant presence at the Seminar helping with comments and with the organisation of the sessions afloat. He concluded, "the seminar was a good vehicle to transfer knowledge and techniques from experienced coaches like Jim to those who may not have had been exposed to much. There is huge potential for the 420 Class to grow in popularity in Asia. With the right support extended to the large Optimist population in this region, and new found coaching skills, this can be achieved more easily".

Kelvin Tan (Singapore) said: "The seminar has covered a wide range of topics from the basics to the new Racing Rules, very informative. I've picked up many tips from the exercises and from the other coaches present at the seminar. Through different coaches' presentations, I've picked up new presentation tips and hope it will help me in better delivery in my coaching session so my sailors can understand better". His colleague, **Jefri Ismail** added: "Jim Saltonstall's sessions are very interesting and besides learning new coaching skills and methods from this seminar, I have also learned a new meaning to the word ferret!"

José Massapina, Vice President of the International 420 Class, paid tribute to the Singapore Sailing Federation for hosting the event and thanked the President of the Federation for his personal support. **Low Teo Ping**, in closing the Seminar, emphasised that "...the 420 and 470 classes are very important for all the countries, and I cannot imagine the dinghy sailing world without these two boats...".

Reflecting on the response from the coaches and observations on the progress of the Seminar, **José Massapina** said of the usefulness of this seminar, "we can say that it has been of a great value for all these coaches. They enjoyed the matters raised by Jim during the four days regarding self and boat preparation, boat handling and tuning, race tactics and strategy, the Racing Rules, meteorology and compass work; they profited to the maximum. The afloat exercises with the 14 volunteer sailors, managed by each coach were also a very issue, not only because of knowledge gained, but also the coaches because went out from the seminar more confident of their skills".

This coaches' seminar is the first of two being organised by the International 420 Class in 2008. A further seminar, for **North and Central America and the Caribbean**, is to be held at the U. S. Sailing Centre, Long Beach, California at the beginning of December. Previous seminars have been held in Palma, Istanbul and, last year, for South America in Rio de Janeiro.

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