

E-Scow National Championship 2017

April 2018

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Congratulations to Harry Melges (I-1) for winning the 2017 E-Scow National Championship! What a fantastic event! The long awaited 2017 National Championship was moved to April 2018 due to Hurricane Irma who hit Charleston back in September 2017. The competition was excellent and the Race Committee led by Principal Race Officer, Tommy Harken, did an outstanding job providing fair racing conditions. Chairman, Walter Prause, and the Carolina Yacht Club did fabulous job hosting the 2017 National Championship with the proper parties at night. Class President, Lon Schoor, was a great advocate helping in the background to make sure all class standards were met. The CYC dock staff helped out with coordinating the busy parking lot. More than 60 volunteers, led by Naomi Van den Bergh, helped out making things run smoothly.

With 57 boats on the line, the race committee was given a tough task. As seen many times in Charleston Harbor, lake boat sailors are not always very current savvy resulting in many general recalls and unfortunate situations at the mark roundings... Principal Race Officer, Tommy Harken, who knows the harbor like the back of his hand, diligently kept warning the competitors about the currents during the skipper's meeting as well as over the VHF radio between races to help the fleet as much as possible in order to get some good and fair racing in.

Race 1 started with a light Westerly breeze of 7kts and a strong ebb tide. One of the competitors hooked the weather mark, resulting in many boats not rounding properly. Due to much commotion about this incident the race committee decided to abandon this race the next morning.

As the winds continued to die and the sea breeze tried to take over, the race committee moved the course around for Race 2. The breeze filled in with a solid 10-12 kts. The tide was still ebbing and the e-Scow class was having a tough time starting, resulting in 2 general recalls and a 3rd start under a black flag. This race was won by Brett Hatton (SL-4), followed by Peter Koar (BH-22), and local sailor Walter Prause (SC-6).

The course moved West for Race 3 as the sea breeze continued to build. During the start there was a significant wind shift, which resulted in an abandonment. After moving the course again, the final race started under a black flag. Seventeen year old Harry Melges (I-1) won this race, followed by Vincent Porter (I-2), and John Brown (T-37).

It was a great first day of racing with challenging conditions. The fleet was very strong and seemed to swap places a lot especially within the top 25. All the gains were made by staying in the ever changing pressure and trying to sail in the current relief.

The second day of racing started under postponement as we were waiting on the wind to fill in. With a Southerly breeze of 8-10 kts coming off James Island, the course for Race 4 was set in front the picturesque Battery. The starting line was so long it barely fit between Castle Pickney and the Carolina Yacht Club. This area is known for strong currents, moving in different directions. A short course was set

at 170-180 under an ebbing tide. Russell Lucas (BH-8) placed 1st, followed by youth competitor Eddie Cox (W-66), and Chad Hillyer (T-17).

As the breeze was building, the course was lengthened for Race 5. The ebbing current became stronger and the fleet was having a hard time starting. The first start resulted in a general recall, the second start under black flag resulted in another general recall, followed by another general recall during the third start also under black flag, with finally a good start at the fourth attempt. Several boats were black flagged. Much excitement happened within this time frame with John Helman (GA-14) (Master/Rookie) T-boning the Signal Boat and having to sail in as their bow split apart. Race 5 was won by Harry Melges (I-1) taking his second bullet in the regatta, followed by Brian Port (I-49), and Jeff Bonanni (T-73).

All the gains were made by playing the current and going right on day 2, as the ebb tide and the Ashley River's push was taking you to the weather mark. The last race of day 2 was a clear start under black flag. The conditions held at 12-15 kts sustaining for Race 6. Erik Bowers (M-11) finished first, followed by Pete Strothman (I-9), and Brian Porter (I-49).

The final day of racing we saw yet another wind direction. With a North East breeze of 8-12kts, the course was set in the same area as the day before, putting the weather mark in a very strong ebb current close to Castle Pickney. Local Sailor Will Hankel (SC-22) cashed in some of his local knowledge by sailing deep into the shallows of the battery as far as he dared, in hopes of not touching ground, resulting in a 6th place finish. Soon many other boats followed. Vincent Porter (I-2) won Race 7, followed by Brian Porter (I-49), and Harry Melges (I-1).

The last race of the championship, the wind shifted slightly right, resulting in an even bigger advantage going left as the ebb tide was so strong. Many boats couldn't make the weather mark, including local sailor Kevin Jewett (GA-8), who hooked the mark and as the e-Scow boards are so sharp the line was cut. Due to the incident during Race 1, the race committee added chain to the mark which resulted in destroying the mark. M1 was quick to reposition and post an M-flag in order to be the mark. Unfortunately yet another competitor ended up cutting their anchor line, resulting in much chaos with boats not rounding properly. Protests followed and after many hours in the protest room, Race 8 was abandoned by the jury due to unfair racing conditions. This was definitely not the most fun way to end a national championship, but competitors will be competitive.

Regardless, everyone seemed to have enjoyed themselves both on and off the water! Look for Colin Grey Voigt's photos and Charlie Morano's video of the event to be reminded of a great time in Charleston. If the current hasn't messed you up too much, please join us for the annual CYC E-Scow Regatta hosted every April. We look forward to seeing you on the water somewhere!

1	I-1	White Heat	Harry Melges [Youth]
2	I-49	Full Throttle	brian porter

3	I-2	Wide Open	Vincent Porter
4	M-42	MADAME	Sam Rogers
5	W-66	Marvin	Eddie Cox [Youth]
6	T-73	Limelight	Jeff Bonanni
7	M-11	ELEVEN	Erik Bowers
8	T-17	Hunter	Chad Hillyer
9	GA-8	Espresso	Kevin Jewett
10	I-9	Rooster	Pete Strothman