

2014 MCSA Masters Championship

Day 1

Article courtesy of Eric Hood - One of the best sailing lakes in the world — Lake Ray Hubbard, and one of the best yacht clubs in the world — Rush Creek Yacht Club are the hosts for the 2014 MCSA Masters National Championship which officially started today. Regatta Chairman Brian Morgan has been working on very unique idea for quite some time. The idea was have loaner boats ready for any and all who came. A full blown concierge service if you will. Ship your sails in and arrive having a boat all ready to go for you. Many of the 50 MCs present took advantage of this gift offer from the country's largest MC Scow fleet — right here at Rush Creek Yacht Club. Full blown red carpet treatment from a very large volunteer team including folks like our current National Champion Kenny Wolf and many others. So exciting to be back here after several years of missing our famous beloved Black Tie Spring Championship.

So lots of teams have been here for several days practicing. Yesterday our PRO Wayne Coulon and team held five practice starts along with two practice races. Breeze has been in the middle for the last three days running between 10-15 mph. Fun Ray Hubbard sailing for sure.

For day one we had a very unusual easterly with all the storms in the area but the breeze finally settled in after a short delay and race one was under way. Breeze was again running around 11-14mph for this race.

Eric Hood, along with Bill Draheim started strong with Mark Tesar and Greg Gust right there too. Stu Oltrogge along with Doug Kern was also in hot pursuit of the lead four boats. The course was a L4 with one mile legs. Three great legs of racing and even a fourth were in progress when some lightning moved in quickly with one of the many storms in the area. Our PRO made a great call and got us in quickly. Breeze came up to about 20 shortly after that and now has gone away. The weather system wins Day One.

The great news though we have spectacular weather predicted for the next two days of racing with winds out of the usual SE-S and at a velocity predicted from 8-12mph.

Big party Texas Rush Creek style over at the Jacobs house nearby the club tonight which everyone is looking forward too.

Check out photographer [Evan Wallis' website](#) for some great photos.

Day 2

Article by Eric Hood -THE DAY AND THE CONDITIONS

A great Texas day with temps in the upper 80s and morning conditions with starting wind speeds of 10-12 mph for Race One that diminished down to 5-7 mph by races end. Direction on big Lake Ray Hubbard was Northeast. For Race Two we saw the breeze diminish down to below five and then freshen to about 6-7 mph from the North so a course reset to the left. Waters were flat.



©2014 | Evan Wallis. www.evanwallis.com — One minute after the start Race 1



©2014 | Evan Wallis. www.evanwallis.com — E Hood and crew Andrew Vandling leading a group original race 1 in a good breeze

THE COURSES

Race One was a L4 with .85 mile legs and Race 2 was a L5 with .65 mile legs. Lines were long and appropriate for the 44 boat fleet. Race One was slightly favored to the windward end but folks came off both ends in pretty good shape. Race 2 saw a pretty good lefty come in with about 4 minutes to go in the light air and caught a few folks asleep who could not get down to the other end of the 300 yard long line.



©2014 / Evan Wallis. www.evanwallis.com — Great form Team Oltrogge

THE COMPETITORS

This 2014 version of the MC Masters by far is the toughest group ever assembled with at least 7 former National Champs from a variety of classes in attendance. Then, another large part of this group are regatta winners from major MC events around the country from over the years. Tough, tough, tough group. Heavy on sailing smarts. Then you even have guys Like Salty Schwarting of Pewaukee Yacht Club who figured out with Charlie Lind of Rush Creek Yacht Club today that they have raced against each other for 64 years. Great to see all brackets for the Masters, Grand Masters, Mega Masters and Old Salts well represented.



©2014 | Evan Wallis. www.evanwallis.com — Mark Tesar going fast and hammer down on the original race 1 that was abandoned

THE RESULTS

Some big shake ups through both races today. Race one had three leaders with E Hood the first half followed by Ron Baerwitz of Lake Eustis for a leg and then race winner Danny Ziegler. Race two had three leaders with first leg leader Devon Howe leading the leg and rounding the top mark in first. Devon shared this was his first major MC regatta ever leading a race at any mark – WAY TO GO Devon!!!! E Hood lead legs 2, 3, 4 and most of 5 with Greg Gust winning in a tacking duel in the end. After two races held in lighter and tricky breezes here is what we have so far.



©2014 | Evan Wallis. www.evanwallis.com — Regatta Team Leaders Jack Kern and Jeff Grinnan leaving the dock last after all competitors are out sailing



©2014 | Evan Wallis. www.evanwallis.com — One minute after the start Race 2

TOP TEN RESULTS (After Two Races)

- 1.) Ron Baerwitz 2-2 = 4
- 2.) Danny Ziegler 1-8 = 9
- 3.) Jeff Grinnan 3-7 = 10
- 4.) Richard Blake 4-6 = 10
- 5.) Doug Kern 9-3 = 12
- 6.) E Hood 10-4 = 14
- 7.) Greg Gust 16-1 = 17
- 8.) Kelson Elam 13-5 = 18
- 9.) Bill Draheim 5-13 = 18
- 10.) Stefan Schmidt 8-10 = 18

[View Full Photo Gallery](#)

WHAT WORKED AND WHAT WAS FAST

No doubt the key to success today was a quick start and dark water. The group as a whole sailed very well but the long starting lines (which were the correct length for our 44 boats) really spread the group out quickly. There is no room for being timid in lighter breezes on the starting line. You have to be in dark water and you have to fight for a clear leeward bow to get off the line fast. It was challenging but fun upwind sailing with not a lot of control changes but for sure small adjustments to the mainsail all the time. Being careful not to let your boat go flat was critical too. Downwind it was all about survival. Stay on the favored gybe to the mark and keep your tell-tales clear. The few boats who wandered off looking for the gold mine found nothing but problems and we never saw them again. Not panicking and sticking with the group and always looking for dark water was the key to fast sailing today.

HALF WAY THERE AND WHAT IS LEFT

So with one day of racing left and the way the rules are set for this event we do have all day tomorrow to get two races in and make it a four race event. It should be pretty easy to pull off as we have the favorite wind to sail in here on Ray Hubbard a good old fashion southerly with a wind range of 10-15mph and no storms in the area. So game on for the Championship. No drop races so lots can happen for sure tomorrow.

OTHER COOL AND SPECIAL REGATTA NEWS

So much to share here. I want to do this now while there is time before the long trip home just after racing tomorrow. This is such a unique regatta. I do not think I have ever really seen anything like it in my well over 5-600 regattas I have sailed in my lifetime. The concept of flying in and having boats waiting for you is not new but it is new to our scow world and for sure the MC Class. When I say this I want to absolutely honor all those for years in scow world who have loaned 1, 2 or 3 boats for sailors coming in but to loan almost 20 is off the charts. The leader and brainchild for all this is Jack Kern from Rush Creek Yacht Club. Jack over the years has been through at least four if not five full cycles of fleet building. It is so cool that his greatest success is coming now where he has the fleet now built up to be the largest active MC fleet of 39 MC s which is off the charts cool! Jack not only put a team together but tuned each boat for the competitor's type of sail and sailing weight. Way to go Jack!

Other teammates helping. Hammerick Morgan on setup along with Stuart Draheim. Kelson Elam setting up the grounds to accommodate all the boats so they could be together. Kelson also had a team including Jeff Grinnan and John the tractor driver getting boats in and out. There was a hoist crew (sorry do not have their names). Tom and Dana Jacobs threw one of the best regatta parties at their home on the lake I have ever been too. Off the charts food, setting, drinks and community time with friends. Pete O'Connell is on our big blow out for tonight (cook your own steak). Bill Draheim is providing a full blown fireworks display tonight. Kenny Wolfe our current MC National Champ has had a big hand in making things happen with parties, the grounds, Kattick racing and more. So thanks to everyone for all of this incredible work.

So I will close this evening just by saying this event story should be shared in our sailing community as it could be our future for some of major championships that have longer travel times. Example – We should be racing scows at Rush Creek Yacht Club and in my humble opinion it is a big miss that our community is not back down here more often. I know the door is open. What Jack, his teams, RCYC have done here is provide a path for participation for many at a fantastic venue. I know there are others out there. So more to come on this story.

Now off to the club for steak night and fireworks with our Texas friends.

E Hood

MC 2081

Melges Performance Sailboats

Final Day

Article by Eric Hood - **THE DAY AND CONDITIONS**

As predicted, the 2014 MCSA Masters National Championship commenced the last day of racing with winds out of the Southeast at about 10 mph that quickly built to 15 mph for the start of Race One. The range was Southeast to South-Southeast for wind direction and velocity was between 15-20 mph with a few big gusts beyond that during the course of this race. Race Two was a barn burner. Starting in about 16-18 and then up to the top of our class wind limits with a few giant puffs that made for some spectacular rides.

THE COURSES

Race One was a L4 with 1 mile legs. Race Two was a W5 with 1 mile legs.

WHAT WORKED AND WHAT WAS FAST

Today was a day of shifting gears from the lighter wind races we experienced earlier in the series. You had to sail really smart and flat on the hard starboard tacks (waves were bigger on this tack). Then some experimenting with your traveler or even mainsheet in the big breeze was very important. Actually not maxing outhaul in the breeze helped with the big waves of the final race upwind. Max vang and Cunningham though for sure going upwind. Downwind was total focus for two things speed and survival to not go swimming. Perfect dead down legs for all four runs of both races made it a big deal to focus on not submarining the bow but also to just go fast. Squeezing the vang in the big puffs was extremely fast. Smart tacking in flat water and gybing in downwind speed moments was critical.

GOING INTO THE LAST RACE FOR THE CHAMPIONSHIP

So it was great racing throughout the fleet and different age groups. You could not have written a better script though for the last race. Seven different teams all within 5 points of the leader. It was game on for the final race. The players were Ron Baerwitz, Doug Kern, E Hood, Greg Gust, Bill Draheim, Richard Blake, Danny Ziegler.

TOP TEN RESULTS (FINAL - After Four Races)

- 1.) Bill Draheim – 20 points
- 2.) Eric Hood – 21 points
- 3.) Doug Kern – 23 points
- 4.) Jeffrey Grinnan – 29 points
- 5.) Stuart Oltrogge – 31 points
- 6.) Kelson Elam – 40 points
- 7.) Eric Protzman – 46 points
- 8.) Danny Ziegler – 49 points
- 9.) Ron Baerwitz – 59 points
- 10.) Charlie Lind – 62 points

As you can see some names are missing from that group I mentioned who could have won the regatta. The final was race was challenging and exciting with three of that group of seven not blinking and making it into the top at the end.

As mentioned in the day 2 report below you can thank the Rush Creek Yacht Club enough for the incredible job they did this week. It is a model to look at, study, and I think follow for the future of sailboat racing.

Many thanks to all and to my crew 12 year old Andrew Vandling of Rush Creek Yacht Club. He is going to be a great sailor someday.

All the best and see you at the MCSA National Championship in Augusta.

E Hood

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