

2014 Train Wreck Report by David Moring:

The remainder of a cold front dancing of Central Florida brought heavy fog and warming temperatures for the 2014 MC Train wreck, but not producing much wind. A record 44 competitors sailed the Event and during the competitor briefing were treated to the resounding horn of a train - one of the 1st seen since the actual train derailment that gave the regatta its name (of course it was a repair crew as the tracks are being refurbished).

Friday's practice was nice if cold - 8-14 mph from the NE, but as the air warmed up, the fog descended and Saturday morning it was sometimes difficult to see the end of the dock! PRO's Devin Farley and Bob Armes made several forays out to ascertain any wind and with the fog lifting, so to did a 5-8 mph breeze and the postponement was dropped. Alas, within 45 minutes, the wind again died below minimums and an on-the-water postponement ensued. Sailors drifting back to the barn caught a shore-side breeze which they used to practice and within 30 minutes the breeze was again sufficient for a start.

This initial breeze was to prove the undoing for many - as the sequence progressed, "pancaking" out on that side wasn't enough warning for many. Others picked up on the right-side zephyr at the top of the course. At the start, the eventual top 10 stayed out right and center-right with a left-lift while those continuing to the left sailed into a pond of nothing.

LESC's Ron Baerwitz (2220) did an OUTSTANDING job of holding of determined attacks by John Porter (LBYC - 1746) and Rob Seidleman (2078) throughout the abbreviated 3 leg race to win both the race and the Regatta. In fact, on the final upwind, those three separated from the next 3 holding their own battle (Robert Newland,LESC,1977; Chris Andert,LESC,2299; David Moring,LESC,2188) and the rest of the Fleet in a right-lift to almost triple their lead at the finish! This became important as the time limit began ticking with Ron's finish - only 20 boats would get in under the wire with a 24 boat tie for 20th place. Back nearer the front, Trish End (2270) had a terrific last leg on the left side to finish 7th overall and Top Woman.

After boats were put to bed, beverages and debriefs began with a scheduled "Press Conference" for the top 5 finishers. Competitors spoke openly on tips on light-air sailing as well as some new ideas which really seemed to work! If you want the inside skinny - come to Midwinters! Dinner was a delicious affair prepared by Patti Moring and her awesome assistants. The weather continued to warm up through the evening and all looked forward to some warm racing in wind. However, it was not to be! Pro's and competitors alike anxiously awaited the fog-lift which came just before cutoff time and the dreaded abandonment flag went up. Trophies were presented as sailors soaked up the now 80 degree temps and broke down boats for travel or just sunned themselves because they're leaving the boats stored at LESG for Midwinters - what a setup! As the hometown team, LESG definitely had the most attendance and did well on the scoreboard with 4 of the top 6 slots and 6 of the top 10. A total of 15 other Fleets were represented and 9 states / countries! Special thanks go out to our Sponsor SONIC! The local franchise owner, Keven Briggs (2393), is not only the newest and most enthusiastic member of MC Fleet 4 at LESG but also provided much of our lunches - thanks Keven and remember to visit your local Sonic especially if it's in Central Florida! Finally, thanks to the Regatta Co-Chairs Geoff Moehl (2412) and Bob Cole (1372) - truly a great regatta and can't wait for next year!