

2015 MCSA Midwinter Championship

15 March 2015

Nine days of sailing in a row for whole bunch of MC Scow sailors this year at Lake Eustis. Fantastic weather, fantastic sailing and racing along with several other big activities for the class.

What all happened down at LESC you ask , well check this out!

First, Melges is investing in new ways to share the excitement of MC Sailing did a full two days of video drone work. We have after about 12 hours of sailing a massive amount of HD footage headed to post production and the edit room. Stay tuned as we have lots of plans for this incredible footage in all conditions. Many thanks to Nick Bowers who really served Team Melges (Andy Burdick, Jim Gluek, EHood and Ted Keller) very well. Really a great video artist and skilled drone pilot.

Second, Zenda University continued it long history and tradition of training both veteran and new sailors learn how to sail and race their MC Scows well. Geoff Moehl Sr sailed fantastic during this two day marathon to win 1st overall for the 9 races and 17 total starts. Also present were three members of our newest MC fleet from New Orleans – Fleet 101 from the famous Southern Yacht Club. Coaches were Andy Burdick, Jim Gluek , EHood and Ted Keller.

Third, a very large number of sailors were present at least 5 days in advance and practicing hard for the upcoming Midwinter Championship. Very exciting to see the energy of a bunch of sailors really wanting to up their game , do well and be prepared for one of our major events.

Fourth, The Midwinter Team Championship had 12 skippers and it was a ton of fun to watch. Eric and Nancy Protzman did a great job running a ton of races. Eric will be submitting soon an article about what all happened with this neat regatta held on Wednesday before the Midwinters.

Fifth, it was the final leg of the all new “Triple Crown” Championship . This includes the Southeastern Championship, the Train Wreck and the Midwinters. 20 sailors did all three. Rob Seidelmann won this event. Zenda U champ Geoff Moehl Sr. won the unique drawing out of the bucket (only one of the 2nd-20th sailors) for a full refund of the entry fee for all three events. Geoff quickly donated all the loot to the very healthy LESC junior sailing program.

Sixth, came the big dance itself with 61 boats . One light medium race, four medium to heavy air races and a handful of restarts. So now on to the racing.

The LESC RC Team

I have been to most of the MC Midwinter Championships and I have to tell you this team led by PRO Bob Armes and assisted by David Leather along with great teammates were obviously on a mission to give an A+ performance for their part of the regatta. They absolutely get an A+. Very good job keeping up the wind conditions and changes. Great starting lines, great courses. Race 6 was a challenge but they followed the SI's to the letter on continuing to try and start us but a persistent hard right shift proved to be too much to keep up with after 4 attempts and Race 6 was abandoned. Just to be clear for those who might be concerned about how the last race kept going after 12noon the official race cutoff . Part 7 of the Sailing Instructions and the last sentence of Part 7 reads and I quote “A race will be deemed to have started if the warning signal is within the deadline, regardless of any recall.” So all was good on what the team was trying to do. Wind and sailors did not work well in the big shift so the race was abandoned.

LESC Hospitality Team

Again as always this massive team that also included the Jr. Sailing Program members really delivered on great southern hospitality . From launching to meals and more. So many great volunteers. Thank you LESC. Way to go !!!!!

The Racing

Wow, you just could not have asked for much better racing. Temps in the high 80s most of the time. Great southerly winds with some races a click S.E., some South and some S.W. Lots of little changes that made for great racing. Water conditions were smooth race 1 but bumpy on one tack for races 2-5. Shifts were there but very fair at the end of the day. The shifts were showing on the water most of the time. Water was cool but refreshing with half the crowd wearing spray tops and half the crowd wearing sports shirts.

The Learnings

Earlier in the week I taught on what was my number 1 concern for the Midwinter Championship and it proved to be true. I say that taking into account my own slow start and talking with other skippers on what was tripping them up . I think six boats out of 61 had good focus. Clearly 1-2 were the best by a ways this weekend. Then the 3-4 boats were in a class by themselves too. The 5-6 boats were solid and had chances to win. After that there clearly were some big scores with the rest of 7-61. Folks that is a focus issue in my humble opinion. There were a lot of moving parts to this fleet that was packed full of talent. You had to do two things really well. One , absolutely go really fast for 3 minutes off each start and then keep the big picture in mind by really focusing on the dark water and shifts off in the distant to stay in the fast forward group. 1-6 boats rarely got into a bind . Big picture , long haul focus. Go fast, clear lane, sail the lifted tack. That is what I saw and what I heard from the forward group.

The Scores

Rob Seidelmann 15, Bill Draheim 18, Tommy Harken 26, John Porter 28, Zach Clayton 39, Ron Baerwitz 43, Kevin Neal 55, Dan Fink 75, David Helmick 76, EHood 81. Top Woman in 24th was Trisha Keenan End.

Race Winners were – Tommy Harken, Bill Draheim, Tommy Harken, Rob Seidelmann and Bill Draheim in that order.

Full results are up at www.mcscow.org and at the LESC website.

Upcoming News

So as I reported to the class with have some exciting new things coming from Melges with the new videos we will be producing to help promote the class in other areas of the country who do not yet know the MC (Google Ads and things like that).

Plus I reported we have 5 new boats available for the June National Championship. Anyone buying one of the five new boats we will have set up and waiting for you at the National Championship in Pewaukee (if you have a trailer obviously). So if you are thinking about it call Team Melges today. Other news would be lots of great tune-up regattas coming between now and the Nationals. Check out www.mcscow.org. Mark down your calendars for the two big Majors this summer and these two might just break 100+ boats each. The Nationals at Pewaukee in June and the Inlands at Lake Geneva mid-August.

Pictures

Lots of pictures from this weekend will be posted soon. Check out Mari Johnson's work on the MC Facebook page.

Closing Thoughts

Sailors we are off to a great start this season. Get your calendars sorted out and make sure you are going to at least one of the big dances this year. Pewaukee, Torch, Lake Geneva or Chattanooga.

See you on the course,
E Hood