

## 2017 Cow Town Classic

The first weekend in May can mean only one thing. Well, some horses run around a track for about two minutes. But to MC sailors it means it's time for the Cow Town Classic. The 2017 edition of the Cow Town Classic, took place at Hoover Sailing Club in Westerville, OH on May 6th and 7th. Hoover is a reservoir on the northeast corner of Columbus, OH. The sailing club is active with multiple one design fleets, and MC Fleet 54.

The weather forecasters again predicted dingy conditions for the weekend with rain, cold temps, and high winds. There were definitely some turned away as it looked mid-week like it would be hard to get any racing in at all. But late in the game, the forecast changed to dry and breezy but sailable conditions both days. Those who were not to be dissuaded made it to Hoover from Indianapolis and even Wisconsin, and a fleet of 18 sailors vied for the Cow Town title.

Saturday saw mostly sunny skies with NW winds from 10-20. We hear that range a lot, but the fleet saw every bit of that range as the lulls were down to 10 or even a bit less and the puffs were in the high teens and touching 20. This meant that it was a shifting gears day, depowering the boat and hiking through the puffs and then powering the boat back up for the lulls. The NW wind was quite shifty as well as the N and W winds fought to edge each other out. Pressure would shift from left to right and back again, pulsing in increments. With the puffs packing some punch, there were definitely some abrupt auto tacks as well. With the shifts coming quickly, it was important to work the middle with a 'climb the ladder' mentality. Getting too far to one side often meant missing a shift, ending up trying to get back to the middle out of phase. Staying conservative and patient was the key, finding the pressure on one side and maximizing it, while almost immediately looking to the other side of the course for signs that the switch was coming.

The Race Committee, led by PRO Steve Lavender, did a great job managing the shifty conditions and setting square courses and starting lines. 4 races were sailed on Day 1, each one with 7 legs. This made for lots of mark roundings, plenty of tight quarters racing and opportunities to pass a bunch of boats all at once. Or lose a bunch.

The highlight of this regatta is the prime rib dinner Saturday night. The Hoover fleet delivered again and the sailors enjoyed great food, drink and comradery, sharing stories of the day.

Race winners day 1:

Matt/Stu Fisher Hoover  
Ted/Ben Keller Torch / Hoover  
Ted/Ben Keller Torch / Hoover  
Dan Fink Little Muskego, WI

Sunday arrived with plenty of sunshine, a little more moderate breeze and cold temps in the 40's. NW winds from 10-16 rotated West and dropped to 8-10 through the day. The fleet bundled up and headed out for the final two heats. The shifts were longer in duration than the day before, which made it possible to work a side of the course more successfully and use the lengthier improved angle to get up the racecourse. Richard Blake with daughter Sarah was fast out of the gate and in the front group along with Hoover's Steve Callison, Mark White, and Clark Wade. Andy McDonald from Indianapolis broke through the pack and took the race win. Matt Fisher came out on top of an America's Cup style tactical battle (pre-foil) to win the last race of the regatta. Mega Master Mike Keenan was in the middle of the action all weekend long and sailed his best race of the regatta finishing a strong 5th place.

Thanks to Steve Lavender and his Race Committee team, to fleet captain Jim Bingham, and all the Hoover volunteers for making this great event happen.

Final result after 6 races:

- 1) Ted / Ben Keller Torch/Hoover
- 2) Matt / Stu Fisher Hoover
- 3) Andy McDonald Indianapolis
- 4) Richard / Sarah Blake Hoover
- 5) Dan Fink Little Muskego, WI
- 6) Clark Wade Hoover

Full results at [mccow.org](http://mccow.org)

Top Grand Master: Steve Callison

Top Mega Master: Mike Keenan

With an active and energized local fleet and a great group of visiting sailors making the trip, Hoover Sailing Club really puts on a not-to-be-missed regatta. Mark your calendars for the first weekend of May 2018 for the Cowtown Classic. Those finishing in the top 5, or top of their age division, have earned a half or full point for their 2017 Blue Chip qualification.