

2019 Cowtown Classic
Hoover Sailing Club
May 4-5

The first weekend in May means its time for the annual Cowtown Classic regatta hosted by Hoover Sailing Club. The club is located on Hoover Reservoir on the northeast corner of Columbus, OH. The sailing club is active with multiple one design fleets, and MC Fleet 54.

Sailors from six different states made the trip to Hoover. Long distance awards go to Dan Fink (WI) and Kurt Stadele (GA). Visitors and the active fleet of Hoover MC sailors totaled 30 boats to contend for the Cowtown title. The area has seen fleet growth in nearby Atwood OH, and Cave Run KY, along with some resurgence in Cowan Lake OH, combined to bring some new faces to the fleet. Hoover leader Mark White reached out to these groups and encouraged them to give the Cowtown a try as a fun, and close by, spring regatta.

The weekend had breeze in the forecast along with the threat of rainshowers at times. Saturday saw cool temps in the 50's and N to NE winds from 8-12 mph. The fleet put on an extra layer and headed out for the first racing of the season.

The Race Committee was led by PRO Steve Lavender and his team from the Hoover Thistle fleet. Races were targeted to be 40 to 45 minutes in length and the RC team did a great job of adding a lap or reducing a lap to hit that target as well as adjusting the course for any big wind shifts.

The lake at Hoover runs north and south, and wind from either of these directions is a plus, allowing for longer legs and more stable breeze. Though the shifts were there, with a little west influence and then a little east influence, it was the prototype of oscillating wind, where one could move up through the fleet and pass boats by playing the shifts and staying in phase.

Just before Race 1, the breeze cranked up to be the windiest of the regatta, probably hitting 15 or 16 in the gusts, and the fleet got a work out right out of the gate. It moderated some for raced 2, which allowed for a bit more direction swing in the windshifts. A big shift to the East just after the start shot Hoover ace Steve Callison out to a big lead he would take wire to wire.

Then for Race 3, in the afternoon, the rain started and the breeze decreased to low side light air as the fleet crawled around the race track. At least being under the boom kept you out of the rain, until it was time to tack, and the flop of the sail sent a dousing of water down the skipper's way.

After the end of Race 3, the RC team wisely send the fleet in to warm up, get dry and sample some craft beer.

Race winners Day 1 were Ted Keller of Hoover/Torch (2) and Steve Callison of Hoover.

Saturday Night the regatta tradition is Grill Your Own Steak Night. The group gathered around the grill to cook, share some laughs and comederie, and then inside to have some drinks, dine, enjoy the evening together.

Sunday was projected to be sunny and warmer and that just didn't quite materialize. It was cloudy and still in the 50's but no rain, and once again, really nice breeze out of the N, NE. The fleet assembled for the last two races of the series. Just before race time, the wind again kicked up, but not quite as much as Saturday. Winds topped out at the 12 or 13 mph range. A bit more manageable but this was day 2 on some already some muscles that had taken the winter off.

The starts were really competitive as the fleet found their early season form, and it was a good battle for the pin end of the starting line, followed by tight racing up the track. The west wind was a little more influential on day 2 and the left side of the race course proved the place to be. The other key was shifting gears from 8 mph lulls to 12 or 13 mph puffs.

Race winners Day 2 were Ted Keller and Andy McDonald of Indianapolis Sailing Club.

Final results after 5 races:

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| 1) Ted Keller | Hoover / Torch |
| 2) Andy McDonald | Indianapolis |
| 3) Kurt Stadele | Lake Lanier, GA |
| 4) Steve Callison | Hoover |
| 5) Dan Fink | Little Muskego, WI |

Top Grand Master: Mark White

Top Mega Master: Mike Keenan

Big thanks to Steve Lavender and his RC team and all the Hoover volunteers for making this a great regatta.

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 event. Mark your calendars for the first weekend of May 2020 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 2019 Blue Chip qualification.

Full results can be found at mcscow.org