



WHITE LAKE YACHT CLUB • 2019

90th Annual Western Michigan Yachting Association (WMYA) Championships

White Lake Yacht Club

By Eric Hood

Always one those regattas that you can consistently look forward to as a summer highlight. The 90th version of the WMYA Championship Regatta did not disappoint the 133 teams who sailed this year!

Spectacular weather all week long. Due to the close proximity to Lake Michigan, thermal produced winds caused light to medium air as a huge high pressure system parked on us the whole week. Temps in the 70s and a few low 80s the last two days of this four day and multi-class regatta. E Scow, C Scow, MC Scow, Laser, Butterfly and Optimist are the classes of the WMYA.

For many in the scow world outside of the WMYA, you would recognize the name Don Nelson from the scow boat building world. Don is the current Commodore of WLYC and he along with so many rock solid friends and sailors went over the top for us this week. Great social events at one of the coolest clubs you can ever go to with its rich history dating back to 1903. The pool, the food, drinks, the lake, friends and the great sailing made it all a truly memorable week. Many thanks to the Nelsons, the Rillemas, the Novaks, and a very large volunteer crew they had assembled in their neon green volunteer shirts. Hospitality is king and WLYC wins the prize in this category. So many special details marked the days and evenings.

The sailing was so well run considering the challenging breezes (mostly velocity). Directions were good, pretty easy to read and pretty quick to line folks up in all the classes shortly after starts.

Before we get into the sailing we have to say a huge thank you to all the families who come and support the sailors. The support teams, friends outnumber the sailors. We could not sail without your help and support !!! Thank you !!!

LESSONS LEARNED (through all the classes)

Weather was WSW on day 1 and 3, then WNW of day 2 regardless the morning or afternoon starts for all the classes. WSW race to the south shore and WNW race to the north shore. So the lesson learned and I for one learned it painfully clear three times. Stick to your plan of getting to that right shore somewhere in the top 10 first beat. If you took more than two clearing tacks in first 2-3 minutes you were quickly in the middle of the pack.

With the lighter winds two things happened quickly. The rich got richer quick. There was always a forward group in the MCs of about 10, the Cs of about 3 and E's 1 or 2 got away quickly most races. The winds were so consistent on the direction part that any attempt to try something else would always fail (I know I gave it a shot 3 times when I was in mid-pack). So a key learning for this event was to start at the closest end to the thermal shore where pressure was always up. The PRO and his crew gave us pretty square lines but one critical move regardless of being square was being closer to the thermal shore. Downwind lesson was 101 basics of sailing, stay in clear air and dark water. The winds on White Lake makes it to the water from the high tree line quite quick sometimes so you had to pay attention.

THE RACING

Full results are on the excellent WMYA.ORG website with the YACHTSCORING race result system embedded. Go check it out.

Who has been hot!

MC Scows - Casey Christensen from Torch Lake is clearly one step ahead on consistency this week and through 5 races was the only sailor in the class to have all top 10 finishes.

E Scows – The top five have a real shoot out going on. After 5 races Robby Wilkins is leading four others in close range to Brett Hatton, Rob Terry, Tom Munroe and Casey Christensen. If we get to a sixth race today on Sunday and the throw-out kicks in, race results will get interesting.

C Scows – Cam McNeil will win the C Scow class even if we get to six races and a throw-out kicks in.

Our next generation of scow sailors who've been knocking it out of the park!

Butterfly Open – Gage Stasko currently is leading but very close are Jack Hubbard, Caroline Henry and Connor Briegel

Butterfly Junior – The top 6 or 7 could flip around if we get to a 6th race and a drop. Currently Bryson Hough leads Camden Seymour, Buzz Ortel, Jenna Wynsma, Isabella Foos, Jackson MacNaughton, Ella Towner and Charlie Molesta. Super tight in this fun group of young guns.

Laser Radial – The top three are super close. After 5 races Noah Wolters has the lead over very close Zoe Czadzeck and Frank Frisinger.

Laser Standard – The top 6 even 7 boats are close. Currently Braden Johnson is tied with Jack Rillema Jr. The tiebreaker goes to Braden with his race win. However if we get to six races 5 or 6 others come into play quickly. Phoebe Whitbeck, Murphy Wynsma, KC McGovern, Justin Lovell, Sam Ralston and Dillon McCormick are all still possible players for the win.

Optimist Dinghy – Nyle Eggert currently is leading Charlie Molesta after five races. With a sixth race it could be either skipper for the win.

So it is Sunday morning as I write. Winds are a sketchy NW at 2mph so they say. My view of Lake Michigan just a couple of blocks from White Lake is no wind at all. Cs, Es, Optimist scheduled at 10am and it is looking sketchy for them. I think the western thermal may be a NW thermal kick in for the MCs, Lasers and Butterfly at 12:30pm.

FINAL RACE RESULTS - check out www.wmya.org right away to see all the regatta champions, race winners, and your favorite sailors.

Huge kudos and thanks to PRO Steve Schiller and his loyal and dedicated crew of multi-course race teams. A massive year-long effort of preparation as their prep work really paid off this week giving us superb racing. Of course we must mention that yes we are incredibly fortunate

to have Happy Fox's fine crew on the Beluga and Midge Verplank's fine team on the Recall here with all their wisdom and expertise serving our race teams.

SOME BIG UPCOMING REGATTAS -

The big ILYA Championships, the MC Nationals and so much more are still to come these next few weeks as we turn the corner into August. Stay tuned to www.wmya.org , www.ILYA.org, www.melges.com, www.mcscow.org for more stories and results.

For Regatta photographs, go to www.glasswaterphotography.com. Much appreciation to Teasley Ruback for capturing the memories. Email teasley@glasswaterphotography.com

Also Coral Reef Sailing Gear has some fantastic Regatta swag for the 90th WMYA Championship Regatta. Check it out at www.coralreefsailing.com