

2013 MCSA National Championship

by Eric Hood

Day One

Big Northwest winds here in northern Iowa at Clear Lake for day 1 of this 3 day National Championship for 70 teams from across the U.S.. Weather reports have been spot on the last three days as teams prepped, practiced and then started racing today with two barn burners out of the northwest. 15-20 mph average today for both races and really pretty steady wind directions that danced around 290-300 degrees for direction most of the day. Great courses and starting lines by Chip Mann along with his big Clear Lake crew and some other RC help coming in from Wisconsin (Nice Job Chip and Team!).

The Venue

Clear Lake, Iowa. Just "Google Maps" this awesome lake . A lot of folks would just be thinking cornfields but this lake is one of the best sailing lakes in the U.S.. Featuring flat landscapes in all directions from this big round lake. Third, and now 4th generation scow sailors at this club, so they know how to host a great National Championship. In fact, this is our 3rd time here for the MCSA Championship since 2000 because we all know the sailing here is at its best.

What Was Fast

Only the big skippers 220 plus went solo today. 80% of this 70 boat championship fleet had crews on today. Fast today included tight side stays, lots of boom vang and lots of Cunningham upwind but you had to be careful on the hard tack which was the long starboard tacks where the bows faced the waves a little more. So trick was to ease up some on starboard and hike hard when your boat crossed big waves. Downwind we had extremely fast runs on these 1.1 mile legs for the W5 courses. If you did not sail a little by the lee and really heel the boat to windward then dive down in the big waves you quickly became a Submarine captain.

Fast also included escaping off the starting line. I know 5 of the top ten teams today had some pretty tough start positions but fighting first three minutes to simply get a real clear lane got you back into the game pretty quick. Constant angle of heel was probably the biggest single positive move out there today but you had to be sharp watching the breeze all the time. Direction did not change but velocity did go up and down quite a bit which meant vang eased, vang on constantly to maintain both point and angle of heel. What was slow today? - poor mark roundings both at the top and at the bottom. Lots of folks were having otherwise good races but just could not get around cleanly on both the top and bottom marks.

The Results

After 2 Races

- 1st - Mark Tesar (Clear Lake,Iowa) 1-3 =4
- 2nd - Stu Oltrogge (Clear Lake, Iowa) 4-2 = 6
- 3rd - Andy Burdick (Lake Geneva, WI) 3-4 =7
- 4th - Kenny Wolfe (Rush Creek YC, TX) 8-1 = 9
- 5th - E Hood (Lake Eustis,FL/Lake Geneva,WI) 7-6 =13
- 6th - Mark "The Doctor" Christensen (Minnetonka,MN) 2-15=17
- 7th - Matt Fisher (Columbus, OH) 14-8= 22
- 8th - Larry Jensen (Lake Okoboji, Iowa) 13-13=26
- 9th - Eric Protzman (Clear Lake , Iowa) 19-9=28
- 10th - Robert Cole (Lake Keuka, NY) 16-14=30

Wild Weather Coming & What To Expect The Next Two Days:

Crazy start time tomorrow as 25-35 mph winds predicted by mid-morning tomorrow. We will start at 8am tomorrow hoping to get at least one in tomorrow before it starts ripping in the 35 mph range. We are obviously hoping to get two or three on Saturday which all weather suggests we will get for the final day.

Social

Big night tonight as we all go to the legendary Surf Ballroom where Buddy Holly, Rich Valens and some other band members played their last gig before their tragic plane crash just after that gig at the Surf Ballroom. Then tomorrow night at what some call the oldest Condo Association in America the "Outing Club" with the Protzmans and many more hosting that very cool gathering on the east shore. Pictures to come soon for sailing and all the social.

Tough but great sailing for the National Championship. Lots of opportunities out there for all to move around on the scoreboard.

All the best,

E Hood

MC 2592

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Day 2 – Race 3

Only one race today. Chip Mann the PRO for the event called it good by having a rare 8am actual race start time today. Yesterday's big winds continued through the night and then started ripping mid-way through the first race. By the time we ended, racing was called off for we think the rest of the day. A lot of teams swimming today and some older boats breaking a few things gave us a finish of only 47 boats out of 70. Exciting windward legs and wild downwind runs that were a thrill if you did not put it all in the drink with a steering error or soft vang. Possible it could all lighten enough for one late race later today but that may just be wishful thinking. The good news is we will have time to get two good races in tomorrow before the noon cutoff time now that we have three races on the books.

The Conditions

295 degrees was our primary wind direction throughout the race. Some big teasers on the right edge and left edges of the course going upwind though as the wind started increasing throughout the race. For the W5 course we started in probably 15mph of breeze and by the first run she was building up to probably 17-18 and then leg 3 we were seeing some big shots now and then above 20 mph. Leg 4 the final run we had some really wild rides and also had some championship swimming with quite a few boats rolling it over in the big breeze. The race was a great race though with just hard and tough conditions. Direction, courses, starting lines were great. Just spoke with Chip Mann and he said the teams brought right up to the line but nobody over on race 3 at the start.

What Was Fast

For sure what was fast was great boat handling first. Without the ability to tack well, come out of those tacks well you quickly found yourself getting moved back in the fleet. The ability to round the marks in the big crowds, waves and big shots of breeze was extremely important today. Maintaining a constant level angle of heel upwind through good steering along with working the controls plus both skipper/crew anticipating the next big shot was key too. Downwind it was all about not being a submarine captain in the big waves. By the lee, vang on pretty hard so your boom tip was not too much above 90 degrees was fastest. The teams that struggled the most were ones sailing deep but not by the lee. Lots of Cunningham, really tight shrouds and max vang in the big shots was really important today at the same time easing those controls in the few rare lulls that came along.

The Results After 3

We had some movement in the top group today, some tightening at the top. Three boats looking at a shot at the title with maybe 4th and 5th peeking in if we get two races in tomorrow.

1st – Kenny Wolfe (by tie breaker) (Dallas, Tx) - 8-1-1= 10

2nd – Mark Tesar (Clear Lake, IA) 1-3-6= 10

3rd – Andy Burdick (Lake Geneva, WI) 3-4-5 = 12

4th – E Hood (Lake Eustis/Lake Geneva) 7-6-13 = 26

5th – Matt Fisher (Columbus, OH) 14-8-10 = 32

6th – Mike Risewick (Okoboji, IA) 17-11-7 = 35

7th – Stu Oltrogge (Clear Lake, IA) 4-2-32 = 38

8th – Noel Neuman (Minneapolis, MN) 25-5-9 = 39

9th – Eric Protzman (Clear Lake , IA) 19-9-11 = 39

What To Expect For Final Day 3 And Last Two Races

Chip Mann our PRO absolutely plans and expects to get two good races in tomorrow with our 15-17 mph winds forecasted. We have one or two weather groups that have been spot on every hour during this event. Intellicast gets an A+ as they have been the closest to right.

So it will be exciting for sure because we will not get to 7 races by the noon cutoff time which means no drop race with the way our SI s are written. So no mistakes at the top tomorrow or for that matter anywhere in the group as every boat counts all races. It will be very exciting to see who wins this tough one. Lots of sailing time left.

Other News

During this lay time today we will have our National meeting which we cancelled last night so folks could enjoy the fantastic dinner, tours and time at the famous SURF Ballroom. Tonight we are the Outing Club for our final party which should be great. Right now lots of repairs and lots of rest for some tired teams. The venue, the lake, the big breeze are fantastic for this years National Championship. Tons of pictures coming very soon that we will post in several areas once we get them .

More soon.

E Hood

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Kenny Wolfe and Virginia Hannan Win Big At 2013 MC Nationals

Our third and final day of the 2013 MC National Championship certainly was exciting for at least several restarts and the first beat. Then shortly into the final race four MC Scow newcomers Kenny Wolfe and Virginia Hannan decided it was time to put their stamp on this championship by just walking away from the fleet the rest of the race. A convincing win left no questions with anyone as to who our new National Champions were.

Lots of drama for sure this race as local Clear Lake ace Mark Tesar who was tied for first in this event going into the last race was busted by the line cops and never went back to restart. Mark sailed so well, had a radio but did not hear what the rest of us heard. So great job to Mark on those other three great races. Andy and Mya Burdick were rock solid throughout the event and only two points out of first going into the final race. Andy and Mya had a great final race finishing 5th for a solid runner-up 2nd place at this years championship. Several others got busted by the line cops in the top ten with the Z Flag start (20% penalty plus restarting) and we had one two swimmers in the top ten also . I will be posting an interview with our new champions shortly on www.melges.com, www.onedesign.com and of course our MC Facebook page (please friend) and some other areas like www.ilya.org So I will break few things down below.

The Conditions

For day 3 we still had big wind but a significant change in direction. After a one hour delay for heavy cold rain the fleet took off for what would be our final race. The practice day, days one and two we consistently had big winds out of 295 degrees that were really steady. For this final race our wind direction was basically due north at 0 degrees, steady at the bottom of the course but very shifty 10-20 degrees in upper half of course. Generally favoring right hand shifts when the breeze was up in velocity. Flatter water though which was nice. Starting line was set good for the top of the course but we had these big right handed blasts coming through and it was like 40 boats thought they would all start at the weather end so we had some restarts then came the Z Flag but no Black Flag which was nice for a National Championship. Finally after a few starts the race was on and the W5 course with the 1 mile legs was really good. Great job to Chip Mann, Bill Best, Charlie MacNider and John Hanson along with the many, many folks including helping them.

The Learnings and What Was Fast Today

This could be a one sentence deal here. Learnings and what was fast were Kenny and Virginia end of story :-) !!!!!!! Seriously though Kenny is going to answer for all of us some of his secrets in my interview with him coming in a couple of days. I am excited to hear from Kenny because I know it will apply to all MC sailors including 1st through 70th at our National Championship held this past week. One thing I have learned since meeting Kenny at first Zenda U and then watching him beat us up at the Midwinters is that he "gives back to anyone who needs help or asks". I spotted it on day one with Kenny and our class is better off big-time for having him on our team. So learnings for all from the champ coming soon. Much of what I shared on day one and two reports still applied too today with a few changes. The big difference today that the velocity up / down was much more dramatic and the shifts were much bigger than our two previous race days. So I think you had to work the mainsheet a lot more today than previous days and if your head was not out of the boat looking upwind you would quickly get caught off-guard and could actually capsize or just be rocked up hard in a nano-second going slow. So what was similar ONCE AGAIN – boat handling was everything. Remember without good or great boat handling you can never get to strategy and tactics.

The Results

Here we go with the top ten. Full results will be posted at www.mcscow.org

2013 MC National Championship – Final Results Top 10 of 67 boats (4 races, big wind)

1st Kenny Wolfe – Rush Creek YC– Dallas Tx –11pts

2nd Andy Burdick- Lake Geneva YC – Fontana, WI -21 pts

3rd Mike Risewick- Okoboji YC, Okoboji , IA -37 pts

4th Eric Hood – Lake Eustis/Lake Geneva -41 pts

5th Eric Protzman – Clear Lake YC , IA - 43pts

6th Noel Neuman – Upper Minnetonka, Minneapolis, MN – 58 pts

7th Matt Fisher – Columbus, OH –58pts

8th Byron Beasley – Clear Lake YC, IA – 63 pts

9th Bob Cole- Keuka YC , Keuka, NY – 67 pts

10th Larry Jensen – Okoboji YC, Okoboji, IA – 69 pts

Top Youth – Emily Oltrogge

Top Woman – Kelli Farrar

Top Master – E Hood

Top Grand Master – Byron Beasley

Top Mega Master – Dr. Jack Kern

Final Thoughts

As I mentioned at the awards yesterday and at the Surf Ballroom party on Thursday night I am excited about our future with the MC Class. It has been a very long time since I have seen so many young sailors both skippering and crewing at our most important regatta of the year. I really feel our future is bright but we have to keep mentoring young sailors and we have to keep coaching the core group of sailors especially the middle to back portions of our fleets both at the club level and our major regatta levels. Clear Lake and their sailing coach for the Junior Yacht Club did a great job of having their whole group involved. A lot of skippers showed up without crews which is pretty risky for a National Championship. I think Clear Lake filled the gaps for everyone but maybe our 10 or so big skippers who are 230 plus. It really was refreshing. So if you want to make a difference build into a young or new sailor today – it is the whole game for our future !!! Buy new boats, mentor new MC Class prospects with the older boats so they can try it out. Contact Dr. Jack Kern down at Rush Creek who has really mastered a mentoring program for great some of his great ideas on growing the class.

Clear Lake Yacht Club what can I say. They won the National Championship too. Hospitality off the charts, parties at the Surf Ballroom and the Outing Club were some of the best I have ever attended. Margret Osmundson, her co-chairs and very large team really get a HUGE A+++ for all they did this past week.

Clear Lake is one of our best lakes in the U.S. for one-design and scow racing much like Rush Creek in Dallas and a few other big round lakes. Do not ever pass a chance up to sail there. They are having the class MCSA sanctioned TEAM Championship the first week after Labor Day . That regatta is quickly gaining strength as more sailors try the fun format out that Team Clear Lake has worked on now for three years. Check that out and contact Eric Protzman there if you want to have a blast at Clear Lake.

Again, to Kenny Wolfe and Virginia Hannan WAY TO GO for winning in style the 2013 MC National Championship !!!!!

All the best,

E Hood

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