

## 2013 Nor' Easterns Regatta

Reported by Chris Hawk

The Nor'Easterns at beautiful Keuka Lake, NY, drew 28 boats this year making it one of the top attended regattas of the year, a true testament to the growth of the class in the Northeast. Nearby Cuba Lake brought 4 boats, Chautauqua Lake brought 2 MC-Scows. New attendees also came from Cowan, Philadelphia, and Sarasota/Buffalo and New Jersey. Returning sailors from Quebec, Connecticut, Saratoga, Columbus, and elsewhere rounded out the fleet.

Any sailor coming to Keuka knows to expect every condition. This year was no exception. The forecast stayed true Saturday with only a light North coming up in the afternoon. PRO Ron Beyer started race 1 up in the West branch in a NNW. The pin favored start became a heavily boat favored start with 15 seconds to go. Will Hendershot led at mark 1, making it on one tack. Then, as Keuka can do, he found himself under the pack beating in a SE back to the leeward mark. Bob Wynkoop picked the shifts right to get to the "top" mark with a strong 200 yard lead only to see that also fade with the pack closing down on a building breeze from behind. On the last leg the fight for the win came down to the last few tacks. Chris Hawk did a double tack to break cover and go left. Bob Wynkoop continued to cover Stuart Strother to the right. And Bob Cole snuck in from the far left. In the end the last puff of the day was from the left letting Hawk take the win followed by Strother, Cole, and Wynkoop. The wind completely died leaving the fleet 2 miles away from home, and some competitors not able to finish in the time limit.

Regatta Chair Steve Bender (field promoted on Saturday) put on a great dinner and event. Two free kegs went dry. But the night was cut short. Sunday brought an early start to the day, an 8:30 start to take advantage of the Keuka thermal. In a beautiful 8-10 South that built to 15, we got in three solid races. In race 2 the fleet immediately split after the mid leg line start coming together at the top mark with the left pack with Eric Hall and Stuart Strother slightly ahead of the right pack with Chris Hawk and Bob Cole. All day the challenge was to find which side gave you that slight boat length advantage. By the end of leg 3 the West had paid off with Hawk, Andre Gagnon, Mark Grinder catching up to Hall. In the end Hawk took the win followed by Gagnon, Grinder, Hall, and Cole.

Race 3 was more of the same great sailing conditions. At the first mark the same names rounded close together with the addition of Chris Craig, Sean Treacy, William Hudson, Joe Meade, Matt Newman and others. It was tight. But I think this is when Mr. Wynkoop conveniently moved the mark out of the way for the pack behind him. Downwind the tantalizing stronger air on the edges made the fleet spread out over the entire width of the course. When they came together at the bottom the order at the top was similar (minus Wynkoop) with no one decision prevailing. On the long windward Hawk split left, Craig right and each nailed a corner only to come back together in exactly the same position the same boat length apart. In a building wind downwind Hawk was able to break the overlap by the bottom mark and round in the lead going on to take the win. Hudson caught Craig at the line for second, followed by Hall and Treacy.

Race 4, the third and last back-to-back of the day, the wind peaked in the 15-18 range settling in around 12-15 for the start. With three wins, Hawk had a strong regatta lead. The battle was between Richard Blake, Chris Craig, and Bob Cole for second. At the first mark Eric Hall yet

again was leading with Wynkoop, Schneider, Craig, and Cole close at hand. The entire race was close fought with Eric Hall changing the lead with Bob Wynkoop. In the end Eric took the gun, Wynkoop second, hard charging Hawk in third just beating Mark Schneider for fourth. Craig beat Cole to take fifth and pick up one point on him, but it was not enough to take overall second away from [Cole](#).

In the end Hawk won the regatta by 15 points. Someone called it an old fashioned smack down. In reality it was a collection of good luck, wide open passing lanes, and persistence. Commodore Cole took second over Secretary Craig, followed by Eric Hall and Richard Blake to round out the top five. But the story of the regatta was Eric Hall borrowing a boat rather than using his "antique," and making his mark at the front of the fleet in all three Sunday races. No fluke. Eric good-naturedly submitted to a toss in the pristine waters of Lake Keuka to help him celebrate his first regatta race win. Not just Eric, but newcomers Mark Grinder, Mark Schneider, and perennials Andre Gagnon, Matt Newman, Joe Meade and others poked into the lead boats and had good races. We will see more of them in the future.