

Report by Eric Hood

2013 Orlando Webb MC Regatta Lake Lotawana, MO

Crazy Midwest weather greeted 35 MC teams this first week of June here in the Kansas City area. Fortunately for this region it was all rain and no tornados like we have seen south of here in the Oklahoma City region this spring. Little Lake Lotawana actually rose a couple of feet but quickly got back to normal because of a good spillway system. Like many of my reports I will break things down into a couple of categories and try to paint a picture of what we did this weekend at one of the last good size events before the National Championship. I did count about 15 of these regatta travellers who are going to the National Championship in three weeks at Clear Lake, Iowa so that was nice.

The Conditions

Crazy Ivan was lurking about and most of you know what I mean when I talk about Crazy Ivans (90 degree turns every 30 minutes). Actually it was not too bad and we only saw oscillating shifts of 30-40 degrees in the mostly big wind races on the first day. On Saturday we had four races (actually started two others and sailed almost entire beats before the class got called back to restart because of confusion around the General Recalls that nobody could see or hear in the crazy conditions). The winds varied from West to NNW with wind speeds ranging from 10-20 mostly mid-teens but some big shots for sure. Day two for races five and six we had 5- 12 mph out of the north with much more stable conditions with regards to the shifts.

The Lake

Just google Lake Lotawana, MO. and you will see the T-Shaped lake. Saturday we raced all four races in the top of the T which runs east and west. High tree lines, narrow lake, dead flat water and Crazy Ivans lurking about all the time with this direction. For Sunday we raced north to south with starts in the middle of the long north/south leg and then up to the top of the lake. Much better conditions for sure on Sunday with this direction matching up better to the lake shape.

The Learnings

Wow, a lot to share here. Almost like we had two regattas here. The big wind with four races on Saturday and then two nice medium air races on Sunday from a different direction sailing in a different part of the lake
I think the number one learning was for Saturday's four races was boat handling but more importantly an added twist. The twist was in the big shots not to ease your main sheet too much if any at all. I saw a lot of teams easing mainsheet in the big shots for the long starboard tacks we were on. Easing instead of anticipating and focusing on steering into the approaching velocity lifts which were showing on the water. So jokingly I will say some folks were "reaching through life or reaching around the course". There can be ease for sure but just not that much. I rarely

eased at all and really focused on steering with constant angle of heel. That won the day with the top ten boats. Downwind on Sunday some huge gains made by not getting tucked under the high tree lines of the windward shore. Almost every run, and there were 8 runs, were won by folks working the low side of the course of these W5 courses that we had. So constant angle of heel, the ability to tack quickly and get the boat on the correct angle of heel immediately with vang coming on quickly then board up. Downwind, simple stay in the dark water. For Sunday it was a different deal. It was a combination of boat speed, smooth tacking the second that first and second shift came after the start. The lines were actually very even all the way across for both Sunday races so being on the line with speed was a big deal but an even bigger deal was simply tacking the second those first two shifts came through. Probably 10 tacks on the first beat of both race five and six. Clear air was huge. Gosh I got trapped under one boat for 30 seconds at the beginning of race six and it was ten boats just like that. So quick escape, not far to get clear and pressure. Tacking and gybing in the light -medium breeze it was critical to do that in pressure and not lulls. I saw a lot of teams tack in light air instead of an up pressure moment and it really hurt them. Downwind it was all about getting to the middle of this narrow lake and just working the middle back and forth slightly as the breeze came straight down the pike.

Who Was Fast

Top 15 boats all had their moments for sure but first and second place overall finishers were poked out most of the time with third and fourth place overall finishers sailing nearby and sailing tight with each other all the time. At the end of Saturday and four races we saw local MC ace Scott Tillema leading E Hood by 1 point with Mark Marling from Lotawana five points back of E Hood and tied with Danny Ziegler of Windycrest ,OK.. Race winners on day one included Danny Ziegler who led bell to bell on race one. Scott Tillema turned it on and won two back to back closely contested races and then Mark Marling won race four. Sunday saw E Hood win both races with Scott Tillema finishing second for both races and a great dogfight between Marling and Ziegler.

The Results

1st – E Hood LESC, FL 2-3-3-(10)-1-1 = 10

2nd – Scott Tillema MYC,MO (10)-1-1-5-2-2 = 11

3rd – Mark Marling Topeka,KS 7-(13)-2-1-7-5 = 22

4th – Danny Ziegler Windycrest,OK 1-4-9-9-5-(DNF)= 28

5th – Craig Eaton – LESC ,FL 11-5-10-4-(14)= 37

In order from 6th - John Sepanski 40, Jeff Harriman 43, Glenn Fouke 43, Bob Cantrell 47, George Silvey 52, Scott Griffiths 52, Chris Brooks 53, Gerry Dorsey 56, Jeff Simon 65 and 15th Woody Woodruff 71. For all 35 boats and complete race results please visit www.mcscow.org

Category and Division Winners

Top – Youth and also Top Woman Nikki Webber

Top Master – E Hood

Top Grand Master – Mark Marling

Top Mega Master – Jim Stinson

Sharpest new boat in the fleet – The Robert Harris Family MC 2582 (and she is quick too)

The National Championship at Clear Lake, Iowa (last week of June- 3&1/2 weeks)

Pre-registrations are hovering right around 50 right now. We really need another 50 to sign up today. It will really help the organizers prepare for your arrival plus sailing with 100+ at this lake like we had in 2000 is an absolute blast. The schedule is easy with Thursday-Saturday sailing and the location is very easy to get to with teams ready to help you setup and launch if you are coming in at the last second. Do all you can to clear your schedule today for the most important MC regatta of the year. You have all that talent in the world coming with past National Champs Andy Burdick and Cam McNeil who represent 12 National Championships between them alone. Then you have the likes of newcomer Kenny Wolf from Rush Creek in Texas plus many other great talents like Bill Colburn and the list goes on.

New Boats At Lotawana and National Championship

It was great to see one of Lake Lotawana's very dedicated MC sailors Robert Harris who sails the oldest MC here hull 818 get a brand new boat 2582. I know it was a little tough on Robert because he had to watch me sail his boat in the big breeze this weekend before taking delivery. Next week will be 10 times easier Robert with your new ride – Congratulations !!!! We still have one or two boats available for the Nationals but you should call Andy today at Melges right now if you want to secure one to prime your game to the max for the National Championship.

Final Thoughts

Missouri Yacht Club is one of the clubs you would just like to clone. Just fantastic hospitality. Off the charts great food. Long standing traditions of lots of sailing and lots of fun. Congratulations to Gordon Hanebutt his teams including Paula Martin and the Ladies who gave us some great racing this week. Many thanks to Scott Tillema who not only sailed one of the best regattas I have ever seen him sail but also worked the crowd to make sure everyone was happy and taken care of. He also did all of our scoring. Great job Team Lotawana !!!

Photos – Great photos by Gordon McBride – contact at 816-578-5850 or gmcbride66@hotmail.com