

## SHOWDOWN AT THE SHAKEDOWN - PETE COMFORT WINS GRAND RAPIDS MC SPRING SHAKEDOWN

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The weekend before Memorial Day is the date of the Spring Shakedown Regatta at the Grand Rapids Yacht Club, and the unofficial beginning to the summer scow season for the northern crowd. 2016 marks the 41st anniversary for this regatta, and a fleet of 23 boats assembled to vie for this year's championship. As there were snow showers in the area just one week earlier, hopes were high that spring would finally show itself. Regardless of the weather the competition would be hot with a loaded fleet stacked with multi-time winners of the Nationals, Western Michigan, and Blue Chip in the mix. On top of the tough competition, the lake itself can be just as much of a challenge. Reeds Lake in East Grand Rapids is in contention for the smallest lake on the MC regatta circuit, and throws every tricky windshift and 'personal puff' it can at the racecourse to jumble the positions in the fleet. Over the six race series, It's survival of the fittest on the racecourse and the score card.

Saturday saw sunny skies and warmer temperatures where the fleet got to remember what sailing in shorts felt like. Winds were NE around 7 to 10 in the morning, building up to 14 at times in the afternoon. Pressure would alternate between the East and North shores of the lake, making the left and right sides of the course pay at different times. Starts were very competitive as the fleet tried to find a little elbow room and get off the line to hit that first shift. Al Vorel and his team from GRYC got off four solid races on the first day, with downwind finishes to get the group reassembled and racing as quickly as possible.

### DAY 1 – RACE WINNERS:

Allison Price, Crystal Lake

Jamie Kimball, Grand Rapids

Cam McNeil, White Lake

Cam McNeil, White Lake

At the end of the day, the top four boats were within 5 points of each other, with one point separating 1st and 2nd place: 1 Cam McNeil, 2 Jamie Kimball, 3 Pete Comfort, 4 Ted Keller, 5 Rob Kimball

We were in for a Sunday Showdown!

Sunday had warmer temps with a little less breeze, 5 to 8 mph, out of nearly the same direction, just a little more N than the day before. The first race of the day saw a big shift

out of the east just after the start that launched the boats on the right side of the course straight up the leg. The leaders of the series were on the opposite side and had to show their ability to dig out and work through the pack. Scott Caston in his new Melges MC led wire to wire for an impressive race win. Pete Comfort showed some Survivor skills and moved from that unfavored side of the first leg all the way to second place and stepping up the leaderboard at the same time.

It would all come down to one last heat. Al Vorel lengthened the course to a W7 to allow some extra laps and a windward finish. Jamie Kimball came firing out of the starting blocks and led this race wire to wire to get the last race win. Pete Comfort finished the race in fourth, one spot behind Cam McNeil, which clinched the Spring Shakedown by a point. Congratulations to Pete on a really well sailed regatta!

**TOP 5**

Pete Comfort, Torch Lake  
Cam McNeil, White Lake  
Jamie Kimball, Grand Rapids  
Rob Kimball, Grand Rapids  
Ted Keller, Torch / Hoover

**TOP MASTER** - Scott Caston, Grand Rapids  
**TOP GRAND MASTER** - Bob Heathcote, Indian Lake

Thanks to Al Vorel and his race management team and to Regatta Chair Rick Busch for putting on an excellent event. Mark your calendars for the weekend before Memorial Day in May 2017 and get to Grand Rapids for a ton of fun on the water and off at the annual Spring Shakedown.