

2016 Scowabunga

Privateer Yacht Club – Fleet 82

Scowabunga is a regatta not to be missed. Not only is it held at one of the most beautiful lakes in the US, but Privateer Yacht Club is one of the best clubs in the south. Year after year this weekend brings MC friends from all over the east coast back together again for some great racing and family reunion style fun.

The conditions for this year were just like all the other years. Wind! It was a little more than some were hoping for so when the forecast on Sat called for 15 with gusts to 18-22, many sailors opted to add crew. PRO Rob Fowler set up a proper length course typically like those seen at National events. The first race was a breezy one and everyone had a tough time figuring out the shifts. There was a nice right hand shift during the last leg and was a game changer for some as it brought them up several place from the back of the pack. It was damn near a photo finish and in the end local veteran Chris Cyrul, with rock star tactician Christian Cyrul, took the bullet.

The breeze was definitely building for race 2 and the pin end looked a little favored. Most of the MC's punched out to the left side and continued to play the shifts on the first leg. A pack of 3 boats were able to stretch out a small lead during the gusty 55 minute race. It looked like a 3 way tie between Jonathan Few, Chris Cyrul, and Chris Brooks. When fighting with 3 other boats for a 1st place finish, it is always advised not to capsize on (or before) the finish line. That created one of the more interesting photo finishes seen on the MC circuit. Few decided to capsize, Brooks tacked away on a knock, and Cyrul dodged Few's rigging, held his course was given a last second lift to earn back to back bullets.

The 3rd race was going to be a tough one as the breeze was by now close to our maximum of steady at 20. Plus everyone's energy level was running a little low. The pin was once again favored and a small group of boats went left. Jonathan Few and crew Shelby were the first to round the weather mark and hold their lead downwind. The combined weight really kept the boat flat and fast upwind on the next leg. Just like in NASCAR, the competition waited till the last lap to make its move. David "Magic Man" Helmick was right on Few's quarter going up the last leg. Helmick tacked away and caught a nice one boat length advantage to win race 3. As they say folks, "It ain't over till it's over!"

Day 1 ended with Cyrul in the lead with 7 points, followed by Richard Blake and David Helmick with 11 points. It should be noted that the Regatta Chairman lost his starboard side stay between the windward and offset mark in race one, drove home for a replacement and was on the starting line for race 3. A jib for the start saw the port side stay break at the spreader swaging. No one hurt, but hard lessons learned. 1. Megles quality is very consistent (2 in one day!) 2. Side stays do not last forever.

Saturday night's cook your steak dinner is always a bonus at this Regatta. You are given an 18 oz., raw steak or filet of salmon, if you prefer, and the entire fleet cooks their own dinner around a large open pit grill. This year besides a keg of Yunecling beer we were treated to a Dark and Stormy's. A Bermuda rum

drink. There is nothing better than standing around with close friends, laughing and reflecting on a great day of sailing.

Everyone that comes to Scowabunga knows the name Jan Varnell. Since this Regatta began she has been at helm of the kitchen door. Ever year she comes up with great food. Thank You JAN.

Sunday was another beautiful day at Privateer Yacht Club and we were treated to a traditional big breakfast. I have always felt that this should be mandatory at every regatta. The breeze today was coming from the opposite direction and straight down the river. Temps. were a little cooler, but everyone was happy to see a little less breeze. The wind was predicted to be 7-8 and looked like even less from shore. Only one boat brought out crew and that was heavy weight (150 pounder) Richard Blake. The fleet soon found that this wasn't the best choice since the gusts of 12-15 began coming in before the start. Race one was set to go with a perfectly square line. Even though the breeze was coming in more from the right, the left side of the course paid off for those who dug deep. After 5 laps it was Ron Baerwitz that took the win.

The last race started out just like the previous race and most of the fleet sailed the left hand side of the course. The bigger puffs disappeared during the 2nd upwind leg and a couple of huge holes formed on the course. Most of the fleet took breathers and powered up. After a few minutes the breeze filled back in as strong as ever with a 10 degree shift left. The RC decided to shorten the course on leg 4 with the wind dropping to the predicted 7-8. It was a downwind finish in a lighter shifting breeze. A big puff from the left came in about ¾ of the way through the leg giving several competitors a passing lane. Richard Blake held on to the lead for all of the race and took the win. Even though that was his only bullet, he was the most consistent in great finishes and took the win for his 3rd time.

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