

## Train Wreck 2016

For anybody who is looking for some sailing time during the winter, the Triple Crown Series at Lake Eustis Sailing Club is not to be missed. LESC always provides great hospitality, beautiful water, a fun atmosphere, and epic sunsets. If you haven't attended the Southeast Regional, Train Wreck, or Midwinters festival, add this to your annual bucket list.

Two years ago, the Train Wreck was cursed with very little wind, causing a single race event spent entirely on the low side. The wise organizers at LESC bumped the event to three days with afternoon sailing on Friday. As 42 boats trickled in from near and far, they were met with a cold, rainy day of setup on Thursday. Camaraderie was high as we were all anticipating a gorgeous Friday. Friday arrived to great wind, sun, and a group of sailors itching to hit the water. PRO Bob Armes got us out on the water promptly at 1 for a day that was originally intended to be 3 races.

In race 1, we saw a big left shift right before the start, pushing the fleet over and causing a postponement while the line was dragged back about 10 degrees. With about a minute and a half to go, a big right hand shift rolled into the starting area. Most of the fleet was caught on the left side of the course during a 35 degree wind from the right. Mark Grinder, Dave Johnson, John Porter, Chris Kubicek, Monte Stamper, Ted Keller, Zack Clayton, and Matt Fisher all hedged to the right with Dave Johnson leading at the first mark. On the run, Mark Grinder nailed the gybe into a changing breeze to jump himself into the lead. The second beat saw a big left shift and a build in pressure which suited Mark Grinder as he extended his lead. On the final run toward the finish, a puff from behind compressed Dave Johnson and John Porter into a photo finish with Mark winning, John second, and Dave third. Monte Stamper and Chris Kubicek had their best finishes of the regatta posting 8<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> respectively.

Race 2 saw Rob Seidelmann break to the right after the start leading a big pack of boats through a long, patient, left shift. Patience paid off as the wind shifted hard right at the top propelling Rob to an untouchable lead. The run saw a big right hand shift propelling John Porter, Scott Tillema, and Zack Clayton out of the 20s and into the top 10. The second beat was quite square with a big right at the top giving John Porter, Dave Helmick, and Zack Clayton a planning reach into the windward mark. The race finished with Rob Seidelmann in a big lead, followed by John Porter, Matt Fisher, Zack Clayton, and Al Haeger. Dr. Chris Brooks had his best finish of the event, posting a 6<sup>th</sup>.

Race 3 showed a building breeze and a big pressure line on the left of the course. Most of the fleet started on the second half of the line grinding all the way to the left layline. Those who were patient and dug into the shift benefited the most. The race was tight with hard competition in the top 10. Rob Seidelmann again schooled the fleet followed by Dave Helmick, Matt Fisher, Scott Tillema, and John Porter. Bob Cole Jr. showed his best performance of the weekend with a 7<sup>th</sup> place finish.

After looking at a dismal forecast for the duration of the weekend, PRO Bob Armes elected for a 4<sup>th</sup> race on Friday afternoon in a building breeze. The final race showed a big split in the wind. This was clearly a race where you had to commit all the way to a layline and hope your edge prevailed. John Porter and Jeremy Pape lead the charge to the left with JP Bordes giving chase. Rob Seidelmann, Matt Fisher, and Zack Clayton lead the charge right. The left prevailed as the breeze continued to build into truly windy conditions. The remainder of the race was spent grinding for position and enjoying big breeze and big waves. In the end, John Porter won the race followed by Jeremy Pape, Mark Schneider, JP Bordes, and Craig Eaton. Mark, JP, and Craig really showed awesome speed and technique to the pack behind them.

Unfortunately, the dismal forecast was correct and no further racing was attempted during the weekend. Fortunately, the group at these events is second to none and everyone had a blast waiting for wind. Monte Stamper smoked some amazing brisket for Saturday dinner and MARGARITAS! were flowing generously. In the end, John Porter won the Train Wreck followed by Rob Seidelmann, Matt Fisher, Dave Helmick, and Zack Clayton. Matt Fisher was Master Champion. Dave Helmick was the top Grand Master. John Houck was top Mega Master. Certainly not least, our top Old Salt was Ronald Reeves. Dave Moring showed a marked improvement over last year's Train Wreck with a 15<sup>th</sup> place finish this year earning him the Most Improved award.

Thank you to LESC and all of your volunteers for an awesome event. We can't wait to come back for another weekend of your terrific facility, lake, and hospitality.

John Porter