

## 2013 MCSA Midwinter Championship – Day 1, 2, Final Day 3 Results

By Eric Hood

**The Setting** - Warm sunny Florida at Lake Eustis just northwest of Orlando. Little change up for everyone right out of the gate for this 74 boat championship. It was in the low 40s at sunrise and then by race time high 50s and low 60s with a big chilly north wind for race 1 today. The four or five most popular weather services were all pretty much in sync with each other on the weather today. Cold, windy early and then warming up to mid 60s and less wind by days end. Not a cloud in the sky though. Tomorrow and final day Saturday though mid 70s and low 80s respectively.

**The Sailors** – We had a fun moment this morning when the Mayor of Eustis asked who traveled the farthest distance to this regatta. The Canadians won but there were some possible disputes with a few Brits in the crowd. Several sailors from other countries were participating including Rob Coutts (Russell's brother) who now is sailing out of Lake Okoboji. Many new sailors to the class including our Regatta leader after day one Kenny Wolfe (actually tied but wins tie-breaker with Ted Keller). Kenny joined us for Zenda University earlier in the week where he worked hard and won that event. Kenny is with the very fast and large growing Rush Creek Yacht Club group from just outside the Dallas area. We had several folks from the Montreal area including Will Hendershot and Andre Gagnon. Several former National Champions including Brett Hatton, Cam McNeil, along with a large group of former Midwinter and Master National Champions were sailing as well. Then back into MC action after a long time away we had Skip and Marge Johnson. Skip will be speaking at our annual MC banquet dinner tomorrow night which should be a highlight for all. Just a great group for this 41st Midwinter Championship.

**The Courses Day 1** – For today we had two W5 courses. Compass courses of almost due North. About 1 mile legs. Velocity for race one was about 10-18 mph. Race two we saw the winds drop down with a range of 5-15 mph. For those of you who have not sailed here before, Lake Eustis is a large round lake and of course very flat surroundings. So you really can see the wind well as it comes down the course. Race one had some nice chop in the bottom 1/3rd of the course and I think it actually threw the fleet of 74 teams off for the first start as the whole group for the most part was short of the line by several feet. Race two we had about 9 boats called over with individuals. Both races saw upwind and downwind shifts swing as much as 20 degrees. However they came in big shots and you knew they were coming. Not enough breeze to set a good course for race 3 today. Very good starting lines today which was really great with such a large group. Not easy to do but the team here at Eustis have a big group and they work it hard for the sailors.

**Results Day 1** – Just take a look at the scores and you can see some pretty big swings. Scores should be up at the class website at [www.mcscow.org](http://www.mcscow.org) or will be attached by Bob Wynkoop and the class. It was a tough day of shifty conditions. Seven boats in really good shape within a range of 5-18 points. Then another group in pretty good shape from 8th-14th within a point range from 26-39. This is a hard regatta because our class rules differ from the national standards from U.S. Sailing. 6 races with no throw-outs. You have to race for every boat all the time and one big mistake or bad break is hard to overcome. Premium on being consistent and not to crazy. While we had to sail to some lay lines by mid beat today you always saw the top 10 or so boats doing it together. Rarely did anyone take off by themselves. The other thing was to absolutely make sure the shift was real today. There were a few teasers that came down that tricked some folks into tacking and sailing off to the wrong side of the course. Race winners: Chris Hawk and Kenny Wolfe.

**Top Ten Day 1** – Here are the top ten with lots of racing left. Kenny Wolfe – Rush Creek YC 5,

Ted Keller – Torch Lake 5, Scott Harestad – Spring Lake/MI 12, David Mooring – Lake Eustis 13, Eric Hood – Lake Eustis 14, Rob Seidelmann –18, Clark Wade – Hoover SC/Columbus Ohio 19, Tim Fredman – Pine Lake/WI 26, Rob Terry – Crystal Lake/MI 27, Chris Hawk – Keuka /NY 29

**Other News** - Lots of reports of very good fleet growth. Sarasota, Florida, the group up in Montreal, Mission Bay, San Diego, and many other reports. Good reports and info by Eric Protzman and Jeff Nicholas about the MCSA National Championship in June plus the MCSA Team Championship in September both at Clear Lake, Iowa. Enter now for the Nationals on-line at [www.mcscow.org](http://www.mcscow.org). Tomorrow morning and tomorrow night we will do Top 5 maybe Top 10 interviews and press conferences for the fleet to learn from those who had good races.

**Day 2** – No racing but tons of fun. After another very chilly morning at Lake Eustis things warmed up by mid-morning but the wind never came. The Race Committee team led by Dave Williams took a shot at trying to get one off before the end of the day but no luck. Yep and guess what, as soon as we are all back on shore a good little evening breeze came in during the happy hour and banquet. Highlights off the day certainly included all the good community time with each other. Folks renewing old friendships and making new ones too with all the new members to the class at this event. The evening was catered by the world famous Oyster Troff which was great. Commodore Bob Cole gave a 15 minute update on the state of the class and new things in the works which was great to hear. I introduced our Midwinter's Championship banquet dinner guest speaker Skip and Marge Johnson which was an honor. Skip really treated the 100 guests to some rich history about how scow sailing started with his Grandfather J.O. Johnson. It was really neat to hear about all of his accomplishments and innovations during those first 50 years of scow building. Skip went on to tell the group about his father Iver and his uncle plus other family members plus many of the other accomplishments of the Johnson Boat Works team and of course mentioning the fun but serious rivalry with Melges Boat Works. It was a great evening. Marge actually caught it all on video: see video here <http://vimeo.com/70964824> . So watch for that info on the MCSA Facebook page.

**Day 3 The Setting and Courses** – So for the final day a couple of written rules of the class for this particular event kicked in and only two could be run. All the weather models were spot on with what would happen except for the 20-30 shift from SSW to SW which was not supposed to arrive until probably the second race. Start time for the first race was 9:30 and the winds were as expected 5-7 mph from the SSW. The big shift actually occurred on the second beat (third leg) of race one. Both races were W5s so from this third leg of the first race through the finish and all of race two were sailed with the new southwest direction and light 4-7 mph winds. Two clean starts again for both races with only a few being called over early. I have to say the starting lines were the best we have ever seen before at the Midwinters so kudos to the PRO Dave Williams and his large team for this event.

**The Results** - Wow, what a tough day of sailing. The first race for day 3 (third race for the event really shook things up for many folks going in both directions good and bad). Ted Keller who was sailing a great regatta and was tied with Kenny Wolfe for first going into this race 3 got caught on the outside left of the big right shift that came through on the last beat. Others out on the left for that big shift included Cam McNeil, Rob Seidelmann and about 6 or 7 others. A pack of sailors running in the 10th to 15th spots went right up this last beat towards the new breeze coming and made big money all finishing in the top ten. So four of the legs of this race were normal but the infamous "Crazy Ivan" appeared as was predicted on the weather services. Now for the last and final, race four, many things could happen for sure starting with Kenny Wolfe who now had a commanding lead in first but certainly had to be careful. Anything from there on back was possible for many to go up or down. Speaking with more than 15-20 skippers after the races were over, I noticed everyone saying the same thing; that the race really took focus and

concentration. The wind showed itself on the water but you could not go chase it. So long distant viewing was a premium for what was coming down. Kenny got a little behind Mooring and Ehood who were hanging out in the front. In the end Kenny put the rubber stamp on the regatta win becoming our 41st Annual Midwinter National Champion by finishing with either a 7th or 8th (left the results at the club – so flying now I am doing a little of this off memory). Here are the top ten and full results will be up on Monday at [www.mcscow.org](http://www.mcscow.org) . 1st -Kenny Wolfe, 2nd – David Mooring, 3rd -Eric Hood (Top Master), 4th - Clark Wade, 5th Hunter Riddle, 6th – Chris Hawk, 7th- Ted Keller, 8th – Rob Terry, 9th – Rob Seidelmann, 10th- Jeff Grinnan. Top Mega Master – Tim Fredman, Top Grand Master – Stefan Schmidt, Top Woman - Trish Keenan End.

**Lessons Learned** – No doubt for me watching and teaching for 13 races & 25 practice starts at Zenda U really drove something home for me and also the discussion panel we did on day two. Sharing of information is extremely important to how you can best approach the next race. I learned a lot listening to our panel of top ten sailors on day 2. Knowing this lake as I and many other do, trusting what you see off in the long distance was extremely important at this particular lake. Watching a few meltdowns of our good friends Ted Keller, Rob Seidelmann, Scott Harestad and a few others was painful because as it happened you could tell from what was coming off in the distance that they would not recover. So knowing your lake I would say was a big premium this week. Sticking with the group you are racing with whether in front, mid-fleet, or in back was really important. Sailing away from your pack 9 out of 10 times will give you some serious disappointments. There were some 10-20 degree wind shifts while going upwind in all four races and you had to learn how to be patient. You had to stay in line sometimes going into the weather mark, eat a little bad air, and not tack away to maintain your position in your group you were racing. Every time someone seemed to tack away from their group they lost this week. Boat speed, boat speed, boat speed was a big premium. That takes practice, practice, practice.

**Fleet News and Growth** - Some exciting news on Fleet growth this week at the Midwinter Championship. Zenda University winner and Midwinter National Champion Kenny Wolfe bought a brand new MC Scow 2579 from Team Melges to take back to Rush Creek Yacht Club just outside Dallas, Texas. Also, Zenda University graduate, Ted Weihe from Sarasota bought my boat 2581 to add to that growing fleet of 10 boats now. We also heard about a new California fleet, Mission Bay YC, San Diego, from Commodore Bob Cole. The MC Class is alive and well. Melges Performance Sailboats is in great shape having caught up with the big rush of Melges 20s and now has MC Scows available for the National Championship

**Other News** – Closing ceremonies were great with Regatta Chairman David Helmick and class Commodore Robert Cole heading up the ceremonies. David pointed out that about 75 of the club's members participated in one fashion or another with all the volunteer requirements needed to help pull off such an event. Tons of photos are out there for this event. Bob Wynkoop mentioned in his Sunday afternoon MC Tell-Tales Newsletter that the pictures and sources will soon be available. So watch for this photo info on his newsletters and also watch the MC Sailing Association Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/MCSailingAssociation> (lots of other goofy MC websites so be careful there – Just click on the Tell-Tales Facebook icon or on the Facebook icon that will come with Bob Wynkoop's telltales). Our new 41st Midwinter's National Champion Kenny Wolfe got the traditional and ceremonial golf cart ride to the awards table which was fun to see. Then the top three Wolfe, Mooring and Ehood were handed champagne bottles to spray each other and some in the crowd down NASCAR style. Meals were fantastic, hospitality was off the charts. If you are sailing MC Scows this one and the National Championship (Clear Lake, Iowa in June – registration available now) are the ones to put on the list as MUST DO events.

All the best,

EHood MC 2581

Sign up now for the National Championship at <http://www.mcscow.org>