Seavy Won Midwinter Championship for 7th Time—
Breaks Old Record—Californians Earl Elms and Tom Nute 2nd and 3rd

A memorable picture of two old-time Splinters—hard-hearted competitors! Francis Seavy (right) receives the Midwinter Championship Trophy and congratulations from Ted A. Wells after winning the 31st annual regatta. It was the seventh victory for Seavy and it broke a tie for the most wins that had been shared with Wells, who is regarded as one of the all-time great spoons sailors. For over 25 years, these two have sailed at the top under all conditions. They enjoy the fine rivalry and friendship found in the Spoon Class. — Photo by Clearwater Yacht Club.

27 boats from 11 different states plus Canada entered the 31st annual Midwinter Championship regatta at Clearwater, Florida, March 4-6, and, as usual, this second annual Spoon regatta turned out to be a great success.

Earl Elms, present National Champion, came back from California to defend his title from last year, bringing a salt wind with him. No. only was he a house guest at the Seavy home, but Francis lent him his second boat HONEY II for the regatta. Seavy, of course, wanted victory also, which would establish his fine record and give him all-time more victories, so he was looking for trouble when he treated his friend Earl so nicely. And that is exactly what he got, although he finally surrendered through the narrowing of margins.

An afternoon was held to be sailed on the Gulf of Mexico over a 4-day period when weather conditions were less than perfect. For a change, the weatherman cooperated perfectly and the schedule was carried through without a hitch.

The first race Tuesday PM was under ideal conditions with wind from the NE, wind 5-15, and enough sun, and over a modified Olympic course (triangle followed by windward-downwind-legs). At the start of the race, Jack Fendall of Michigan led the way followed by Seavy and Elms, but by the time the ships were completed the triangle, Seavy had dropped back. When Francis started on the downwind leg, it appeared the wind was out of by falling boats, and Elms maneuvered into 1st place. Heading for the final leg of the windward leg and the finish line, Elms turned almost due north before bringing his craft about and cut-raced Seavy to get the checkered flag.

Here’s a picture in sharp contrast to the one in the adjoining column. These two young-time Splinters are receiving their first major awards. Pat Flaherty (left) and his crew, Bob Webber, display their trophies won for the highest score of any junior in the regatta—113 pts. for 13th position. The trophy was given by Charlie Morgan when an active member of Clearwater Fleet 46, and has been won by Paul’s older brother Danny, who went on to win the National Junior Championship and was also National Champion Crew for Harry Leutens in 1965. There are 4 Flahertys sailing Splinters in Clearwater, as can be seen. Bob is a newcomer to shuffle sailing, and certainly looks quite competent. Clearwater has always been noted for producing good junior sailors, and here is a couple full of ambition, ready and willing to emulate Wells and Seavy. — Photo by Clearwater Yacht Club.

Frank Leutens of Clearwater, Jenkins, and Dr. Dan Costner of Clearwater, finished in that order.

The first of Wednesday’s 3 races started out in wet and gummy weather, quite a contrast to the previous day. This was what Seavy had wanted, and he was right at home as he took the lead right at the start to win it by one of the most decisive margins ever. He led the 2nd race unchallenged by Bert Poulter, National Secretary for Canada, by over 5 minutes—a lot of water to leave between the fleet. Dr. Bruce Cochrane was 3rd and Elms finished 4th.

However, at the time of the last race, the rain increased and conditions were very appropriate. The wind died down and changed directions. And it was cold—nothing else had could happen. So many wondered, “Will it come?” All except Dr. Peter Engeln of Clamatooga (who had made the trip to seek up a little sunshine) who won the race and looked out at the end of 3 races that his overall placing was second and quite close to Elms in 1st. This was due to Seavy, sailing in light air, having the mark as he was turning for home and the final leg. That put Seavy in 7th overall. Seavy, co-chairman of the regatta, jokingly said, “We’ll get in 8 races even if it snows!”

Races 4 and 5 were sailed Thursday PM in bright sunny weather with fresh winds up to 15 knots and high temperatures.
on occasion. Right what the doctor ordered for Seavy. He reined Dr. Don Cochran early in the race, but called to win going away. Cochran was 2nd, docking Jr., and Elms 4th. This was no insignificant win for Seavy.

The following race was new winner. Taut Naka, possessor of one of the finest racing sailboats available, and fast, came through in style after 6 previous below-par races. He beat below-determined Elms and Seavy across the line while Dr. Bruce Cochran, one of the Cochran family competitors, was 4th. Jenkins got a 5th - a spot he held on his protest against Seavy being crossed. But he pointed Seavy back to 10th overall. Like Seavy, he looked forward to the final race on Friday, which promised to be exciting and decisive.

At this point, Elms had 3.4.5.6.7 and 27 pts. against Seavy with 2-1-DNF-1-3 and 41.7 pts. With Seavy sure to drop his DNF, Elms had a win while Seavy was worse than 28th, as he could keep him on his way back in the pack and allowed him to finish not better than 28th, then Seavy would be forced to accept the 26 points for 11th position and wind up with 35.7 pts. while Elms, assuming he was also way back, would just throw away that race and go with the title with the 38 points he already had. A neat triumph!

The weather was perfect for Elms out the deck Friday to try out his well-planned strategy. He politely accepted, failing only because he made an error in scoring (he thought a 12th or worse would side Elms), and become friends never to outwit him in the race.

This Elms-Seavy duel was a classic example of cut-throat racing. Elms covered Seavy into a big outside all during the race, matching him move for move, even to the extreme of holding back when Seavy would try to give him some air.

At one point, the pair was as far back as 12th and 13th, but with less than 4 legs left, Seavy took advantage of a sudden puff of air to sneak by Elms and then moved through the fleet, with the defending champion desperately trying to catch him. Seavy was 11th across the line and Elms was 12th. Thinking at that point he had succeeded in doing what he had set out to do. But

the official scoring goes set him right. Tom Nutt won this race and he was a real happy man, for by garnering two firsts in the last 2 races, he not only won the first 3rd overall, but also put himself right back into contention for the Southern Circuit Championship. Dr. Peter Dunbar finished in 4th position, while Dr. Don Cochran, Jr., barely beat out his son, Dr. Bruce, for the 5th spot. 43.7 vs 47.3 pts.

Jerry Jenkins, with a DNF in the last race, dropped to 7th spot.

At the banquet Friday night, Seavy was awarded the SCBA Midwinter Trophy. He also got the Taut Naka plaque for being the fleet champion of the fleet for the 11th consecutive time. How many more times must sailing - and sailing - mean?

All in all, it was a great week of sailing - and the final, and the second, but the last two races were perfect. And there was always enough wind to get in all races as scheduled. It was agreed that this was one of the most exciting regattas ever, Champions are, though, if someone asks a local resident for a loan of a boat again, the regatta might be a long time in coming.

— Bill Meyer of the Clearwater Sun

Final Results - 1968 MidWinter Championship Regatta

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Tom Nute Big Winner at Snipe Winter Circuit

One of the more exciting moments of the DCN Q YRM KRG series occurred on Biscayne Bay, Miami. Tom Nute, Jr., aboard the 6.5-footer, won the final race of the series.

The Snipe Winter Circuit is a series of races held in the Bahama area. The circuit is divided into three sections: Nassau, Miami and Clearwater. The races are scheduled to be held on Biscayne Bay, Miami, Clearwater, and Nassau. The series concludes on Miami Beach, with the winner being crowned the overall champion.

Nassau - Feb 25-26

Nute repeated his victory of last year when he tacked the final race and once again demonstrated the superiority of the Snipe series. The final race was won by Tom Nute, Jr., aboard the 6.5-foot Snipe. The race was held on Biscayne Bay, Miami, and the winner was Tom Nute, Jr., aboard the 6.5-footer. The Snipe series concluded on Miami Beach, with the winner being crowned the overall champion.

Miami - March 2-3

The Don Q Rum Key Series was held on Biscayne Bay. The series was won by Tom Nute, Jr., aboard the 6.5 footer. The series was divided into two parts, each consisting of five races. The winner of the series was crowned the overall champion.

Clearwater - March 8-9

The Clearwater Winter Circuit was held on Biscayne Bay. The series was won by Tom Nute, Jr., aboard the 6.5 footer. The series was divided into two parts, each consisting of five races. The winner of the series was crowned the overall champion.