

2013 Snipe Midwinter Regatta

The winter months bring a stronger breeze and for three days, 24 boats from five countries competed in six races in some of the best sailing Florida has to offer. From March 10-12 the Clearwater Yacht Club hosted the 2013 Snipe Mid Winters.

Sunday morning Eric Heim, Quantum San Diego, and I arrived to the Clearwater Community Sailing Center, puffy eyed and exhausted from racing the Miami Bacardi Cup the days prior. But the breeze at Midwinters gave us no mercy; she huffed and puffed throughout the regatta.

Races were held in the Gulf of Mexico, giving the race committee plenty of room to set a lengthy Olympic course to kick the regatta off with a bang. The easterly was strong enough to have some exciting reaches and waves to surf. The first race offered up some excellent foreshadowing for the outcome of this regatta: Bruno Amorim and Dante Bianchi started off with a win, with their fellow Brazilians, Mario Sergio de Jesus Jr. and Gabriel Portilho Borges, coming in second, and Augie Diaz with Julia Melton coming in third.

"This was my 4th consecutive year sailing in the Midwinter's event and it has been gratifying to improve slightly each year," Julia said. "The open, deep water venue on the gulf and smaller fleet with sailors of varying abilities makes speed and kinetics through waves an important factor. In this varied wind we focused on 'changing gears' through puffs and lulls - I played the vang a lot and consciously rolled our tacks more or less depending on the pressure. We would re-heel a few more degrees and ease through the lulls,

then get flatter in the puffs. These changes may seem obvious but premeditating how you are going to move in the boat is essential to maintaining speed."

The day finished with a slightly shorter second Windward/leeward race.

Monday offered us a little relief with steadier conditions and smaller seas. RC took full advantage and ran three Olympic courses. The hard work paid off in the evening when the sailors gathered at the Clearwater Yacht Club for a wonderfully hosted dinner and grapefruits filled with your choice of either rum or vodka.

A storm system brought overly heavy breeze and scattered showers on Sunday. Greeted by the AP flag upon arrival, sailors dispersed around the center to find ways to pass the time. Some tuned their boats and talked tactics, others used the time to take care of work while a few crews decided to stretch their worn bodies with a little yoga. AP down, gear up - or so we thought. It wasn't soon after every boat had dawned their boots and neoprene that the AP flag was raised again due to fog. The afternoon sun finally cleared up the weather enough for one final big-wave course.

The San Diego Quantum loft keeps a roll of pink sail tape in stock, mainly for one pink boat. Hanna-Leena Lehtinen and Juha Lehtinen made the trip from Finland to the states to sail the three part winter circuit. The "easy-going people, great nature, great waters to sail and dolphins" keep the Fins hoping to return next year to do it all over again. Race conditions were not easy with the "crazy tide under the bridge," Juha remembered.

The ripping current paired with the



bounce back of waves made for an eventful downwind return through the inlet. How we didn't capsize is still a wonder; behind us was a particularly large wave rolling in. I gave Eric a look. We were quickly on top of it with our bow being buried into the wave ahead of us. Somewhere in the scramble for the high side we were able to blow the sails and get the boat back under control. A few nervous laughs later we continued towards the beach.

As the awards commenced that evening, along with honoring the top placing boats, Steve Lang from fleet 801 was also recognized with the Sportsmanship award, for actively recruiting so many new crews for the regatta and into the snipe class. Julia Melton's final thoughts on the regatta are key words for any sailor to remember: "I feel very lucky to sail with such talented skippers. Always take notes and love the learning opportunities Snipe competition has to offer!"

Terra Lee Berlinski



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Don Q 2013

The Snipe Class slogan is "Serious Sailing, Serious Fun." After spending the weekend covering the XLVII Annual DON Q Rum Keg regatta, I have to say they take their slogan, well..... seriously. Thirty eight Snipes from nine different countries converged on Miami's Biscayne Bay for the second stop of the Snipe Winter Circuit. The Don Q is a five race event with no drop, so every race is serious. One false start or bad shift can make the difference between trophies or memories.

Friday brought out another Miami chamber of commerce day with clear skies, light to moderate northerly winds and temps in the low seventies. Race one got under way at a very civilized noon. Ernesto Rodriguez with crew Julia Melton jumped out to an early lead, and never looked back. Ernesto had been scheduled to sail with perennial Snipe champion crew, Kathleen Tocke. When it looked like illness might keep Kathleen on the dock, Augie Diaz stepped in and offered to have his crew Julia join Ernesto. According to Ernesto, "That's the great thing about this class. Everybody helps everybody. For Augie to offer to have Julia sail with me is the ultimate gesture of sportsmanship."

Kathleen decided she felt well enough to sail the first day, and joined Augie to earn a first day score line of 5-1 leaving them in first place over former world champions Bruno Bethlem and Dante Bianchi of Brazil who rolled a 4-2. Ernesto and Julia's 1-6 left them in third. After the two scheduled races, the fleet was back on shore early enough to go out and explore the local Coconut Grove nightlife. It seemed like half the fleet wound up at Scotty's Landing a local waterfront restaurant and favorite of the sailing community.

Day two began with a postponement on shore. The predicted sea breeze was late in arriving, which gave the sailors time to talk shop, with many of the more seasoned Snipe skippers offering rigging tips to the newcomers. This is another nice facet of Snipe sailing. Peter Commette said, "We all try to help everyone learn how to best rig and sail the boat." He continued, "Just recently, Augie and I were helping Ernesto with the set up on his main sail. We discovered we had been using different standards for measuring mast rake settings. Once we figured that out, we got him dialed in, and look how well he sailed."

By the time the Coconut Grove Sailing Club race committee had brought the fleet out to the bay, and set a course in the light and shifty conditions, it was getting late. After one general recall and a couple of mid-sequence AP's caused by big oscillations, the race got off in a light five to six knot Southeasterly breeze. Recent University of Miami graduate and long-time Snipe sailor, Nick Voss, lead the race wire to wire. His, and crew Nicole Popp's, local knowledge of the conditions, paid big dividends. Rounding out the top three were Brian Kamilar with crew, Enrique Quintero in second, while Ernesto and Julia added a third to their line, giving them the day three lead. Kathleen was unable to sail Saturday leaving Augie, who has won the Don Q many times, on the beach. After the first race, PRO Jamie Ramon decided that the failing breeze and late hour didn't leave enough time to get in the second scheduled race, so the fleet headed back to shore.

Once the fleet arrived back to CGSC, one of the best aspects of the Don Q Rum Keg Regatta began. It is a long-standing



tradition of the regatta that upon returning to the dock on Saturday, the non-sailing family members meet the competitors with trays of Don Q daiquiris. This ceremony is followed by a big party for all featuring a feast of good Cuban and Caribbean food, and of course, more daiquiris. Remember that earlier part about "Serious Fun?"

Sunday was the last day, and the race committee was determined to get in both remaining races. A problem was that several of the competitors were leaving that afternoon, with their boats, for Nassau, the third stop on the Winter Circuit. A ten o'clock first warning meant the racing might not get finished in time to pack up for the ferry. The first race started in a nice 12-14 knot southeasterly, under mostly cloudy skies. Peter Commette and crew Bruno Mello took the left side of the course and rounded the top mark with a nice lead on the Brazilians, Bethlem and Bianchi. They extended over the next three legs and won the race with a twelve boat length lead over Kamilar and Quintero. Bethlem and Bianchi fell back to third. Ernesto Rodriguez took fourth keeping him in the overall lead.

By the start of the second race, the breeze had lightened a bit. Rodriguez and Diaz headed out to the left side along with Nick Voss. Peter Commette, who had a difficult start, spotted a bit of better breeze on the right, and rode that to a huge comeback rounding the top mark just on the sterns of Voss and Rodriguez, and just in front of Diaz. That order lasted all the way to the finish with only one or two boat lengths separating each of the top four.

Ernesto Rodriguez and Julia Melton won the regatta with a nice, consistent line of 1-6-3-4-2. The former world champions Bruno Bethlem and Dante Bianchi finished second. Peter Commette and Bruno Mello tied for third with Brian Kamilar and Enrique Quintero but won on the tie-breaker. Nick Voss and Nicole Popp rounded out the top five. Though the fleet was down from last year, it still featured top level competition. The Don Q Rum Keg has always been an international event with this year's boats coming from as far away as Canada, Finland, Norway, Italy, Columbia, Uruguay, and Brazil in addition to the United States and Puerto Rico. Much of the fleet now moves to Nassau and the Royal Nassau Sailing Club for the third leg of the Snipe Winter Series.

Complete results: <http://www.cgsc.org/regattas>



2013 Snipe Nassau Winter Championships dominated by Class Commodores past and present

Our current international commodore and three past commodores of the class duked it out for top honours in the beautiful Bahamian sunshine and crystal clear warm waters of Nassau's Montagu Bay, head and shoulders above the rest of the fleet. Each of the denizens of our class won 2 races in a combined series totaling 8 races. The Bacardi Cup, the first series of the week, was taken by the American team comprising Commodore Don Bedford and Erik Heim who nipped local Bahamians Jimmie Lowe and Adam Boorman by one point over three light air races with shifty breezes from the south on flat water giving conditions mighty reminiscent of lake sailing. Third and Fourth were rounded out by Norwegians Birger Jansen and his daughter Jeanette Jansen and American Jerry Thompson and Mandi Smith. As the regatta progressed the wind increased each day and, unusually for Montagu Bay, backed to the East. The Dudley Gamblin was won by Birger and Jeanette whose conditioning as a result of having just sailed the Clearwater and Miami legs of the Zimmerman trophy showed and also garnered them top honours overall in Nassau, the Charles Kelly Trophy as well as the coveted Zimmermann Trophy for top boat overall in the Clearwater Midwinters, Miami Don Q and Nassau events. This was surely a nice way to put a cap on Birger's thirtieth consecutive year of attending the Nassau particularly as the Charles Kelly Trophy included a very nice pair of Tag Heuer watches kindly provided by local merchants John Bull. Second was taken by Don and Eric with Jimmie and Adam taking third and thus the Concord Trophy for top Bahamian boat. On the final day of the regatta with winds commencing at

14 and climbing to 18 the back to back races proved a little too much for our oldest team of Jerry Thompson and Mandi Smith who, while finishing 5th in the Gamblin, nevertheless and by reason of their two bullets earlier in the week managed to beat out locals Fernando deCardenas and Sarah Morley for the Basil Kelly Memorial Trophy awarded to top finisher not winning any other trophy. As always the Royal Nassau Sailing Club with their volunteers, members and primary sponsors, both Bacardi and shipping company Betty K Agency worked together to provide great racing, great parties and great home stay for the competitors notwithstanding an initial snafu with clearing the boats through Bahamas Customs. Although the fleet this year was small, it was a truly international event with sailors from America, Norway and Finland. The local fleet is in a re-building process and hopes to double the local entrants next year and is looking to discuss with Clearwater and Miami the possibility of having next year's event start in Nassau as a means of reducing the return time for US sailors coming out of states other than Florida.



Lori Lowe

Midwinters - Clearwater, FL - top 10

Skipper/Crew	Sail #	Total
1. Bruno Bethlem/Dante Bianchi	BRA30111	9
2. Mario de Jesus/Gabriel Borges	BRA31126	11
3. Augie Diaz/Julia Melton	USA30288	12
4. Ernesto Rodriguez/Megan Place	USA30473	18
5. Kevin/Ashley Reili	USA29112	26
6. Peter Commette/Bruno Mello	USA29442	27
7. Eric Heim/Terra Berlinski	USA30337	38
8. Pietro Fantoni/Pere Puig	ITA15790	40
9. Kathleen Tocke/Dave Hughes	USA30287	41
10. Henry/Christian Filter	USA21007	46

Don Q - Miami, FL - top 10

Skipper/Crew	Sail #	Total
1. Ernesto Rodriguez/Julia Melton	USA30473	16
2. Bruno Bethlem/Dante Bianchi	USA31111	24
3. Peter Commette/Bruno Mello	USA29442	34
4. Brian Kamilar/Enrique Quintero	USA30759	34
5. Nick Voss/Nicole Popp	USA28814	37
6. Andrew Pimental/Megan Place	USA31061	39
7. Raul Rios/Edgar Diminich	PUR39841	39
8. David Hernandez/Lior Lavie	USA30287	50
9. Augie Diaz/Kathleen Tocke	USA30288	58
10. Carol Cronin/Kim Couranz	USA30860	59

Bacardi Cup - Nassau, Bahamas - top 10

1. Don Bedford/Eric Heim	USA30618	6
2. Jimmie Lowe/Adam Boorman	BAH28811	8
3. Birger Jansen/Jeanette Jansen	NOR30090	8
4. Jerry Thompson/Mandi Smith	USA24702	10
5. Fernando deCardenas/Sarah M.	BAH29616	17
6. Lori Lowe/Michael Holowesko	BAH30511	21
7. Halvor Poulsson/Donico Brown	NOR29673	21
8. Martin Bebb/Terra Berlinski	USA30942	22
9. Hanna-Lenna/Juha Lehtinen	FIN30833	22
10. Steve Lang/Jeni Shaefer	USA28678	30

Gamblin - Nassau, Bahamas - top 10

1. Birger Jansen/Jeanette Jansen	NOR30090	10
2. Don Bedford/Eric Heim	USA30618	13
3. Jimmie Lowe/Adam Boorman	BAH28811	15
4. Fernando deCardenas/Sarah M.	BAH29616	20
5. Jerry Thompson/Mandi Smith	USA24702	24
6. Martin Bebb/Terra Berlinski	USA30942	30
7. Hanna-Leena/Juha Lehtinen	FIN30833	35
8. Lori Lowe/Pyfrom/Brown	BAH30511	38
9. Halvor/Edel Poulsson/Mousiz	NOR29673	42
10. Steve Lang/Jeni Shaefer	USA28678	48

Zimmerman Overall Circuit Winner:
Birger & Jeanette Jansen



