**Snipe Winter Circuit 2014**

**Midwinters**
The 76th Snipe Midwinters in Clearwater, FL got underway (March 16-18) with 18 teams from 6 countries in attendance. The three day event was plagued by strong winds, allowing for only four races to be completed.

Winds in excess of 20 knots on day one allowed for only one race, while thunderstorms and winds in excess of 25 knots on day two kept the fleet ashore.

The final day of competition dawned clear with winds out of the northwest, giving sailors three races in the lumpy seas with winds of between 8 and 15 knots.

Augie Diaz with crew Bruno Mello won the final race to finish in an overall tie for first with Ernesto Rodriguez/ Eduardo Mintzias, with Diaz taking the title. Third went to Emmanuel Hens and Yannick Laumans of Belgium.

The Midwinters is the first leg of the Snipe Winter Circuit, with the next stop at Miami’s Coconut Grove Sailing Club for the Don Q regatta beginning Friday (March 21), and then on to the last two events being sailed in Nassau’s Montagu Bay.

**Don Q**
32 Snipes collected on the starting line of this year’s DonQ Regatta, the second stop on the annual midwinter circuit. A light and challenging southeaster allowed for two races on Friday, rewarding those who connected the “dots” of puffs on Biscayne Bay. Local Augie Diaz sailing with imported San Diegan Aine McLean won the first one, but one of the farthest traveled teams won the second: Belgians Manu Hens/Yannick Laumans. The fleet was off the water in time to soak up some warmth and sunshine at the Coconut Grove Sailing Club, before heading to the Voss house for a regatta party.

**Bacardi/Gamblin 2014**
The day dawned bright and breezy on beautiful Montagu Bay, Nassau. Perhaps a little too breezy at 22 knots out of the northwest with an ebb tide making lots of chop. Racing was postponed until the afternoon leaving people to enjoy the wonderful sun and hit the closest shopping center with food court, coffee shop and liquor store for later.

By 1PM the winds had subsided to 15-16 knots with gusts to 19. With the direction out of the Northnortheast and an incoming tide the water was fabulously flat, an olympic course was set and after a great and very close race Birger and Janette Jansen were first, leading the local sailors Fernando deCardenas and Sarah Morley in second, Jimmie Lowe and Carmeron Symonette in third and Robert Dunkley and Michelle Love fourth. A couple of the remaining registrants had let the morning blow get to their heads and missed some great sailing. Even the heaviest boat in the race got up on one of those beautiful Bahamian planes on the reaches. Is this not why we sail.

Since the weather was so fabulous race committee set another olympic during which Jimmie Lowe and Cameron Symonette managed to pass the Race Committee cancelled just before noon, sailors packed up their boats to head for either home or Nassau (the final stop on the Winter Circuit). Thanks to Gonzalo “Old Man” Diaz, Jr., the entire CGSC staff, and all the volunteers that make this great event possible.

Birger and Janette Jansen for first with Hanna-Lena and Juha Lehtinen acting the bandits and passing Robert Dunkley and Michelle Lakin for third.

Fernando de Cardenas and Sarah Morley had issues with their traveller and ended in fifth.

So the top few places after two races of the three race Bacardi Cup are Birger in first with 3 points, ahead of Jimmie Lowe with 4 points and close behind Fernando with 7 Robert with 8 and Hanna-Lena with 9. It will be close sailing again tomorrow.

We are now off to the Bacardi Party tonight.

Thanks Bacardi you are the best hosts and part of why we love The Bahamas!!!