

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 Rodreguiz/ Eduardo Mencias, 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 Symotette 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

Saturday turned out very different racing conditions. After a few general recalls in very light conditions, a nice 10-12 knot southeaster built in just before the first actual start. Rigs were too loose for the sudden increase in breeze, and a quickly built chop made it tough upwind—but the reward was a fun surf-fest downwind.

Ernesto Rodriguez and Eduardo Mintzias won the first race of the day but carried forward a Z flag penalty from one of the general recalls, leaving them with 7 points. Doug Hart/Ryan Hopps were second, though they also had a Z flag penalty. Augie/Aine posted a 3rd; their 1,2,3 scoreline was perhaps heading in the wrong direction, but it was still a pretty nice group of numbers.

Race four started in 12-15 knots, and an approaching a rainsquall that held off until the finish. Again the waves were challenging upwind, but the rides downwind were well worth it. Ernesto/Eddie won the second race of the day too, ahead of David Hernandez/Liam Munzenmaier and Eric Reinke/Amy Benner. Augie/Aine had to be happy with seventh, but with one race left in the five race series they held a commanding eleven point lead over Ernesto and Eddie, in 2nd overall, who in turn were only two points ahead of the Belgians.

The famous DonQ daiquiris greeted sailors ashore (though not on the dock as in years past). And the fleet enjoyed a cuban dinner, sharing stories of waves ridden and missed and shifts that went the right or wrong way. The Snipe class is like a large family, and this annual dinner at Coconut Grove Sailing Club is a reunion enjoyed by all.

And suddenly, it was over. Sunday's breeze didn't fill in time, so when

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

2014 Midwinter Championship - top 5 of 19

1. Augie Diaz/ Aine McLean	USA30288	11
2. Ernesto Rodriguez/ Eduardo Mintzias	USA30473	11
3. Manu Hens/Yannick Laumans	BEL30714	21
4. Claus Carpelan/Freddy Wegelius	FIN29965	23
5. Kevin Reali/Hillary Noble	USA29112	27

Don Q - top 5 of 32

1. Augie Diaz/Aine McLean	USA30288	13
2. Ernesto Rodriguez/Eduardo Mintzias	USA30473	24
3. Manu Hens/Yannick Laumans	BEL30714	26
4. Doug Hart/Ryan Hopps	USA29941	27
5. Eric Heim/Bruno Mello	USA30337	33

Bacardi

1. Birger Jansen/Jeanette Jansen	NOR	3
2. Jimmie Lowe/Cameron Symonette	BAH	4
3. Fernando de Cardenas/Sarah Morley	BAH	7
4. Hanna-Lena/Juha Lehtinen	FIN	9

Zimmerman 2014

1. Birger Jansen/Janette Jansen	NOR	
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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!!!

