

Chapin and Lindley romp through Florida winning the Midwinter and Don Q portions of the 1996 Winter Circuit. Hart/Duffy sweep Nassau. Filter and Newman take overall Zimmerman

Dave Chapin Wins His 4th Midwinter Championship in Wild Conditions

With a break in the traditional dates of the Midwinters, 27 Snipers showed up at Clearwater Yacht Club to sail the 58th Midwinter Championships. It was "Surfin' Safari" on the last (and only) day of racing. Dave Chapin and seven-time Midwinter champion crew Rob Lindley muscled past the 1993 champions Henry Filter and Carol Newman in the last race to win the abbreviated regatta by .5 points.

After two days of being blown out by 25-40 knot winds, it looked like the breeze had finally abated to give the race committee a shot at getting in the three races needed to make a series.

The RC and support boats had to tow the fleet out to the race area in the Gulf of Mexico because the wind wasn't strong enough to battle the funneled incoming current at Clearwater Pass. The mambo sea left over from two days of strong onshore breezes made for bumpy going as the first race got under way in 12-15 knots.

A relatively small but mighty fleet – 20 of the 27 registered – remained to sail as the others opted to head home after the second day of postponement flags. Mastering the shifty conditions as the unsteady breeze filled in, Chapin and Lindley took the first gun of the day, followed by Filter with Scott Nixon and Samantha Rosemont in 3rd. Defending champion Jack Franco with crew Mike Bartell finished 4th with Norwegians Birger Jansen and Carine Juliussen in 5th place.

The seas and wind continued to build for the second race. After one general recall, Franco beat out the consistent Filter with two-time national champion Doug Hart and veteran crew Watt Duffy beating out Chapin for 3rd. There was a 3-way tie for 1st - Chapin having a 1-4; Filter a 2-2; and Franco a 4-1.

By the start of the 3rd race, the wind had stepped up quickly to 25 knots. The reaches were a blast with the big breeze and six-foot breakers, but the RC wisely changed the course to a double triangle at the top of the second weather leg. By the second reach of the second triangle, the wind took another step up to 30 knots, causing the fun to turn a bit frantic.

Boats started to fall, and only ten boats made it up the last beat to finish. There were



photo: Dennis Kelly

numerous capsizes, a few broken masts, and a few who elected to go in early. Chapin muscled out a first over Filter by ½ point, while Hart finished 3rd, Hal Gilreath and Will Glenn 4th and Franco 5th.

Even for those who finished, the ride in through the surf to the inlet proved to be treacherous. Most racers opted to drop the main and sail in on jib alone. Almost all reported their windows blowing completely out of their jibs. Filter bent his mast before he could get the sail down. Franco's mast bent to windward when a large wave broke from behind, with the mast ram literally ripping through the 3/16 inch aluminum webbing on the mast. Some sailors opted to beach their

boats, some causing considerable damage. Birger Jansen's boat had to be left in the Gulf, only to find it a day later on the beach. There were many other crash and burn stories that will be told at the bar for years to come, with luckily, no injuries reported.

The Levinson Sportsmanship Trophy was awarded to Carine Juliussen with the Blair Masters Trophy presented to Jerry Thompson and Dee Schilling. Carol Newman was the recipient of the Naomi Seavy Award for the highest placing woman.

—report a compilation from articles by Alex Pline, Bob Foster and numerous other contributors.

Results

	<i>Skipper/Crew</i>	<i>Boat</i>	<i>Fleet</i>	<i>Finishes</i>	<i>Total</i>
1.	Dave Chapin/Rob Lindley	25175	St. Petersburg	1-4-1	5.5
2.	Henry Filter/Carol Newman	28094	Annapolis	2-2-2	6
3.	Jack Franco/Mike Bartell	28702	Alamitos Bay	4-1-5	9.75
4.	Doug Hart/Watt Duffy	28687	Mission Bay	12-3-3	18
5.	Hal Gilreath/Will Glenn	28655	Lake Lanier	7-10-4	21
6.	Stu Robertson/Nancy Grubbs	27100	Alamitos Bay	8-6-9	23
7.	John/Maggie Manderson	28065	Barneget Bay	11-8-7	26
8.	Don Bedford/Steve Stewart	29013	Mission Bay	13-12-6	31
9.	Birger Jansen/Carine Juliussen	28810	Norway	5-7-dnf	32
10.	Scott Nixon/Sam Rosemont	28214	Annapolis	3-11-dnf	34
11.	Jerry Thompson/Dee Schilling	24702	Alamitos Bay	9-17-8	34
12.	Willie Graves/Lisa Griffith	27568	Mission Bay	dnf-5-10	35
13.	Alex/Lisa Pline	26926	Annapolis	6-9-dnf	35
14.	Steve Lippincott/Scott Norman	26761	St. Petersburg	10-14-dnf	44
15.	Charlie/Michele Bustamante	27872	unaffiliated	15-13-dnf	48
16.	Bob Oberg/Kari Warren	26459	Annapolis	16-15-dnf	51
17.	Don Hackbarth/Priscilla Duffy	28571	Atlanta	17-16-dnf	53
18.	John MacRae/Ken Delpeppa	27225	Winchester	14-20-dnf	54
19.	Bill/Sherry Welch	27772	St. Petersburg	18-18-dnf	56
20.	Gordon Hackstaff/A. Franklin	25712	St. Petersburg	19-19-dnf	58