

# *Snipe*

# **BULLETIN**



## **Greetings**

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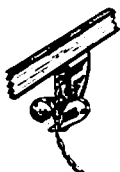
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# SNIPE BULLETIN

The **SNIPE BULLETIN** is edited and produced monthly by Birney Mills, Executive Secretary.

Address all correspondence to:

Snipe Class International Racing Association,  
655 Weber Ave., Akron 3, Ohio, U. S. A.

Subscription Rates.

\$2.00 Per Year.

Owners of measured and paid-up Snipes receive **SNIPE BULLETIN** as part of their membership free.

Forms close on the 10th of each month preceding publication. Material received after that date will not appear until a later issue. Contract advertising rates may be had on application. Be sure and notify **SNIPE BULLETIN** of any change in address, giving both old and new addresses.

## Annual Meeting in Chicago

All who attended the SCIRA annual meeting at Chicago last year were pleased with the friendly and appropriate atmosphere of the Chicago Yacht Club and so final arrangements have been made to hold a repeat performance on Saturday, Feb. 11th, 1956. The Chicago Yacht Club is located in a new building (to which an addition was added this summer) on the lake front at the foot of Monroe Street and is close to downtown hotels and easily reached by taxi. There is also plenty of parking space available. Since many snipers stayed at the Blackstone Hotel, it has been designated as the "unofficial" headquarters and you can make your own reservation there direct, if you wish. You will find prices commensurate with other leading hotels. The Chicago Boat Show will be in progress at the International Amphitheatre at 42nd and Halstead Sts. from February 3rd through the 12th, so you can take in that event at the same time. All members in good standing are invited and urged to attend. Final details in the January **BULLETIN**.

## Important District 3 Meeting

There will be a district meeting for all fleet officers and skip-pers in South Bend, Indiana on Saturday, January 14th, 1956 at the La Salle Hotel. The set-up will be the same as last year, with the first session starting at 5:00 P. M., thus allowing plenty of time for driving on Saturday. There will be a dinner, followed by the District 3 meeting, with discussion and entertainment after the meeting. The main purpose of this meeting is to make the final arrangements for the Snipe booth at the Chicago Boat Show and anyone who is willing to go to the show and tell the public "what a wonderful little boat the Snipe is", is asked to contact Hattie Carver, Green Lake, Wisconsin. Likewise, if you want more information or reservations for the South Bend meeting, please contact Walt Krause, 1015 Foster St., South Bend, Indiana.

## Pacific Coast Championship Races —

The newly-organized Northern California Snipe Association (see August Bulletin) sponsored the Pacific Coast Championships and it was a howling success. Vern Warfield, chairman, sent in complete stories and descriptions of each race (with maps, yet!) and Van Sargeant, publicity man, was extremely successful in both TV and newspaper coverage. This was probably a model affair, attained through hard work on details, and Warfield deserves a lot of credit for the precise manner in which he handled the event. After reading how the boys capsized in the first race, it brings up the subjects of safety and advisability of holding races under such unfavorable conditions. Often the question is raised "What were they doing out there in the first place?" and, in case of a serious mishap or tragedy, the judgment of the race committee is open to justifiable criticism. Recently, the U. S. Olympic Yachting Committee discussed as to whether there would be any top limit of wind velocity in which a race would not be sailed in the Olympics in 1956. Obviously, a race would not be started in a hurricane and a 50 knot wind would make starting a race appear ridiculous. It would help everyone if they knew in advance what the top limit would be and, if races were held in only fair winds, the weight and height of crews would automatically be solved. Prehaps SCIRA should take a look at the situation.

## ZIMMERMAN DEFINES "IMPROVEMENT"

Since nobody else has answered the very constructive question brought up by Hal Winstead, it is probably my job to do it, so here goes!

In the March 1955 Bulletin, Commodore Eddie Williams posted five projects for the year 1955 and named one member of SCIRA to take charge of each project. I had #4, which was to head a committee established with the main objective to investigate all possibilities to improve the class and boat. (Not feeling too strong at the time, I asked Commodore Eddie to give the job to someone else).

In the May issue, Hal Winstead (City Island Fleet #161) made an emphatic protest to the project which I hope to clarify somewhat by the following, which, although only my own opinions, I believe is also the way these points are interpreted by the other members of the SCIRA Board. I regret not getting to it sooner.

Mr. Winstead's objections seem to be that:

- (1) The boat should be kept a standard design and not changed for improvements. Fiberglass hulls and aluminum masts should not have been approved.
- (2) The cost of a new boat has increased to such an extent that it is no longer an "average" man's class.
- (3) Synthetic sails should not have been allowed.

My own answers to the above are as follows:

### (1) BOAT IMPROVEMENTS.

The word "improve" has, unfortunately, been carried on for several years in connection with a different snipe project until now it has a different meaning to those who have not followed snipe affairs minutely. In 1952, Commodore Owen Duffy had almost developed a project to obtain standard well-built snipes in lots of 25 at a very low cost, thus overcoming the high price barrier to more rapid expansion. After Owen died, others tried unsuccessfully to carry out his plans, but the builder involved, as well as others we contacted, would not cooperate on the plan.

The word "improve" at this time was used to mean improve the purchase situation in any way possible, except changing any of the dimensions or tolerances so that the boat would be any faster basically.

The word "improve" still has the same meaning in SCIRA Board meetings and the past commodores and chairmen of the rules committee have always turned down emphatically any changes tending to change the dimensions or basic speed of the boat.

### (2) COST OF BOAT.

Strenuous efforts are still being made to reduce the cost of a new Snipe. Harold Gilreath has done considerable constructive work on the project and Alan Levinson is also working on it.

The fiberglass boat was approved on the basis that it would not be any faster than a standard wooden boat and would have the very considerable advantage of requiring much less maintenance with a much longer life. The aluminum mast was approved for the same reasons.

When the plywood boat came out, we were under the impression that the cost of construction would be much less, but this did not prove to be the case.

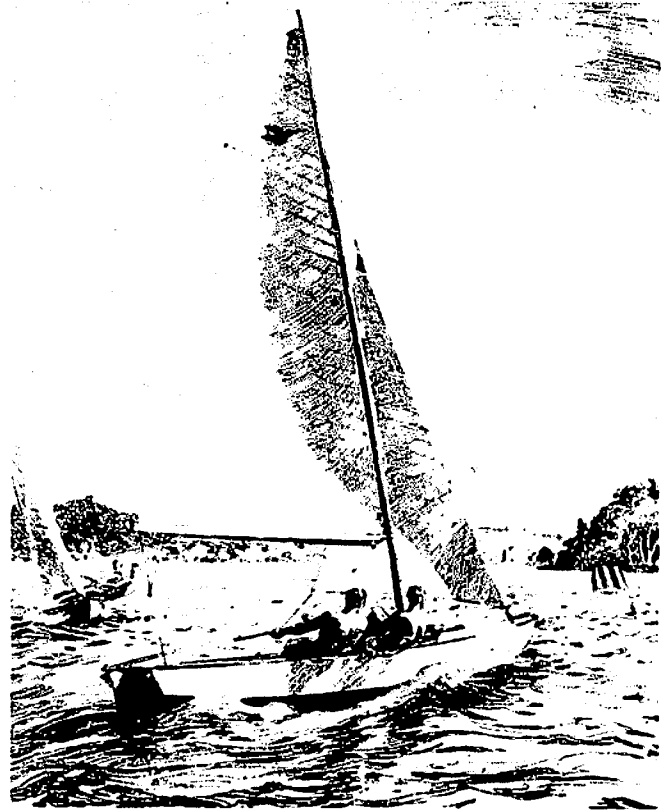
But after all, has the cost of a new snipe increased in greater ratio than the cost of other commodities?

### (3) SYNTHETIC SAILS.

Whether synthetic sails are faster than a real good suit of cotton sails is still a moot question and not too clear cut, but I do not believe that this question was the criterion used when the decision was made to allow synthetics. The Board held off approving these sails because they might prove decidedly faster than cotton sails and would therefore make obsolete all the cotton sails in use. By first approving synthetic sails for local use, a means was found of first determining their relative advantages and this also afforded the opportunity of spreading out their complete adoption over a period of several years.

In any case, it appeared that all other classes were adopting synthetic sails as a matter of progress and that the Snipe Class would have to do likewise in order to keep up with the

(Continued top of Page 5.)



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# TOM FROST REGAINS PACIFIC COAST TITLE



Beckner Photo.

THE WINNERS -- Champion Tom Frost and his expert crew, Dick Lewis. (No, that isn't a line through the deck--it's merely a brace for the splashboard.)

Tom Frost of Newport added another to his impressive string of Snipe laurels with a clear-cut victory July 9-10 at Sausalito at the Pacific Coast Championships of the SCIRA with a total score of 5544 points.

Eight Snipes from Southern California made the long trail to San Francisco Bay and virtually dominated the 23-boat regatta. Last year's Pacific Coast Champion, Charles Merrill, consistently 3rd, 2nd, 6th, and 10th, placed second with 5151 points. Clark King of Los Angeles came back after capsizing Saturday to win third place honors with a 13th, 5th, 2nd, and 7th and 4814 points. The only Northern California boat to hit the money was Jules Voerge of Lake Merritt, sailing his new COBRA into 4th place by virtue of a 6th, 8th, 4th, and 9th for 4707 points. George Walker and Jerry Thompson, both of Alamitos Bay, finished in fifth and sixth places respectively.

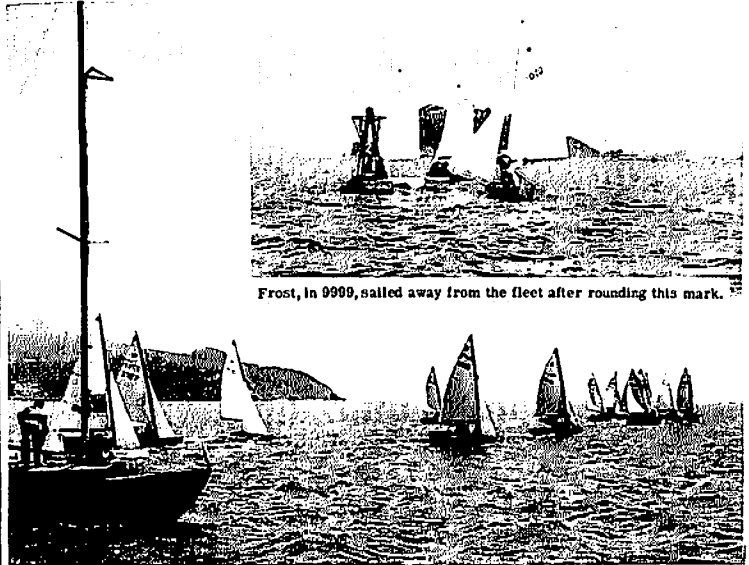
During the four races a variety of conditions existed. The Sausalito Yacht Club was a bee-hive of hectic activity Saturday morning as the boats were weighed in and sails measured. But the wind and chop were really whooping it up, making it necessary to postpone the first race until later in the afternoon.

Skippers and crews alike welcomed this chance to catch a breath and almost everyone knocked off for a bite to eat. Then long about 3 o'clock, the weather eased off sufficiently and the race committee decided to go ahead as planned. Two laps, windward-leeward--the race was on!

It was a 25-36 mph wind that came howling down Richardson Bay that afternoon; the race would be sailed, all right, but there were bound to be a few mishaps. Freddie Schenck, who always makes a big splash no matter where he goes, got the catastrophic parade off to a flying start when the mast of his CHEQUENDEQUE let go--in compression!--before he got out of the harbor. The little fireball is widely recognized as a top-notch crew, but he's dynamite on the tiller, too. Everyone was sorry to see him forced out of the regatta. Excitement reigned at the weather mark! But here, let a participant, Dick Lewis, the crew for Tom Frost, give you a first-hand account:

"Charlie Merrill led the fleet across the starting line and Tom followed closely on his tail. Then, at the first mark, the defending champ (Merrill) lost his crew over the side and Tom, after a nearly disastrous jibe, took over the lead. But the elements hadn't given up on SNOWBALL II, for a few seconds later a puff caught her while she was riding down a trough; instead of going over the next wave, she dove right into the middle of it. This brought the boat to a complete stop and over she went in nothing flat!

Tom jumped into the water almost immediately, lest the boat fill up, and a few seconds later, I scrambled over the high side; by some miracle of dumb luck, I wound up sitting on the dagger board and the boat came back up. So, after hardly ten



Frost, in 9909, sailed away from the fleet after rounding this mark.

START OF RACE 3 -- Committee boat in the foreground.

Photos by Albert Harris & Associates.

seconds' loss, the national champion was back in the race; he'd dropped back to second place, but pulled out in front once more to go on and win the race. Charlie King, 1950 National Champion, lost his rudder half-way through the race and the boat, he says, went around in 33 1/3 circles before he could get her back under control; in spite of his difficulties, however, he finished 12th."

This spot at Sausalito is known as Hurricane Gulch and as Snipes executed flying jibes around the first mark, four of the first five boats capsized. A heroic job of reclamation was displayed by Bob Huggins and his wife, Ellie, of the local snipe fleet, when SHADY TOO went over. Several of the boats wore around rather than jibing in the confusion of the downed boats. The crash boat picked up one fully capsized boat; otherwise the seamanship so evident on these small, fast boats prevailed. So, in the first race, Tom gained the lead after the weather mark and romped in easily; Rod Pimental took a fractional second over Charlie Merrill after coming up from ninth place on this fast, windward-leeward course.

Three races were held Sunday under ideal conditions. The sea was relatively smooth for San Francisco Bay and the wind a moderate 10-12 knots. The course was a triangle, twice around, and Lee Thompson, Jr., took the lead from Merrill on the second lap and held it, with Frost a still dangerous third.

The third race was held at noon with the previous day's windward-leeward course tripled. This race was plagued by the sportsmanlike withdrawal of seven boats that, at different times, had nudged marks or miscalculated their port tack speed. The fast Southern California boys generally dominated the lead, but Jules Voerge hit his stride to finish fourth here, after Frost (who won with a five minute margin), King, and Walker in that order.

The final race promised to be a light one, but the wind picked up on the first beat to Hurricane Gulch, favoring the boats who had tacked in out of the tide in order to gain a shore lift. The visitors had all tacked out and encountered lighter winds and a strong ebb tide, and here, in the fluky going with winds coming from all directions at once, the local boys began to ramble, with Rod Pimental's BLACK BEAUTY sniffing out the lead and increasing it with every puff. Gordon Prichett, who had moved into the secondary position early, split tacks with Jim Warfield for a split-second edge at the final whistle; 4th was Don Trask, 5th Bob Brown, all of the local fleet. The Southern California boats dropped well back with King finishing 7th, Merrill 10th, and Frost 11th.

It was a hotly contested series, to be sure; the local Snipe fleet at Lake Merritt had worked hard to put on a successful regatta and that it was! The sincere thanks of all the participants are extended to the people whose splendid co-operation made it possible--the Sausalito Yacht Club, the San Francisco Yacht Club, the Lake Merritt Sailing Club, and the newly organized Northern California Snipe Association.

—Doris Klein

(IMPROVEMENT from Page 3.)

other classes. Synthetic sails have the very appreciable advantages of no breaking in period, long life without change of shape, and no damage from rain or tip-overs. A number of young sailors who could not afford to buy new cotton sails every few years told me they preferred to buy one good suit of synthetic sails.

Finally, while on the subject of IMPROVEMENT, I think the big mistake was made in 1933 or about 15 years ago when almost all snipes built weighed 500 to 700 pounds. I know that when I bought my first snipe in 1940 along with several others in my club, I could not persuade the builder to give me a 450-460 pound boat--I got a 500 pound boat. The result of this early feeling of the builders that a heavy Snipe was the best was that there were thousands of heavy and fairly slow Snipes built which had to be considerably remodeled before they would "go".

A great deal more could be written on this subject, showing that SCIRA Governors of the past have all had the basic idea in mind that there should be no changes in the dimensions or basic speed of the boat and have rigidly enforced these fundamentals throughout the years. I believe that proof of the pudding is that any of the old boats can be rebuilt and, if properly sailed, would give good competition in a real hot regatta. It has been done!

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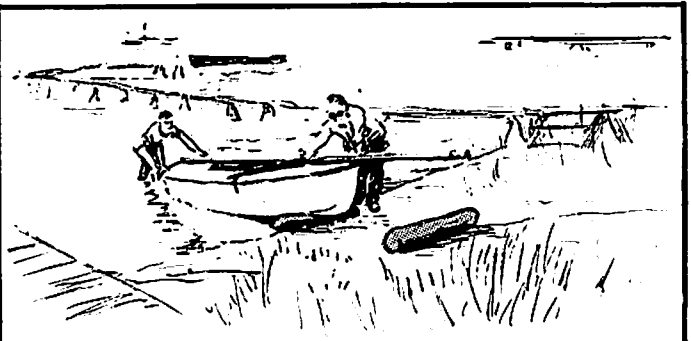
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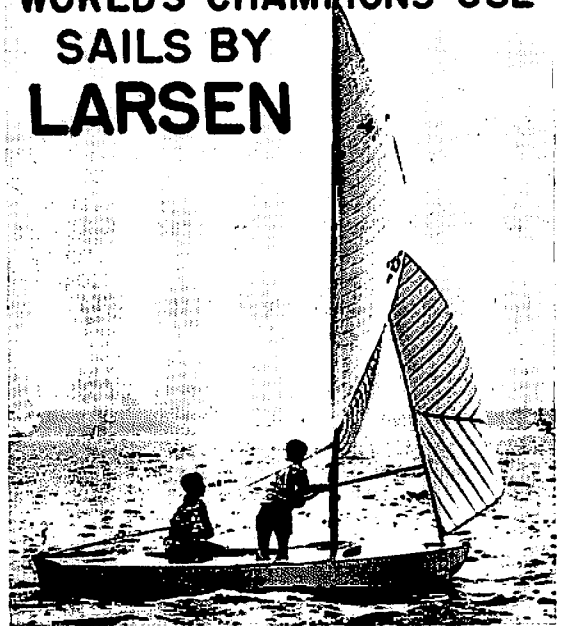
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# *Wells Wanderings* by Ted Wells

## Bermuda Report.

### Miter-Cut versus Standard Mains.

#### Helpful Hints for Regatta Committees.

#### Bermuda Report

(The Bermuda Report was announced in the heading last month and was simply omitted through avoidable error; likewise, the last three paragraphs of the Wanderings concerning courses should have been under the heading of Race Courses instead of being included under Starting Lines. Guess it was just one of those unexplainable days. —Ed.)

After spending ten days in Bermuda helping them to plan the 1956 Western Hemisphere Championship, I will probably sound like the local chamber of commerce (they call it Trade Development Board there), but I am sure that they will put on an excellent regatta and it is a wonderful place to go for a vacation to join in on the fun, if you can't be one of the two skippers from each country who will be eligible to sail there.

The Bermuda Islands are beautiful and very interesting to begin with; the regatta will be put on by an enthusiastic, capable bunch of small boat sailors, and there is an ideal body of water to sail on which is called Great Sound and is part of Hamilton Harbor. All marks can be at least a half mile away from any land, yet there is sufficient protection either from land or from reefs so that no trouble should be experienced from the sea.

They also will be able to furnish a good fleet of boats, which, while they may not be on a par with the best boats seen at a United States National Championship, will still be identical as far as racing capabilities are concerned, which, of course, is the important thing when a different boat is sailed in every race and borrowed boats are used by everyone.

In order to get their boats all equal, however, a number of Bermuda skippers are going to have to do what a large number of other skippers throughout the world ought to do during the off season.

A number of their boats are older and, while many of them have good equipment on them, some of them are a bit overweight as a result of unnecessary junk that could be removed, and all of them are suffering from rough bottoms, rough centerboards (item of incidental intelligence: the centerboard is called a fan in Bermuda and a plate in England), edges on the latter which could be sharpened considerably, and rudders which are the same way. SCIENTIFIC SAILBOAT RACING and past issues of the BULLETIN (adv. t.) give complete information on what to do about these situations. The only thing that the owner of such a boat needs to do to fix his boat up to be equal to a new one is have sufficient time and energy to get the job done. In every fleet, there are skippers who use as an alibi for not placing higher the fact that their boats are old and they just can't compete with the new ones. The only trouble with this alibi is that it just simply isn't any good, and all they are actually doing is admitting that they are lazy.

#### Miter-Cut versus Standard Mains

About the only real hot question which still exists pertaining to synthetic sails concerns the relative merits of mitre-cut

versus standard-cut mainsails. There are, of course, certain areas in which the battle of dacron versus orlon is still carried on heatedly; however, I think that it is going to be a long time before that particular question can be settled on the basis of anything except personal opinion, if it ever can be.

The same comment may well apply to the question of miter cut versus standard cut on mainsails. Theoretically, the miter cut should be slightly better, especially for light winds, as it appears to be possible to maintain the proper curvature of the main to a point a little closer to the boom with a miter cut than is possible with a standard cut; however, since results in light wind are influenced more by where you happen to be when things happen and what kind of control you have over the dice, it is going to be very difficult to get any proof either for or against this contention.

Against the miter-cut main is the fact that it probably won't flatten out quite as well when the wind picks up and therefore maybe the boat will heel more. The remaining fullness, however, is low down and maybe it will contribute more to making the boat go fast than it does to making the boat heel.

There is also a theory that if synthetic sails are faster than cotton sails, it is at least partially due to their smoothness and slickness. If this is the case, what is the effect going to be from having about half the seams on the main run at right angles to the air flow over the sail?

What's the correct answer? I don't know, and I don't think anyone else does; nor do I think that anyone will soon be able to definitely prove that his theory—whichever it may be—is correct. The only thing I am convinced of is that not having a miter-cut main is not going to be a very good alibi for not winning races.

#### Helpful Hints for Regatta Committees

##### Starting Lines. (Continued)

A perfect starting line could probably be defined as one on which an experienced skipper without a compass would be unable to make up his mind as to which end of the line would be best. This can be accomplished very simply by giving the port tack end of the line about a five degree advantage; since the Snipe tacks on about a ninety degree angle, this means that the angle between the starting line and the starboard tack close-hauled should be about 40 degrees. If the angle between the starting line and the starboard tack is forty-five degrees or more, there will be an increasingly large gangup at the windward end of the line as this angle increases; and since, in most cases, the wind is not steady enough to permit having an absolutely perfect starting line, it is better to err on the side of giving the port end more than it should have but only by a few degrees.

Since marks will be left to port if at all possible the committee boat will be (or at least should be—some race committees are a little casual on this) on the windward end of the line and a long anchor line will not interfere with the boats. If the wind is showing a consistent shift in one direction, an estimated amount of shift can be allowed prior to the five minute gun so that the line will be practically perfect at the starting gun.

The nervous tension is always high prior to the start of a race in an important regatta, and the racing skippers will remember the starting line long after they have forgotten everything else about the event. The people who sailed in Long Beach in 1950 are still talking about the perfect starting lines they had there, yet anybody who thinks the wind never shifts in Long Beach Harbor and that the race committee therefore had a cinch, just hasn't sailed there. The race committee was simply on the ball all the time. One interesting result of this was that Clark

## **CHICAGO BOAT SHOW—FEBRUARY 3 TO 12, 1956**

**SCIRA Dinner Feb. 11 at Chicago Yacht Club**

King and I, who were battling for first place all through the event, started on opposite ends of the line in every race, Clark preferring the windward end every time and I preferring the leeward end. On the other hand, there have been some important regattas at which the starting lines will be remembered for a considerably longer time and for opposite reasons.

There is no fixed rule as to the length of starting lines; however, a minimum is about 20 feet for each boat in the race. Lines much longer than this should be avoided simply because of the fact that the advantage occurring at one end or the other tends to be accentuated by a longer starting line.

The race committee boat is supposed to stay put after the start until it moves to establish the finish line. This staying in one place, however, is not too important providing the skippers know that during the race the boat will be moving around. It is, however, important that the committee boat should move to the opposite side of the mark to establish the finish line (assuming, of course, that it was on the right end of the line at the start). The finish line should be very carefully established so that it is absolutely at right angles to the course from the last mark, and the line should be long enough to accommodate a fairly large number of boats trying to cross it at the same time. The new rules, of course, take care of the circumstances in which it is impossible to move a committee boat and get it on the correct end of the line; however, the only excuse for not moving the committee boat should be failure of the power plant or inability to get the anchor up. There is also no big mystery as to the proper end of the line for the committee boat on either the start or the finish. The rule is very simply that all buoys are left on the same side. If marks are to be left to port, the buoy should be left to port on the start and also on the finish line. (To be continued)

#### As Others See It

### Voice Of The People

"The reproduction of the plans for the trailer in the August BULLETIN was superb. I hope there will be some snipers who will use them, for it is a good trailer.

If a correction is possible, I would like to make one now. In attaching the 2" draw bar to the channel iron, I believe it would be best to make a weld joint, besides using the 2 U bolts. The reason I specified attaching these two members together by U bolts alone was so you could disassemble the trailer for any special reason. However, I feel that once one of these things is put together, 99 out of 100 will never be taken apart. Also, a weld at this connection will prevent draw-bar from twisting because of uneven weight conditions caused by the crown of most roads. There are, no doubt, other points of the trailer that can be refined or improved and I would like to make this point known to snipers."

Stan White.

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### WANTED AND FOR SALE DEPARTMENT CLASSIFIED ADS. Used Boats and Equipment

Why not try an ad here for only five cents a word, at a minimum charge of \$2.00? RESULTS WILL BE GOOD!

**FOR SALE: REGISTERED SNIPE #4225.** ORIGINALLY BUILT FOR TED WELLS. Linen covered hull, new GERBER mast and boom. Stainless centerboard. 2 suits sails (RATSEY & JOY). Trailer. Nylon halyards and mooring. Good racing record. Barry Jonas, 330 E. 63rd. St., New York City. Circle 7-1769 or evenings TEmpleton 8-0043. Price: \$695.00

**DRY-SAILED SNIPE #6674** with 2 suits of sails. Plywood deck, all bottom seams routed, weight 460 lbs., for only \$395.00. Also new steel trailer for \$60.00. Boat is ready to sail. Paul G. Tillotson, 301 W. Lake, Peoria, Ill. Phone 5-5193.

**LAKE MEAD** - Would like to organize Yacht Club on Boulder Dam. Have 1 or 2 Snipes in the neighborhood. If interested in any way, contact Brick Diels, Box 230, Las Vegas, Nevada.

**FOR SALE: SNIPE DECALS.** Two bright red Snipe insignia 6 1/2" long with number decals, only \$1.00 postpaid. Use them on your car, trailer, boat, etc. STICKS ANYWHERE. Get them from SCIRA, 655 Weber Ave., Akron 3, Ohio.

**BUILD YOUR OWN TRAILER.** You can get blue-prints and a detailed instruction sheet for two different types of trailers which were especially designed by snipers to fit a SNIPE. Why spend a lot of money? Only \$1.25 postpaid, complete.

SCIRA, 655 WEBER AVE., AKRON 3, OHIO.



**STEP-ON-IT  
BILGE PUMP**  
*Leaves hands free!*  
**BRONZE-3 LBS.-5 FT. HOSE-49.95**  
POSTAGE 50¢

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## XMAS BOOKS for SNIPERS

Order AT ONCE for del-  
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SCIENTIFIC SAILBOAT  
RACING, by T. A. Wells,  
Price \$4.00.

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THESE PRICES IN U.S.A. ONLY.

Snipe Class Int'l Racing Ass'n.  
655 WEBER AVE. AKRON 3, OHIO



What You've Always Wanted  
**SNIPE INSIGNIA**  
 —the Ideal Christmas Gift!



**DITTY BAG**--This miniature sailbag stands 11" high, is complete in detail to the grip strap on the bottom and draw string top. Colors, white, lt. blue, red, lt. green, pale pink, & black. State class boat & #. If name of boat is desired, add 50¢ to order. .... \$3. 50



**WOMEN'S RIVIERA SHOES**--in sizes 5 to 9 in matching sailcloth and colors as ditty bag above. An attractive combination. . . . \$2. 95

**MEN'S RIVIERA SHOES**--same shoe as shown -available in sizes 8 to 12. Colors, white, red, avocado, dark brown, royal blue, and black. Ideal to wear on the boat, washable. . . . \$2. 95.



**LEATHER KEY CASE**--snipe insignia in a soft-finished leather, 6 colors to choose from--navy, red, dark brown, British tan, blege, and off-white. .... \$1. 00



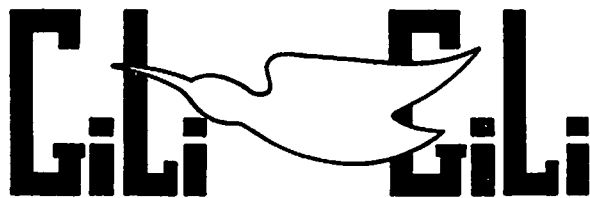
**SNIPE PIN**--vivid baked enamel on copper. Ideal for tie, coat lapel, or hat. Colors--red, navy, white, light blue, yellow, pink, and black. .... \$2. 00



**SNIPE CUFF-LINKS**--enamel same as pin and in the same vivid colors. .... \$3. 00



**SNIPE EARRINGS**--again in the same colors as the pins. These three--pin, cuff links, and earrings--make a wonderful set. .... \$3. 00.



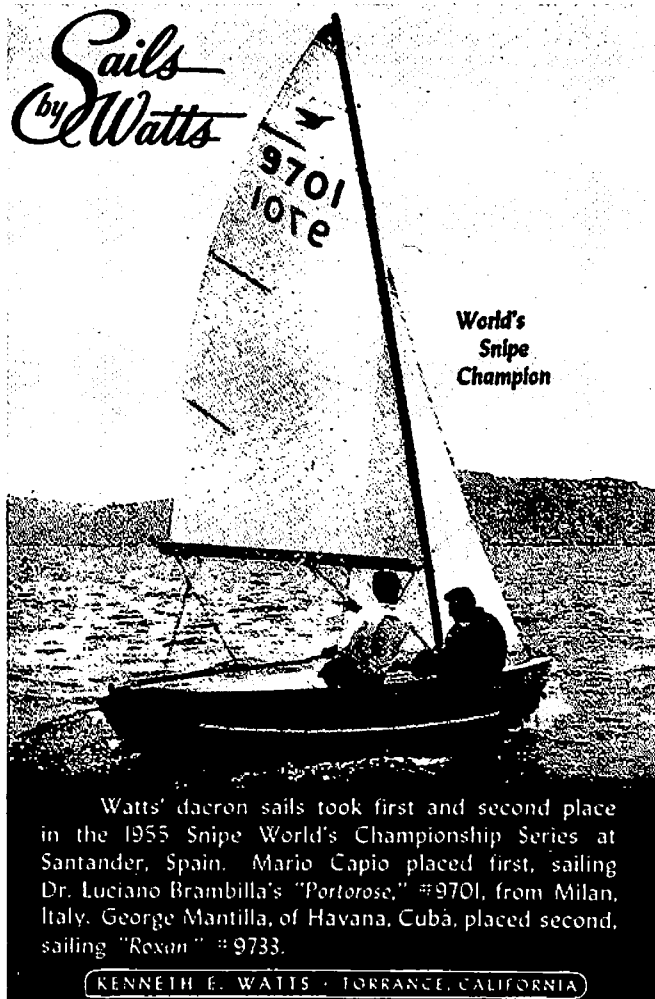
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Description	color	size	quantity

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Watts' dacron sails took first and second place in the 1955 Snipe World's Championship Series at Santander, Spain. Mario Capio placed first, sailing Dr. Luciano Brambilla's "Portorose," #9701, from Milan, Italy. George Mantilla, of Havana, Cuba, placed second, sailing "Roxon" #9733.

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**SAILMAKER to**

HARRY ALLEN  
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 and proud of it!

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Use the Gilreath designed  
**RUBBER RUB-RAIL**

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OLD SCOTCH AIR.

Hang the mistletoe and holly,  
 Deck the hall and let's be jolly!  
 Hold the ladder steady, dear—  
 Oops! There goes the chandelier.

Green the leaf and bright the berry!  
 Go and mix the Tom-and-Jerry.  
 Gather 'round and let's be jolly—  
 HANG the mistletoe and holly!  
 —Ruth L. Kirke