

Chapin Edges To Western Hemisphere Win

Augie Diaz, in close pursuit, captures second place

The 16th Western Hemisphere Championship was held December 7-14, 1980 in Montevideo, Uruguay. Dave Chapin with crew Scott Young of the U.S.A. was the winner with Augie Diaz and crew Gonzo Diaz, also of the U.S.A. second place. The defending champion Ivan Pimental and crew Carlos Gordillo of Brazil were third. Brothers Hector and Hugo Longarela from Argentina were fourth and Paulo Oliveira and Alfredo Correa, Brazil rounded out the top five.

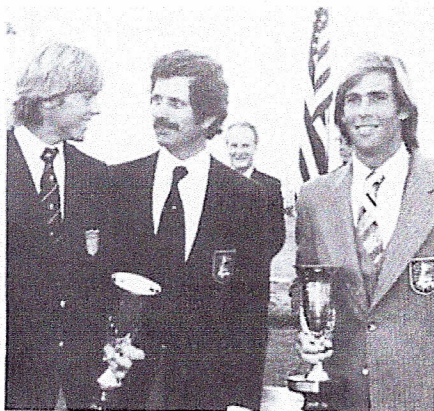
This championship is held biennially, alternating with the world championships. Boats are furnished by the host country and each skipper must sail a different boat in each race. Two entries are allowed from each country, plus the defending champion. This year eight countries with a total of fourteen skippers were entered.

Dave Chapin is the current World Champion and now has the Western Hemisphere Championship to add to his list of firsts. In fact he is the only one in our history to hold both the World and Western Hemisphere titles at the same time. Dave and Scott are both students at the University of Texas.

Augie and Gonzo Diaz are sons of Commodore Gonzalo Diaz. Augie is current U.S. National Champion and a past winner of the Western Hemisphere title. He was second in the other time he contended and was second in his only try for the World Championship. Augie and Gonzo are in the family business in Miami, Florida.

Ivan Pimental was the defending champion and is an architect from Rio de Janeiro. He provided the usual strong competition that is expected from the Brazilians.

In the Western Hemispheres, the boats are all borrowed and are rotated between contestants after each race, so there is always an element of luck involved. But Chapin grabbed the lead by winning the first race and held it throughout the series, showing the style of a world champion. However, he was pressed hard all the way by Diaz, and it was not until the last leg of the final race that the championship was decided. If Augie had gotten the second place in that race, he would have beaten Dave for the championship.



Bertrand Gayet, Western Hemisphere Secretary shown congratulating Dave Chapin and Scott Young. (Buzz Lamb photo)

The races were held on the Rio de la Plata and under ideal conditions. Montevideo is at the mouth of the river with no land directly south except Antarctica. The width at this point is nearly 100 miles but the depth is only 12 to 15 feet. There is no perceptible tide but the wind driven currents are very noticeable. When the wind blows there is a short and vicious chop with waves which were described as "square". A capsize in these waters requires nimble work to prevent the mast from being stuck in the mud.

All races were held on schedule except one which had to be postponed when the wind was over 30 knots. There was one race, the first, with heavy wind and a couple of others with light conditions, but there were no drifters.

The race committee chairman, Joe Murguia, did a fine job of running the races, as well as being regatta chairman. He was ably assisted by Horacio Garcia Pastori. The Yacht Club Uruguayo is an old and interesting club. The eight story club house had all the facilities for feeding, housing and entertaining. The members were all most gracious and everything was done to make the championship a memorable one for all in attendance.

FIRST RACE

The light off-shore wind available as the boats left the harbor for the first race of the series built to 10 to 12 before the start. Argentina's Longarela brothers

broke their gooseneck fitting at the boom during the 5 minute countdown. A short postponement showed that the break couldn't be repaired on the water. Break-down points were awarded to that team for the race.

After the postponement, the first start was spoiled as a big puff just before the starting gun took many boats over, causing a general recall. In the second start, boats held back until the last few seconds, and the whole fleet made a clean start.

At the first mark Augie Diaz led, followed by Thode of Uruguay and Dave Chapin. Defending champion Ivan Pimentel was 8th. On the reach Augie increased his lead, but Chapin passed Thode; and at the end of the triangle Augie was just inside Dave at the rounding. At this point, a small front — a pamperito in local vernacular — went through, causing a big shift and increase in the wind which was now very strong — gusting above 30 at times. Several boats capsized, and only 10 finished.

Dave Chapin led as the boats rounded the last leeward mark, and Augie lost Juan MacCall of Argentina at the rounding, only to retake MacCall and threaten Chapin at the finish. The finishing positions were Chapin, Diaz, MacCall, Torben Graef of Brazil and Thode.

SECOND RACE

Uruguay's spring turned unseasonably hot for the races, and the second race was no exception. The morning wind was out of the west at 8 to 10 mph. A 10 minute postponement was called to accommodate a problem caused by changing masts damaged in the high wind of the first race. The first start was spoiled as the boats forced each other up and over the line early. In the second start the boats crowded the committee boat end, and again there was a general recall. With the DSQ rule in effect, all boats were careful on the next start, which got away OK.

All the boats worked the right side of the course, although the wind was still on the mark. At the first rounding Amakawa of Japan led Pimentel, Chapin, Diaz, and MacCall. At the end of the triangle the

leaders remained the same as at the first windward mark. The wind was gradually dying, and shifted, so that the windward mark was moved 30 degrees. By the second windward mark Ivan Pimentel had taken the lead, followed by Amakawa, Chapin, Diaz, and Torben GraeL. These positions were maintained to the finish.

THIRD RACE

The start was clean in the light westerly wind of 8 to 10. Chapin started at the committee boat end and continued until he tacked on Pimentel, who had started further down the line. Both worked the right side of the course, with Dave gaining the upper hand in the first third of the leg. Diaz worked the left side of the course, with more favorable wind, but less favorable current. At the first mark rounding Dave Chapin was followed by Torben GraeL, Paulo Oliveira of Brazil, and Juan MacCall, with Augie in 5th, and Ivan back in the pack.

By the second windward mark Dave had worked out a big lead, followed by GraeL, Augie, and Johnny MacCall. Paulo Oliveira, who was 5th at this point fouled MacCall, and dropped out of the race before the finish.

At the finish it was Chapin, GraeL, Diaz, MacCall, and Ivan Pimentel, who had worked his way up to 5th place.

At this point — in very unofficial scoring — Chapin led, with Diaz second, GraeL 3rd, Pimentel 4th, and MacCall fifth.

FOURTH RACE

Thursday morning had been declared a lay day for rest and recuperation and touring the town. A front, with the expected east wind, arrived during mid-morning, bringing high winds, and causing eventual cancellation of the afternoon race, as the local naval authority closed the port.

Winds moderated by Friday morning, and the 4th race got underway in winds of 15 to 20, with big waves and heavy chop. Chile's Felipe Cubillos had a half-yard problem, but managed an on-the-water repair, and started about 2 minutes late.

Augie got the pin end start, and Pedro Garra of Uruguay was most windward boat. With most of the fleet working the left side of the course, Augie led at the 1st mark, and Garra was second. The Longarela twins were 3rd, Johnny MacCall 4th, and Ivan Pimentel 5th. Dave Chapin (working with "Hiram", reputed to be one of the slowest boats) was 11th.

Positions remained the same at the reach mark, but Dave had worked into 8th by the end of the triangle. The first 5 were the same boats, but Garra was 4th,

and the Longarelas second. Chapin was 7th. The finishing order was Augie, Longarela, GraeL, Oliveira (who had a great last beat) and Dave Chapin 5th, just beating out Pimentel.

FIFTH RACE

With wind 15 to 18 and even higher waves than in the morning race, the fleet got a good start on the first try. Boats were mostly bunched at the pin end, but Pimentel was holding back behind the committee boat, and shot out to lead on that end, just as the gun sounded. At the first mark the positions were: Dave, Augie, Longarela, Ivan, and Paulo Oliveira. On the wild planing reach, first Longarela, and then Ivan managed to plane past Augie — who had one of his "bad" boats. Paulo held 5th. These positions were maintained on the second reach with all the leaders — except Dave, all alone in first — fighting each other for position, while maintaining the boats on a plane, in the tricky waves. The first triangle took only 27 minutes for the lead boat.

Augie took Ivan back on the beat, and at the finish it was Dave, Longarela, Augie, Ivan, and Johnny MacCall just ahead of Paulo Oliveira.

SIXTH RACE

Temperatures were cooler, and seas were down, but the swells left from the easterly wind were complicated by a cross chop from the new northwesterly winds, for the start of race six. The start was postponed to allow time to get the boats in the water, as the wind had emptied the shallow harbor, making it almost a portage.

The start was good, although boats were crowding the line. Diaz and Chapin were first at the mark, followed by Pimentel and Garra. On the second reach Dave went low, and lost two boats. During the second beat the wind lessened, and began to shift more to the west, working toward the threatening clouds coming from south west. Both Dave and Augie lost boats, although they split to opposite sides of the course. Pimentel was now leader, followed by Oliveira, Garra, Diaz, two Chilean boats, and Chapin.

As the wind swung toward the cloud formation, both the leeward and windward marks were shifted by the committee. In spite of the change in the marks, the final beat turned into a reaching march to the finish lead by Pimentel, Oliveira, Diaz, Garra, and Chapin.

SEVENTH RACE

Augie, the only one who could still beat Dave for the Championship, had to be either 1st or 2nd, and have 2 boats

between himself and Dave. Ivan could still beat Augie overall if he had 1st and two boats between them.

Rain had begun as the boats left the harbor, and the prediction was for winds up to force 5, and rough seas. Instead, the winds decreased, and shifted, causing the committee to reset the line farther out in the river. A strong current was running, making the shore (port) side much favored.

On the start Dave hit the pin end mark and re-rounded. Being behind, he headed into the current on the non-favored side of the course. At the mark Longarela led, followed by Fumio Amakawa of Japan. Ivan was 4th, Augie 5th, and Dave 9th. By the reach mark there was the beginning of a wind shift, and boats were on a tight reach to the "leeward" mark. By the second windward mark Amakawa was in first with a commanding lead, and Augie had moved into 2nd. Ivan was 5th and Dave was still in 9th place.

As the boats approached the finish line, Amakawa still had his big lead on all the other boats, and Augie and Ivan were now fighting for the second place finish. Dave, now in 7th could not control the outcome, but was close enough to observe the action, as Ivan managed to cross and Augie had to take his stern. This was three tacks from the finish, but from that

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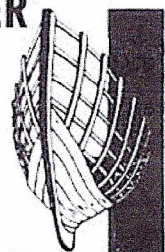
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Western Hemispheres . . .

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point there was no doubt — Ivan took the second for that race, Augie the third, and Dave took the championship.

BOATS

"The country holding the regatta must furnish an adequate number of equally matched boats . . . the skippers shall draw a boat by lot for each race . . .", SCIRA Rule Book, page 64.

Other than the prohibitively expensive option of brand new boats delivered to the club holding the regatta, there is no way of providing equal boats for a round-robin event — and "equal" is usually a comparative absolute at best, depending on who does the evaluation.

In the Hemisphere series there is the further complication of having more contestants than races; therefore not all boats are sailed by all contestants. In this championship the boats, all owned by members of Uruguay's top fleets, were handicapped as to previous performance, and placed in two groups. The contestants first drew lots as to which group they were in, and then drew lots for order of boat rotation.

In racing, contestants were allowed to add compasses (as navigational aids), and

some other minor personal items (such as a longer tiller extension); but additions could only be taped on, or attached in some non-permanent manner.

The boats did not always conform to their predicted performance, and the psychology of the draw probably entered into the contestant's performance in some races. Augie mentioned halfway through the series that Dave would get his "bad" boats at the end, but by then it might not matter, since he might have the regatta won. In the last race Augie had a Cyclone boat — much like one which he had owned and raced. Dave had a "bad" boat — and his worst race — but he also had an upset stomach; he hit the mark on the start, and on re-rounding headed into the current on the "wrong" side of the

course. There was also the psychological problem of a potential loss to Augie, which more-or-less would have been a repeat of the U.S. Nationals, which was lost on the last beat of the last race — at the finish line.

The second problem of borrowed boats is in breakdowns — an added risk when the skipper can't be expected to know about a boat's maintenance — or weak spots. The Longarelas had to take breakdown points for the first race, and might have finished better than their average points for that finish.

One contestant suggested that better equality of boats could be achieved by having an expert appointed to rig and tune boats before a championship in which borrowed boats are used.

WESTERN HEMISPHERE CHAMPIONSHIP

Boat	Skipper/Crew	Country	Places	Points Finish
24094	Dave Chapin/Scott Young	U.S.	1-3-1-4-1-5-(7)	23.7 1
23712	Agustin Diaz/Gonzalo Diaz	U.S.	2-(4)-3-1-3-3-3	25.8 2
24214	Ivan Pimentel/Carlos Gordilho	Brazil	(7)-1-5-5-4-1-2	31 3
24043	Hector Longarela/Hugo Longarela	Argentina	Pls-6-6-2-2-(10)-5	47.3 4
12111	Paulo Oliveira/Alfredo Correa	Brazil	6-8-(nf)-3-6-2-4	54.1 5
10771	Juan MacCall/Diego Brauer	Argentina	3-(9)-4-6-5-8-8	63.4 6
20524	Fumio Amakawa/Hitoshi Horiguchi	Japan	(nf)-2-12-10-9-11-1	69 7
21649	Jaime Fernandez/Francisco Perez	Chile	8-(10)-7-8-10-6-6	80.4 8
24589	Fernando Thode/Eduardo Thode	Uruguay	5-7-8-9-8-(12)-9	81 9
12296	Torben Grael/Lars Grael	Brazil	4-5-2-(dq)-ns-ns-ns	81 10
22207	Pedro Garra/Cesar Brignoni	Uruguay	9-11-9-7-(nf)-4-12	86 11
21648	Felipe Cubillos/Rodrigo Searle	Chile	(nf)-13-10-11-7-7-10	94 12
24116	Chris Hains/Ian McKinnel	Canada	10-12-(13)-12-11-9-11	101 13
22269	Bertrand Gayet/Cesar Spezzini	Paraguay	nf-14-11-(ns)-12-13-ns	113 14



Felipe Cubillos and Rodrigo Searle from Chile are almost hidden by the waves of the Rio de la Plata. (Buzz Lamb photo)

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