



Hackworth and Dickinson with the Buenos Aires skyline in the background (Means Davis photo)

THE 1990 WESTERN HEMISPHERE CHAMPIONSHIPS CLUB NAUTICO OLIVOS, BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

By Pete Fenner

Twelve teams from six countries gathered at Club Nautico Olivos in Buenos Aires, Argentina for the opening ceremony of the 21st Snipe Western Hemisphere Championship. Warm easterly breezes from eight to twelve knots allowed most of the races to start a short distance out from the club on the Rio La Platta. This river, which is almost 25 miles wide at this point, is more like a large shallow bay with a constant current running downstream to the south and the South Atlantic 50 miles away.

Even moderate breezes would develop a noticeable short chop as the day went on. Following a front which caused major flooding the night after the first races, the wind went to the west. During races 3 and 4 this west wind became quite shifty as it blew off the Buenos Aires shoreline. By the time the lay day had passed and races 5 and 6 were run, the wind had returned to the prevailing north-easterly direction

and velocity.

The Club Nautico Olivos is a fine facility for this event, with a big lawn and swimming pool overlooking the sailing area. Pedro Sisti and his race committee were the most low-key and efficient I have ever experienced. Lines were great, with only one recall in the whole event. Mark setting and moving were handled with little fuss or bother. Off the water, Johnny McCall did a great job organizing the event including housing, transportation, and boats for the competition. To insure access to good boats, Johnny required every competitor in the Argentine trials to agree to make his boat available for the Western Hemisphere Championship. As a result, some of Argentina's best wood and plastic boats were used in the event. In fact, the boat with the best record was a 26000-series wood boat built in Brazil.

Overall, the conditions provided a good test of the competitors' sailing skill. The

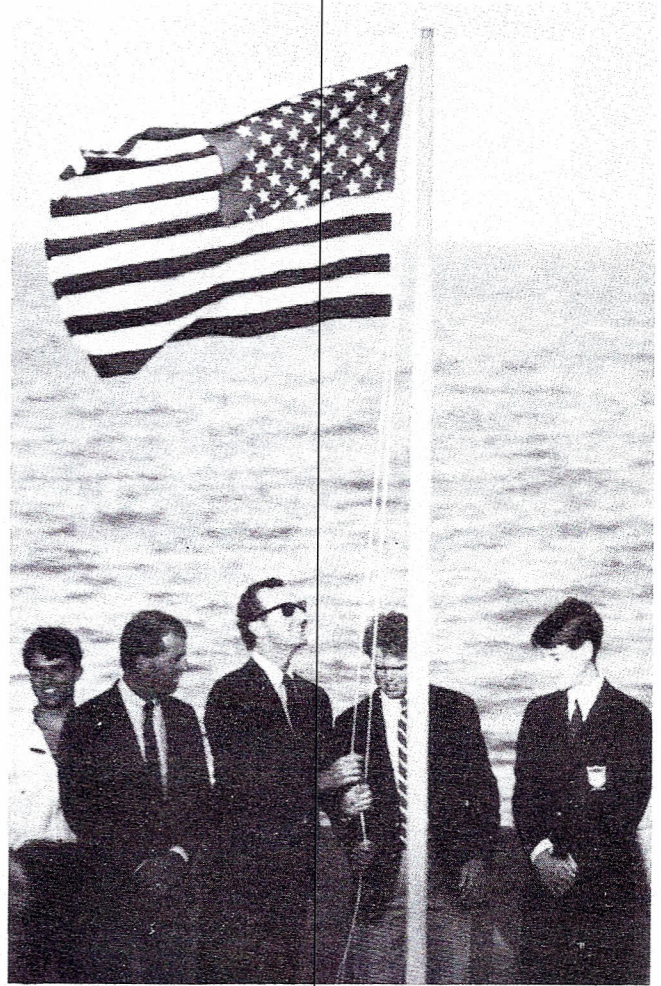
competition was tight, with four teams having a chance to win the championship going into the last race. There is always a bit of luck in this type of championship where borrowed boats are used and the sailors use a different boat in each race. However, World Champions Ricardo Fabini and Harold Meerhoff of Uruguay won the last race to win the championship over the 1988 Champions Ivan Pimentel and Sergio Araujo. The two Argentine teams of Parada/Martinez and Borgstrom/Revora finished third and fourth.

Following the opening ceremony and a great cocktail party the previous evening, the Championship started with two races on Monday, November 19, 1990. As many competitors were getting adjusted to the conditions, Fabini and Meerhoff won the first race of the series, followed by Leme/Feltrim team from Brazil and Parada/Alves of Argentina. The second race was won by Torkel Borgstrom and Raul Re-

vora of Argentina followed by Parada/Alves and Leme/Feltrim. The first day's results left the Borgstrom/Revora team with a slim quarter point lead over the Parada/Alves.

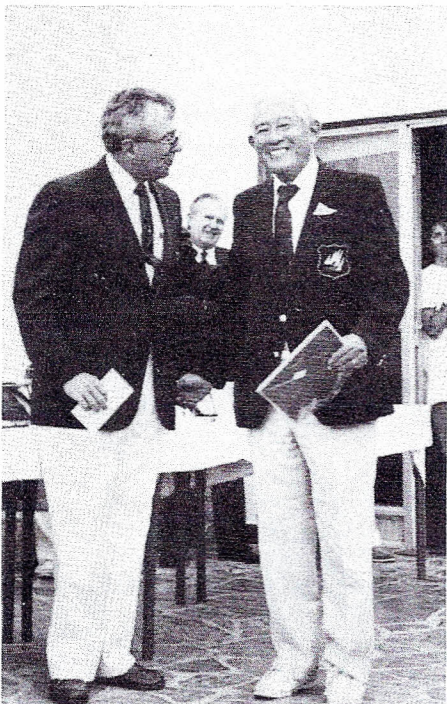
Monday night a strong front blew into Buenos Aires with 4 inches of rain which caused extensive flooding. As a result, Tuesday provided some of the most interesting Snipe racing to watch. Race three started in a southwest breeze of 12 knots off the city. As the racers approached the first mark toward shore, they were challenged by wind streaks and quick shifts. The Parada team lead at the first mark, followed by the teams of Leme, Borgstrom, and Fabini. Each team held its position for the next three legs. On the run, the Borgstrom team passed Leme/Feltrim and closed on Parada. However, Parada held on during the last beat to win followed by the Borgstrom, Leme, and Fabini teams.

In the fourth race, Ivan Pimentel showed the boys how to sail off the wind. As the storm clouds cleared, the wind picked up to 18 knots off the land with shifts and wind streaks. Leme and Fabini were the leaders at the first weather mark. Ivan started the first reach in eighth place. Going low on a planning pole reach, Ivan had moved up to fourth at the jibe mark. After a clean jibe with the pole up, Ivan went

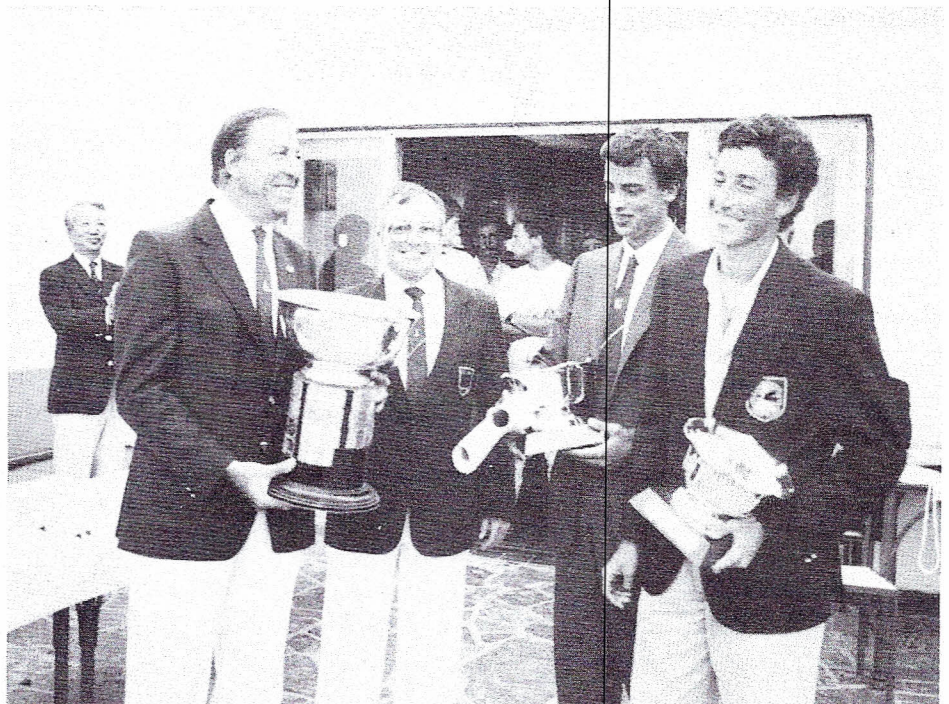


The U.S. team at the Westerns; l-r: Chuck Sinks, Jack Franco, Bart Hackworth, and Hal Gilreath. (Means Davis photo)

Japan's Katsumi Hirata accepts a plaque from Commodore Fenner, recognizing him as Honorary Vice Commodore.



Uruguay celebrates another championship! l-r: National Secretary Luis Alberto Carluccio, Commodore Peter Fenner, crew Harold Meerhoff, and skipper Ricardo Fabini show the Hayward Western Hemisphere trophy. (Means Davis photo)



high. Jumping on a plane with the next puff, he quickly passed the next two boats and began to close on the leader Leme. About 200 yards from the leeward mark Ivan took the lead, rounding the mark 10 yards ahead of Leme. Through the shifts and wind streaks of the second weather leg he held the lead. As Ivan rounded the second weather mark with about a 30-yard lead, his main halyard shackle broke and his main sank slowly onto the deck.

The Leme team went on to win the race, with the American team of Bart Hackworth and Chuck Sinks getting second and Torkel and Raul taking third. Ivan requested redress and was awarded first place points for his breakdown, a result that most competitors seemed to feel was fair given his total dominance of the first half of the race.

After a lay day on Wednesday, Thursday's weather was back to a light 6- to 8-knot northeasterly breeze with scattered clouds for the fifth race. The Parada/Martinez team won, leading the race from the first mark. Most of the race Fabini/Meerhoff battled with the Japanese team of Yaguchi and Ogowa for second while Ivan and Sergio were fourth. On the last beat Ivan and Hackworth went right while the leaders went left. At the finish Ivan had moved to second with the Yaguchi

team third, Fabini fourth, and Hackworth fifth.

As the clouds cleared, the wind picked up to 10 knots from the northeast for the sixth race. At the first mark the Yaguchi team lead the race followed by Ivan, the Japanese team of Sugiyama and Sugimoto, Fabini, and Parada. By the second mark Fabini had moved to third. During the second weather leg Fabini broke the cover of the two ahead of him and went right to gain a slim lead at the fourth mark. Fabini opened his lead on the next two legs to finish ahead of Yaguchi and Ivan. At the end of six races with their worst race thrown out, Parada led Fabini by one point

with Ivan and Torkel tied, three and one quarter points out of the lead.

The seventh and final race was sailed in the usual 10-knot breeze from the northeast. At the first mark Ivan had the lead with Fabini second, Borgstrom fifth and Parada eighth. A second behind Ivan would have given the victory to Fabini. However, on the second weather leg, Fabini passed Ivan and went on to win both the race and the Championship. Certainly, Fabini and Meerhoff have demonstrated their mastery of Snipe Class competition as both the current World and Western Hemisphere Champions.

1990 WESTERN HEMISPHERE CHAMPIONSHIPS
Club Nautico Olivos, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Finish	Skipper/Crew	Boat	Country	Places	Points
1	Ricardo Fabini/Harold Meerhoff	25186	Uruguay	.75-(6)-4-4-4-1-1	14.25
2	Ivan Pimentel/Sergio Araujo	23612	Brazil	(8)-5-5-YMP-2-3-2	17.75
3	Guillermo Parada/Gonzalo Martinez	10883	Argentina	3-2-.75-6-.75-6-(9)	18.50
4	Torkel Borgstrom/Raul Revora	17490	Argentina	4-.75-2-3-6-(10)-5	20.75
5	Antonio Leme/Pepe D'Elia	26680	Brazil	2-3-3-.75-(11)-8-7	23.75
6	Bart Hackworth/Chuck Sinks	25992	USA	7-(10)-6-2-7-5-3	30.00
7	Kazuma Yasuchi/Yuzuru Ogawa	27875	Japan	5-(12)-7-8-3-2-6	31.00
8	Taketasu Sugiyama/Tomoki Sugimoto	27757	Japan	(10)-4-10-5-5-4-4	32.00
9	Rafael Paradede/Fernando Alves	26915	Brazil	6-9-8-7-8-9-(DNF)	47.00
10	Alesandro Garcia/Diego Garcia	12733	Uruguay	9-7-9-(10)-9-7-10	51.00
11	Jack Franco/Hal Gilreath	26752	USA	11-11-11-9-(12)-11-8	61.00
12	Stevie Dickinson/Damian Payne	24602	Bermuda	12-8-(DNF)-DNF-10-12-11	66.00

A COMPETITOR'S VIEW

By Hal Gilreath

Close racing typified this event, as did excellent regatta support, high-caliber competition, and a beautiful sailing venue off of picturesque Buenos Aires. From the time of each team's arrival until their departure, all transportation, housing, social and sailing requirements were immediately met.

The Race Committee displayed a keen awareness of condition as two hour races were sailed in a variety of winds and seas. Punctuality, proper starting and finishing lines and accurate course adjustments characterized the committee's efforts. The top five teams clearly showed the results of their extensive training efforts. They were superior to the other seven teams with slight edges in speed, boat handling, and tactics. These small advantages were magnified over the course of the two hour races. The result was consistently high finishes, a paucity of tactical mistakes, and the ability to overcome small errors.

The following are some observations of the top five teams that differ from the

standards that I have noticed in North America:

The boats were local Argentine Alax (glass) and wooden Brazilian and Argentine hulls. The rigs were U.S. and South American Cobra and Bruder spars. The boats were rigged for the prevalent local heavy air conditions. Traveller controls were placed behind the skipper rather than in front as is the norm in the U.S. Also, increased purchase on the boom-vang and aft-puller were used for greater reliance on vang sheeting and increased use of the aft puller.

Boathandling observed noted a more forceful employment of upwind kinetics. The kinetics appeared to be used to aid in upwind steering and working the boat through the short and steep chop. The sailing area, fifty miles wide and six feet deep, encouraged the use of these body movements. Additionally, the top five teams, with the exception of Fabini, sailed upwind sitting very far aft.

Crew placement was latitudinally cen-

tered six inches aft of the daggerboard trunk. Fabini and Meerhoff placed their weight in the more conventional forward position. No major weight placement differences were noted downwind.

Upwind sail sheeting was markedly looser than in North America. A lower heading was steered, resulting in better speed through the chop and an overall increase in distance made to weather. This style integrated well with crew placement as it is normal to move farther aft as a lower course is steered. Also, sitting farther aft aided in raising the bow over the steep chop. No major differences were noted in downwind speed or techniques.

There was only one day with planing reaches and only Ivan Pimental of Brazil displayed any large speed advantage over the fleet. On behalf of all of the competitors, I want to thank John MacCall, Club Nautico Olivos, and everyone who worked so hard to make this such a super event. My skipper, Jack Franco, and I had a great time!