

Fifth Annual Champions Regatta
James Island Venue
Charleston, South Carolina
March 3 and 4 2007
Rick West RD and Frank Angel Scorer

Five competitors from the 2006 Colonial, Dixie and Florida sailing series gathered with Jarl Wathne, the 2006 CR winner and current National Champion. John Ebell was the rookie from Colonial, as all others had been here before. This is an anticipated event and like Jarl said, "Like the swallows returning to Capistrano," half the fleet gathered at Bessinger's for a noon BBQ meal on Friday. The event would be intense competition and the better it would be the more fun all would have. So, the fleet warmed up with a boisterous feast at the Crab Shack in Folly Beach that night.

Joining the fleet and the festivities we are blessed to have supporters in this minimally staffed event. Allan Fernald left his working boat in New York Harbor, Doug Wotring from a driveway with four inches of ice on it in Harrisburg and Cameron Hunt from his CPA services in Greensboro. Bill and Jenny Coates were there each morning with donuts and coffee, as we provide nothing for the fleet but water. Yes, there was no Gatorade. Thanks you all!

Saturday morning came without rain but light winds from the southwest to a course on the eastern shoreline. It was cool with jackets, long pants and gloves donned for the first race. The winds grew to 8 knots by noon with Reichard Kahle, Chris Kakavas, Jarl Wathne, Danny Thomas, John Bottensek and David Brawner clearly establishing the front-runner set.

The wind clocked westward in clear skies and a steady 8 knots and the leaders began to emerge while bullets were spread out through the fleet. John Ebell had an uncontested win in race 12. Gerry Cobley began the event with a bullet and won the last race of the day, as all retired to the cabins. With the only throwout of the event factored, Kakavas, Kahle and Thomas were one point apart after 14 races.

The fleet was well behaved, as usual, relaxed with a bit of poking fun and always quiet. It is quiet when this A Fleet sails.

All rolled out of the park at 1800 for Gilligans about nine miles away where our own room was provided for the event within an event, the EC12 Class Saturday night dinner party. Without the public looking on some forgave shyness to the silliness of boys at play with friends. While playful insults were hurled about the room Papa Dick Gerry appeared to be fond of pink when it was suggested to be his favorite color and that Scott Todd was wearing pink also. Papa Dick began slinking seductive approach across the room toward Scott when the target made the quote of the night, "Somebody find this man a date." It was a showstopper.

Sunday morning brought 10 to 12 knots right out of the gate from the northwest corner and the B rigs were up. This was typical Charleston and the course was moved to the north shore. Five races were sailed and the fortunes of many were changed, as the wind freshened even more. While these conditions are sailable they place stresses on boats and competitors alike. Things started to break, as the experienced fleet moved further apart from each other on the water with survival in mind. Amid this Danny Thomas separated himself from the fleet, Reichard Kahle fell deeper into the fleet with poor performing B sails.

The winner was clearly established and when the breeze reached 20 knots at 1100 the event was called to the relief of many.

Congratulations to Danny Thomas of the Maryland MYC for his third win of the Sir Francis of Graham Trophy over some of the best we have in the Class.

On the road again...
Like a band of gypsies we go down the highway
We're the best of friends
Insisting that the world be turnin' our way...

Rick West