

## **To All East Coast Fall Series Competitors:**

We are now halfway through the ECFS season, with four regattas to go. All of the individual regatta results – including crew names – have been posted on the TCA website. These are all "clickable" directly from the homepage "News" item announcing the winners – or from the "Events" page for a specific regatta listing.

In addition, the Cox-Sprague Standings for skippers will be available on the website shortly. A sneak preview of the current leaders is given below.

The really cool thing about the East Coast Fall Series at mid-season is that there is still time for ANYONE to qualify and win – even if you haven't sailed in a single event yet. So far this year, we've had 55 different teams participate – just one boat off last year's pace at mid-season. Overall, a total of 91 boats took part in the 2007 version of the ECFS. Let's see if we can top that in 2008!

Figuring out who's ahead under the Cox-Sprague scoring system can drive you nuts, because the possibilities are even more complicated than the wild-card selections in baseball. First, each boat's low-point finish in every race of a regatta is assigned a "C-S" percentage based on the total number of boats in the event. Finishing 3rd in a 5-boat race (e.g., Sayville) earns a lot fewer points than finishing 3rd in a 25-boat fleet (e.g., Westport). These values are then totaled and weighted for a theoretical average number of races per regatta.

The ECFS Excel spreadsheet that accomplishes this task has more formulas than Einstein, where nothing is ever as simple as  $E = MC^2$ ! Known in polite circles as the "Cox-Sprague Machine," it is the invention of outgoing TCA President Charlie Kreitler. We have given it the code name "ENEMA," for the silent hosing it gives unwitting skippers on the final day of the racing season.

So it's never really over until it's over. The guys with only one regatta under their belt can get the minimum of one throw-out if they race every event remaining in the series. But everyone with two, three or four regattas to their credit (modesty prevents me from naming names) – well, all of these guys are still in the running for TWO throwouts, which can toss everything into a cocked hat right up to the last weekend at the Red Dragon Canoe Club.

### **SNEAK PREVIEW**

But for those of you sailboat racing addicts who crave the inside scoop, here is a sneak preview of how the competition is shaping up at the All-Star Break. The leading contenders are the skippers who are already doing well and have completed at least two events – three-time national champion Brent Barbehenn, `perennial' ECFS champion John Baker, America's Cup veteran Steve Gruver, Dave Hansen, Brian Kitchin and Bill Wilson. Scott Latham, Mike McBride and Craig Smith are within shouting distance of a top-five finish. And two-time national champion Chris Pollak, with only one regatta under his belt at this point, is well known for his late-season charge. But don't count out some of the other guys who have sailed only one or two regattas and can still come back with a string of good ones.

Still to come on the schedule this weekend (October 4-5) is the fifth regatta in the ECFS – the Kayaderosseras Kup at the Saratoga Lake Sailing Club in Ballston Spa, NY. The forecast is for beautiful weather with medium breeze. It is a gorgeous venue with vibrant fall colors and frequently more than one nip in the air. The lake is located not too far from the famous racetrack, and downtown Saratoga offers a full range of dining and drinking experiences for those who arrive early on Friday. The place to be on Saturday is the club, which hosts a

wonderful Italian snarfing extravaganza after racing that day. There are usually 20-plus boats. Get in touch with Dave Hudson ([hudsod@rpi.edu](mailto:hudsod@rpi.edu)) for more details.

Next comes the Oyster Roast (Oct. 11-12) at the Severn Sailing Association in Annapolis, MD. The event drew 40 boats last year. We are busing in slews of oysters from Chincoteague this year, which will be served both raw and steamed. There will also be miles of lemon chicken, pasta, salad and dessert for the non-seafood eaters. If you have one, bring your own oyster knife, but there will be plenty extra for everyone. Fleet captain Joe McCorkell has been working on free housing for everyone who comes. It's also the weekend of the annual sailboat show in Annapolis, so take an extra day off work to take a gander at the newest generation of racing and cruising vessels. Contact [peterandsusanhale@atlanticbb.net](mailto:peterandsusanhale@atlanticbb.net) to pre-register.

The LoGerfo Memorial Regatta (Oct. 18-19) is the penultimate event in the series. The venue is spectacular – tucked under the Hudson River Palisades at the Nyack Boat Club where the river is at its widest point. On a clear day, you can see New Yaawwwwwkkkkk. The narrow streets of the picturesque town climb sharply upwards away from the Hudson to form what the locals call the "hill of booze." Jared Ridder is the tour guide again ([jared3602@yahoo.com](mailto:jared3602@yahoo.com)).

The final ECFS event is the Heather Bowl & Costume Party, hosted at the famous Red Dragon Canoe Club in Edgewater Park, NJ. The club is a venerable Civil War era Second Empire style mansion overlooking the Delaware River as it narrows its way northward toward Trenton. There is lots of current, frequently strong winds and a narrow shipping channel to make life more "interesting" for the competitors. Launching at low tide from the steep bank is facilitated by boat dollies that are loaded with Thistles and then sent careering down railroad tracks into a splashy landing below. Abundant camping on the grounds is available, as is indoor couch, bed and floor space with the appropriate equipment of air mattress and sleeping bag. The regatta frequently decides the winner of the East Coast Fall Series and is always well attended for that reason alone. The ECFS awards presentation is also held on Sunday. But the Halloween costume party on Saturday night – with serious prizes for the most clever and dashing getups – is the pièce de résistance of the weekend and insures good attendance even when the weather doesn't cooperate. Elmer Richards is the presiding judge. Brent is the person to contact: [bbarbehenn@metrocomercial.com](mailto:bbarbehenn@metrocomercial.com).

Please feel free to call or e-mail me with any questions or suggestions.

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