



Being In the Competition Is Key

NEWPORT, R.I. (August 22, 2011) – Conditions were wet and wild on Narragansett Bay as the second day of racing got underway at the C. Thomas Clagett Jr. Memorial Regatta . The ninth edition of the premiere event for sailors with disabilities has attracted over 60 competitors racing in four classes of boats: the three-person Sonar, the two-person SKUD-18, the singlehanded 2.4 Metre and the four-person J/22.

The J/22s wrapped up their series today with a total of nine races to determine the Sail Newport Blind National Sailing Championship. The seven teams, coming from as far away as Texas and California, sail with two sighted guides assisting the two blind sailors.

Mitsuhiro Iwamoto (San Diego) and Philip Kum (San Francisco), with sighted guides Danette Davis (Berkeley) and Al Spector (Sausalito), make up the California team. Kum has been sailing The Clagett with Spector and Davis – who organize the California team and also run the Marin Sailing School – since 2008 when blind sailors were first invited to compete in The Clagett alongside the sailors in the Paralympic classes. They have sailed with Iwamoto on the helm since the 2009 event, and they believe The Clagett is “about being in the competition, not about winning or where your team finished.” The time training and raising the funds necessary to get to the event, is well-spent in order to be able to challenge the country’s best.

The Texas team of Karen Penrose (Shore Acres) and James O’Laughlin (Clear Lake), with sighted guides David Atkinson and Scott Tuma (both Shore Acres) are not only at The Clagett for the first time but also taking home the championship title after a solid effort. With four second-place finishes and a win of the final race on day one, they started the final day of the championship at the top of the leader board. They ended the regatta the same way – winning the final race of the series to take the 2011 Sail Newport Blind National Sailing Championship title with 12 points.

“It’s pretty overwhelming since I am a rookie to sailing,” said Penrose of the championship win before explaining that the team only had a few months to prepare. After making a last-minute decision to enter the regatta, they were fortunate to arrange to practice in a friend’s J/22. “I’ve only been sailing for the last couple of years and I was amazed, very happily, that we ended up doing so well. I had the best crew you could have ever asked for: Jim was our jib trimmer and he did a fantastic job, and Scott has experience with blind sailing as well as J/22s, and especially David who was my talker. Absolutely could not have done it without them.”

The Texans were followed in the standings by three Massachusetts teams, all of whom participate in the SailBlind program organized by The Carroll Center for the Blind (Newton) and run out of the Courageous Sailing Center in Boston: Jason Wallenstein (N. Billerica) and Bruce Howell (Needham), with Lisa O’Connor Dalton (Hull) and Peter Frisch (Swampscott), won four of the nine races to take second overall with 16 points; Duane Farrar (Watertown) and Deb Keating (Woburn), with Sol Marini (Littleton) and Bob Costello (Medfield), were third overall with 21 points; followed by Sengil Inkiala (Watertown) and Glenn Boivin (Saugus), with Nancy Jodoin (Natick) and Ken Legler (Reading), with 31 points.

Fifth overall with 40 points was Walter Raineri (Santa Clara, Calif.) and Jim Stevens (San Leandro, Calif.) , with Jim Boyd (Concord, Calif.), Chuck Anastasia (Barrington, R.I.) and Matt Dunbar. Another SailBlind team from Massachusetts, Matt Chao (Newton) and Nina Kagan (West Roxbury), with Bill Rapp (Rockport) and Mary McKinnon (South Boston), was sixth with 42 points followed by the California team – Mitsuhiro Iwamoto (San Diego) and Philip Kum (San Francisco), with sighted guides Danette Davis (Berkeley) and Al Spector (Sausalito) – with 46 points.

Paralympic classes: A more consistent breeze in the upper teens saw the leaders in each of the three Paralympic classes – 2.4 Metre, SKUD-18 and Sonar – solidify their positions on day two of The Clagett.

Mark Leblanc (New Orleans, La.) had perfect day in the 2.4 Metre, winning all three races to retain the lead position in the 12-boat fleet with eight points. 2010 Clagett champion Charles Rosenfield (Woodstock, Conn.) remains second overall with 16 points, and Peter Wood (Ottawa, CAN) is third with 21 points. Julia Dorsett (West Chester, Penn.) is racing The Clagett in a 2.4 Metre which she just purchased and shipped back from Europe as a birthday present to herself. The US Sailing Team AlphaGraphics team member has taken a break from her SKUD-18 campaign and is clearly achieving her goal of sailing the 2.4 “just for fun.” She currently stands fourth overall with 27 points,

followed by Tim Ripley (Randolph, N.J.) who has 40 points.

In the SKUD-18s, Scott Whitman (Brick, N.J.) and Brooke Thomson (Newport Beach, Calif.) won three out of four races today to retain the standings lead with seven points. Sarah Everhart Skeels (Tiverton, R.I.) and Aqeel Shhaib (Springfield, Ill.) moved up to second overall on 15 points, and are followed by Ken Kelly (Victoria, B.C. CAN) and Brenda Hopkin (Fairmont Hot Springs, CAN) with 18 points.

In the Sonar class, Paul Callahan (Newport, R.I. /Cape Coral, Fla.), Tom Brown (Castine, Maine) and Brad Johnson (Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.) lead with seven points after eight races. Albert Foster (Wayzata, Minn.), Jim Thweatt (Sacramento, Calif.) and David Burdette (Lutherville, Md.) are second with 16 points, followed by Andrew Fisher (Greenwich, Conn.), 2008 SKUD-18 Paralympic Gold Medalist Maureen McKinnon-Tucker (Marblehead, Mass.) and Christopher Murphy (Charleston, S.C.) with 17 points.