

2015 IOM USA National Championship Regatta

Bob Wells reporting:

This annual ranking regatta on Hood River Marina at The Gorge was elevated to the IOM National Championship this year, as Class Secretary Fred Rocha wanted to have the Nationals venue outside of California, where it has been the last few years. We felt honored and were happy to accept, although we were new to hosting Nationals. This was also Regatta #3 in our annual COW CanAm Pacific Northwest series.

Attendance was way down for an IOM Nationals though, which I think is mostly due to USA Worlds in Foster City burning up everybody's vacation time. Still it looked like a brilliant venue choice on the day before the regatta as three Cali boats practiced in upper 2-rig conditions – just what we travel here for. Of course it was also honkin' the day after the regatta. Unfortunately during our regatta the wind and wind direction was so bad that 60% of our racing was postponed. No wind at the Gorge, an LA Angels baseball game rained out in Anaheim, and thunder and lightning to start TransPac – freaky stuff this weekend.

Day 1: We measured the boats in the morning and raced in the afternoon as planned. Unbelievably our first day was light wind in lower 1-rig range. It was the prevailing westerly we want, and we had great light air sailing. After 6 raced (12 heats) John Ebey held a slim lead of 2 points over a hot Mark Golison with three wins and a 2nd place. Promotion-relegation was 6 boats, so a number of skippers on the bubble sailed a lot of races. We used one observer at the windward and one at the leeward marks from the fleet not sailing.

Day 2: I thought the one thing that I could count on, as Organizer, was the Gorge's wind. Yet this day was a sailing bust - no races even started due to light fluky wind from the wrong direction. For stretches there was no wind at all. Finally at 1:30PM PRO Barry Fox mercifully canceled racing for the day. There is no shade on the elevated spit we sail on, and temps abnormally rose to over 100° in the afternoon making it stifling. Windfinder says that the wind blows from the NE only 2.3% of July, yet this was what we mostly had over most of our regatta. (In other words, 17 hours of 744 in July on average blow from the NE, and they all happened during our regatta – what are the odds?) Unfortunately we can't set a fair course with an unstable NE wind.

Day 3: Our nice forecast for westerly's beginning at 7:00AM was a bust also until about 12:30, when the westerly established itself in the top of 1-rig, and then our last three races finally were in 2-rig. It was very hot again too, but the higher winds made the heat more tolerable. This is easily the hottest Hood River regatta we have ever experienced in five years.

After 11 races over two afternoons of sailing our well-deserved 2015 IOM USA Champion is John Ebey from San Rafael, CA, his first one. John was also our 2014 Hood River Carnage Champion, an endurance contest with 41 races, so he knows this venue. Fellow Californian Mark Golison finished a strong second, and the difference between them was Ebey's consistency. Golison had five first place finishes to Ebey's two, but Ebey's worst finishes were only two 5ths. Joe Damico didn't just haul his RIB dinghy hundreds of miles for our buoy boat; he also picked up two 1st place finishes himself. Unfortunately for Joe and the rest of us not named Ebey, championship consistency was not to be in this regatta.

Thank you to our PRO, Canadian Barry Fox, who (no surprise) did a great job under challenging wind conditions. Barry was scheduled to assist PRO Fred Rocha, but Fred canceled his plane ride at the last minute due to upper respiratory illness. This is the first USA Nats that Fred has missed in something like twelve years. I marvel at the high quality PRO's and race management we attract in IOMs. Also thank you to Jerry Brower, who sacrificed sailing to man the rescue boat. And thank you to Ron Blackledge who was everywhere assisting race management before and during the regatta. Ron arranged the Saturday outdoor evening dinner at Divots restaurant, once again a most appreciated oasis of pleasure after a long hot day. At Divots we raffled the option-to-purchase three Bruce Andersen custom mast drill guides, and raised \$100 for the class from three very happy 'buyers'. Thanks to Bruce your new masts will have accurately aligned spreader and forestay holes. The regatta also collected \$10 per head on the entry fee, for an additional \$230 gong to the class. Someday we will have class dues of some kind, but in the interim this will help.

This year Seattle MYC joined forces with Oregon MYC to co-organize this regatta, and we worked well together. We plan to continue organizing this great annual regatta as a team. Next year the Hood River Carnage will be another PacNW ranking regatta in mid-July, and we expect to be back to the higher winds inflicting 'Carnage' on our fleet. You need to book early though if you want the convenience of being in Hood River, and we will try to reserve a block of rooms again at the Best Western for "radio sailing regatta". The 'Carnage' did not live up to its name this year, but we did have one boat almost sink. Some fool named Bob Wells tried to race without his hatch cover after a hurried rig change.

Summary of the 2015 IOM USA Nationals & COW CanAm Series #3:

Class: IOM

Date: July 17-19, 2015

Location: Hood River Marina at Hood River, OR

Host Club: Oregon MYC & Seattle MYC

Entries: 23

Winds: 2 – 18 knots plus gusts.

Races Completed: 11 (22 heats)

Scoring System: 2014 HMS

Regatta Committee & Valuable Assistants: Bob Wells – Organizer; Barry Fox – PRO & Scorekeeper; Larry Stiles and Bruce Andersen – Measuring; Jerry Brower – Entries, Finances, and Rescue Boat; Morgan Dewees; Joe Damico – hauled and provided buoy boat; Ron Blackledge – Lunches, Dinner, and Race Management.

Jerry Brower images: <http://www.ibextrax.com/RC2015/0717USN/>

Results after 11 Races

Pts	Skipper	Club/City	Hull	Score	
1	John Ebey	San Rafael, CA	BritPOP!	25.0	
2	Mark Golison	Long Beach, CA	V9	30.0	
3	Craig Mackey	Oceanside, CA	BritPOP!	35.0	
4	Gary Boell	Richmand, CA	Cheinz	41.0	
5	Jon Elmaleh	Brooklyn, NY	New World	60.0	
6	Stephen Cohen	Los Angeles, CA	BritPOP!	63.0	
7	Bill Wright	Alameda, CA	Pikanto	67.0	
8	Peter Sternberg	Redmond, WA	V8	67.0	
9	Morgan Dewees		Portland, OR	MMX	68.0
10	Bob Wells	Mercer Island, WA		Kantun S	69.0



<Caption> The elevated spit and prevailing westerly parallel with the spit provide great sight lines to the 2-rig action on the water at IOM Nats in Hood River Marina. Jon Elmaleh smiled when he saw the venue, and said, “We don’t have anything like this”. J. Warren Brower photo.