



Another B-fleet start that is well spaced and on time. B-fleet in this case includes three of our top 6 finishers – it is not easy staying in A-fleet. It's easy to stay in Dago in October though. Robert Hirsch © photo.

2016 IOM National Championship (October 7-9, 2016) Mission Bay Model Yacht Pond in San Diego, CA

By Bob Wells

Initially slated for Boise; the venue moved to San Diego where more participation was assured at this bucket list venue that is a more convenient travel destination. And San Diego came through again with 80-degree sunny weather for our 2016 Nationals on the venerable Model Yacht Pond custom built by Parks in the middle of Mission Bay. It could not be more convenient for radio sailors and the pond aligns so well with the dependable onshore breeze. Plus, the host San Diego Argonauts pride themselves on running a first class full service regatta, which this time featured individual custom sandwiches, lots of giveaways, and an excellent catered barbeque Saturday at the venue after racing. This time a club newbie, Bob Hirsch, stepped up as organizer to handle registrations and the many details. The tell of a good organizer is it all works seamlessly with no sign of panic, so good job Bob. PRO Freddie Rocha entertained and cajoled as only he does between races, and his professional race management is a huge contribution to the class. Let's just say Freddie doesn't need artificial amplification to be heard. Assisting on the scoring and heat boards was the highly competent Elaine Brown, imported from Oz for race management for this event.

Thursday practice was so much fun visiting and checking out the new kit. I've seen the pictures, but this was my first time with Zvonko's proto *Kantun 2* and Tim Brown's *AKA* proto, and clearly they are heading in a similar "wider and shallower with mast a little aft" direction. What a treat to talk with the designers about their protos, and both have just started production. George Pedrick has habitually been an early purchaser of Ian Vickers' designs recently, and on cue he provided my first view of the new V10. His wife Gene now sails his V9, so we got to see them side by side. I can see the subtle differences when George points them out, but it seems more like a V9.3 to me. Safe to say IOM design development is not stagnant in 2016. The overall quality of all the boats and the preparation of them is high too. Well the exception is maybe Toshi's Micro Brew 5, where the hull is ultra-smooth but too many sanding sessions left the soft paint he prefers thin

to non-existent. Not the usual Toshi standard, and his no apology excuse is that his shop time is all directed to his new MB6.

The NoR set aside Friday morning for compliance check, which per usual was headed by Commodore Mike Eldred with IOM Class Secretary Bruce Andersen again assisting him. It is amazing how quickly they could weigh all our batteries, our keels, weigh our boats all-up ready to sail, and float test them. Only 1-rigs were weighed, because you don't need a 2-rig here. It helps that we mostly all know the drill. All "eventually" passed and we were ready to sail on time, but the wind took a little longer to develop. Unfortunately, some registered skippers did not compete. To name a few: Organizer Bob Hirsch felt pressured to be available for handling the little demands that kept happening, and Bahamian Stan Wallace had Hurricane Mathew to deal with (he's fine).



39 competitors from four countries made it to the starting line with three countries represented in this image. Aussie Tim Brown's AKA 07 proto in lime green livery was a fast one in light air San Diego. Notice how race management resolved having two sail number 7 entries – we liked it. Simple and no confusion. Unfortunately, this coming January we will both have to be 07, and this all gets a little more difficult again. Photo is by Larry Kuechlin of Southside Photography.

Racing was great, but you have to accept shifty conditions that, “no matter where you are on the course, somebody has better wind than you” (thanks for that John Ebey). The prevailing onshore wind is straight down the narrow-ish rectangular pond with many NW and SW shifts and holes. The skippers job is simple to define; find the shifts and pressure, and to transition efficiently as the wind varies. Not so simple in execution. Mackey says, “This is one of the most difficult venues to sail well at”. Friday I thought it best to hug the south shore most of the time for big gains from that narrow band of better pressure with upwind lifts and downwind headers. Saturday and Sunday, the wind was more square and you used the whole course, but always you searched for shifts and/or pressure. The experienced guys that know this venue have an early advantage, which diminishes as the regatta moves on. Nobody gets it right all the time, and in every leg positions change until you cross the line. And damn those fickle shifts and lulls just before the finish line and weather mark that so affect your outcome! I very much like the challenge of sailing here.

No surprise it was a strong field augmented by skippers from BRA, CRO, and Oz. Everybody but our winner spent some time in B fleet, and some top skippers found themselves fighting to get out of C. Congratulations to our winner, 2009 World Champion Zvonko Jelacic from CRO, who separated himself from the leaders on the last day. From past performance Zvonko was the easy pick for this one, but after two days he was in 2nd just behind John Ebey, who was sailing exceptionally well. USA guys Gary Boell, Craig Mackey, Mark Golison, and Bobby Flack were also all still in the hunt after day 2. The last day Zvonko maintained his consistency to pull away from the pack for the win. Golison made his move with all firsts and 2^{nds} on the last four races and Mackey nearly matched him on those races. They finished tied with Golison getting 2nd on countback. Ebey and his beautifully prepared *Fusion* finished a few points out for a close 4th. It was nice for a change to see a young guy, Bobby Flack, in top five.

As it should be, those racing quietly focused on the business at hand and spoke only to make a needed hail, then as soon as the race is over the friendly banter resumes. This is the environment I like to race in, absent the distraction of sea lawyers arguing about rule violations in the control area. Sure we missed some sailing time for a couple of protests, but this was a cleanly sailed regatta. Some of the credit for this goes to the observer system the USA class instituted about five years ago, thanks Freddie. All who participated were winners on this great weekend, and it was smiles all around as we packed to depart.



Builder/sailmakers provide tuning guides for their IOM customers, which is a partial reason for the success of their products. Gene Harris is shown tuning her V9 with a scale in millimeters, the class standard reference. Before she is done here the mainboom will be on or near centerline. On the last day I caught Zvonko measuring his shroud tension, as he had a tune he liked so he recorded it. The ability to repeat fast settings is de rigeur in this class. Robert Hirsch © photo.

Of course a big IOM event is also very social. Under the shade of the oak trees the pond is a great place to hang out and meet old friends and make new ones. My old friends now include Zvonko and Tim and Elaine Brown from overseas. One of my new friends is Michel Roure from New Jersey, where he sails every Saturday he can at Central Park MYC. He also hopes to form a new sailing club at Parsippany Lake, NJ. Born in France, he purchased a Brazilian Britpop and picked it up in Foster City last year after Brazil's Pedro Stier chartered it for Worlds. A nice way to get a new boat that is properly tuned. Worlds is where the very French Michel was hooked by the friendly atmosphere of our international community. Now Michel has purchased another Britpop from Denis Astbury for his Father's 86th birthday. Sadly, Pedro passed unexpectedly this year, and Michel carries the name Pedro gave the boat, *Alforria*, in his honor.

Every time I sail here there is always a contingent of Argonaut club members watching and cheering when their boys do well. Friends and significant others are hanging out too, or seeing the sights and shopping. After three IOM regatta visits to San Diego, I don't think my wife has seen a single heat yet. She does see a lot of San Diego though so we're both happy. What a great weekend and what a great class. We left with a strong desire to return soon and stay longer. 2017 Midwinters maybe?

Summary of the 2016 IOM National Championship:

Class: IOM

Date: October 7-9, 2016 (3 days racing)

Location: Mission Bay Model Yacht Pond in San Diego, CA

Host Club: San Diego Argonauts Model Yacht Club

Entries: 39

Winds: light – upper middle of 1-rig

Races Completed: 15 (three heats per race).

Scoring System: 2014 HMS

Regatta Committee & Valuable Assistants: Organizer & Registration – Bob Hirsh; PRO, Buoy Boat & Scorekeeper – Fred Rocha; Race Officer: Elaine Brown (AUS); Measurements – Mike Eldred, Bruce Andersen; Food – Mark Halberg; Volunteers – Bob Williams and Rich Rogers.

Special Awards:

Corinthian Sailor Award - David Woodward

Best IOM New Sailor - Gabriel Mueller

Thank You! Award - Elaine Brown

Photos Links:

<http://s181.photobucket.com/user/pamologist/library/2016%20NCR%20San%20Diego%20Argonauts?sort=3&page=1>

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/6ourfqkq7yzzw2q/AACM5rf0nVW3s62IzONAxIWda?dl=0>

<http://www.ibextrax.com/RC2016/1007USN/>

Video Link: <http://www.rcgroups.com/forums/showthread.php?t=2697607&page=5>

Full Results: <http://www.ibextrax.com/RC2016/Results/1007USN.pdf>

2016 IOM National Championship - Results after 15 races with 2 throw-outs:

Position	Skipper	Sail #	City	Hull	Score
1	Zvonko Jelacic	35	Split, CRO	Kantun 2 Proto	34.0
2	Mark Golison	55	California, USA	V9	59.0
3	Craig Mackey	29	California, USA	britPOP!	59.0
4	John Ebey	93	California, USA	FUSION	62.0
5	Bobby Flack	96	Michigan, USA	britPOP!	71.0
6	Gary Boell	71	California, USA	NITRO	96.0
7	George Pedrick	50	California, USA	V10	101.0
8	Kelly Martin	77	Washington, USA	V8	111.3
9	Ken Campbell	181	California, USA	V8	114.5
10	Jerry Brower	42	Washington, USA	V9	116.0
11	Steve Toschi	94	California, USA	Micro Brew 5	124.0
12	Gabriel Mueller	58	Rio Grande do Sul, BRA	britPOP!	137.0
13	Pedro Loureiro	88	Rio Grande do Sul, BRA	britPOP!	142.0
14	Baron Bremer	81	Florida, USA	britPOP!	144.0
15	Chris Sullivan	62	California, USA	britPOP!	149.0
16	Jon Elmaleh	2	New York, USA	New Road 2	172.0
17	Tim Brown	07	Gold Coast, AUS	AKA	181.0
18	Bob Wells	7	Washington, USA	Kantun S	192.0
19	Stephan Cohen	28	California, USA	britPOP!	196.0
20	Denis Rogers	43	California, USA	britPOP!	218.0
21	Bruce Andersen	16	Idaho, USA	britPOP!	258.0
22	Scott McConnell	21	Washington, USA	Kantun S	259.0
23	Michel Roure	18	New Jersey, USA	britPOP!	263.0
24	Joe Damico	86	Washington, USA	britPOP!	271.0
25	Larry Stiles	64	Washington, USA	britPOP!	277.0
26	Barry Donaher	47	Utah, USA	FUSION	293.0
27	Terrance Heyns	13	California, USA	Pikanto	318.0
28	Gene Harris	57	California, USA	V9	321.0
29	David Jensen	68	Washington, USA	V9	334.0
30	Mike Eldred	39	California, USA	V8	339.0
31	Jim McCaa	36	Washington, USA	Kantun S	347.0
32	Glen Murray	59	California, USA	MB5 (Woody)	348.0
33	Steve Washburn	155	California, USA	V8	354.0
34	Kurt Wells	737	California, USA	britPOP!	396.0
35	David Woodward	54	California, USA	Goth	397.0
36	Ben Reeve	136	California, USA	Tempest	413.0
37	Thomas Respess	90	California, USA	Micro Brew 4	427.0



2016 IOM USA Nationals Champion Zvonko Jelacic from CRO and his proto *Kantun 2* with its distinctive wide stern. He's walking with Gary Boell and his *Nitro* by Jeff Byerley. It's good to be tall in radio sailing. In my next life I want to come back tall like these Sequoias with the elevated viewing angle. Photo by Larry Kuechlin of Southside Photography.

The 'Bob Wells' Rule: *It is never good when they revise the SIs with a rule named after you... On the first day everybody wanted to sail along the south (or far shore) for the big gains, but my tired eyes were making it very difficult even though the distance wasn't far. In the upwind congestion I was afraid I would hit someone and downwind I struggled with trim and steering – all due to my vision limitations. Maybe it was the afternoon glare and/or the boats were in shade there, but I was sailing embarrassingly poorly with no confidence.*

Then I see Boells go to the south shore to release his grounded boat, and I recognize that I would see much better from that shore. After confirming that was in the control area, I sailed from the far shore my next races and I could see perfectly! What a joy. I could hear the starting tape (barely) and the few hails that went my way, and for the first time I'm sailing at the front of the fleet in a B and then in an A heat. Take away my other issues on those races with my topping lift snagging on my new carbon spreaders, and I would have had my best finishes of the regatta. Next Jerry Brower joined me for the A heat and he much preferred it too – he was in 2nd until a pile-up at the leeward mark left him DFL. For the record, Jerry said afterwards it was caused by the limited visibility from the skippers on the north shore, and if they shared his closer vantage point it would have been a clean rounding for all.

Racing ended for the day and the race committee quietly informed me there would be no more sailing from the south shore, and the official announcement came at the next day's skipper's meeting. Initially the concern was 'unfair advantage', but after I explained anybody could be there it was agreed that wasn't a problem. The official reason to restrict access to the south shore is 'a communication problem'. So be it.

The next two days' fewer boats sail along the south shore and my vision was acceptable upwind. Downwind I still struggled with trim and steering at the often preferred south shore though, and I'd say I lost 3-4 boats per leg simple due to vision limitations. After the regatta Zvonko volunteered he noticed my struggles with vision downwind, where too often my sails weren't powered up after a wind transition or my

steering direction was crap. He also gave me a tip: position myself either in front or behind my boat so I can see more of the sails. That should help, but I would have appreciated the tip a little sooner...

The reason I'm spending so much time on this is I would like the San Diego Argonauts to consider putting the south shore back into the control area. Try it, the radio sailing quality will be better in my not so humble opinion. And you'll get a nice workout from all the walking to the north side to visit and check the heat board. I can work off the nice lunches you provide.



The staging area at the Mission Bay Model Yacht Pond on Vacation Isle in San Diego, and there can't be a more convenient place for radio sailing. The worst thing you can say is you have to move your boat once in a while to stay in shade. The skippers in the upper right are lining up for the next start. What a great venue. Robert Hirsch © photo.