



Practicing and socializing the day before the regatta at the venerable Mission Bay Model Yacht Pond, where our conditions were always terrific with the westerly more central on the pond than usual at about a 10-knot average - with few wind holes. The dappled shade is really nice in the San Diego summer. Bob Wells image.

2018 M National Championship (August 1-2, 2018)

By Bob Wells

2018 San Diego Argonauts Race Week included this year's M National Championship, and it is also recognized as the Bob Debow Memorial Regatta. We sailed at the venerable Mission Bay Model Yacht Pond on Vacation Island in San Diego, and conditions were terrific with the westerly more central on the pond than usual at about 10 knots average. Of course, there were many shifts, but importantly few wind holes. The sunny conditions came with extra humidity. As the elegant Ms sliced up and down the pond quickly, they were dragging some very hot and tired skippers in the afternoon because there are few breaks in single heat racing and this is one long course. I was pooped at the end of both days.

Another way to describe the field is nine IOM skippers racing in a faster more exotic class. It is no accident that the M Championship preceded the IOM Championship or that most of the M skippers competed in IOMs also, providing five continuous racing days in two National Championships for eight of us. Argonauts Commodore Mike Eldred and Bruce Andersen promoted M sailing in San Diego in 2016 and 2017 with friendly regattas prior to IOM events, and this championship is the result of that ground work. Bruce also supplied three of the yachts racing and George Pedrick supplied two, which is over half the fleet! Competitive M racing has a pulse on the left coast, and the format of Ms racing before IOMs is showing early results and slowly gaining momentum.

From my limited experience of three days sailing them so far, Ms are the most fun radio sailing boat that I have enjoyed. It is easy to get addicted to acceleration and this venue is all about acceleration out of the many shifts. All the carbon is serious eye candy from my IOM oriented perspective too. There are two new Ms in the fleet since last year, with Bruce's *Grunge* from the UK's Robot Yachts the belle of this ball in red. Al Chernin did an excellent job building his *Indie* in carbon finish, which is Brad Gibson's line plan version of the *Grunge*. Al is new to Ms like a lot of us, and he showed up with a B-rig so he was underpowered. He pointed so high that upwind he competed well with the back of the fleet, but downwind he was off pace. Al now knows he needs an A rig, and the swing types proved superior.

This championship was an IRSA M duel between Bruce and Gary Boell in doubt until the end, with Bruce winning by a 4-point margin. Their Ms have all the updates, and mostly sailed at the fleet front against each other. The race for 3rd was between two carbon finished beautiful Bantock Ms owned by George Pedrick; and unfortunately for George, the *Paradox* (without swing rig) sailed by Mark Golison won by 6 points. George's Ms were state-of-the-art in the 90s, and lightly used since as well as not "pimped" from original – if you missed the reference search "Pimp my Marblehead" by Brad Gibson. The race for 5th and final trophy was a tie, with Stan Wallace winning by countback over Al Chernin. Inadvertently the trophy went to Al at the pond, and was corrected a few days later – about the only mistake the race management team made.

Bruce's loaner flier included a 25-year-old Martin Firebrace design sailed by Stan Wallace and uses a carbon swing rig with Amen Sails of similar vintage. On swing rigs you just ease the main downhaul for storage, so it probably has a 25-year-old tune too. This one came balanced and easy to sail when I borrowed it in 2017. Bruce's other loaner is a more current Vickers design. This came not tuned and I was the dreaded low and slow when the racing started, as well as lost on how to correct it. My guesses at tuning just made it worse through the day. Finally, to begin the 2nd day I closely copied the *Grunge's* twist, and the boat smoothed out and took off. Why I didn't do this simple comparison the 1st day is a mystery.

Jerry Brower sailed his decidedly old-school Viper+ with a shorter fin, a deck of a few balsa beams and Coverite iron-on plastic, and a Kevlar hull (the only non-carbon hull). Last year in lighter air Jerry was competitive with this package, but this year's stronger wind left him off pace. Electronic issues on original equipment during race 7 took him out of the regatta.

Thank you to the San Diego Argonauts organization for another great Race Week experience, and especially Organizer Bob Hirsch. PRO Tom Gardner graciously stepped up to serve for the Ms, and he did a nice job orchestrating race management and the cadence of the races. The system of three in a row and then a 10-minute break works well for single fleets. Tom's wife, Glenda, recorded the scores; and I'm happy to report this husband-wife team was still smiling at the end of both days. Organizer Bob was smiling too, and relieved to have one regatta completed so successfully with "only" eight more to go...

Regatta Summary:

Event: 2018 M National Championship
 Date: August 1-2, 2018
 Location: Mission Bay Model Yacht Pond on Vacation Island
 Host Club: San Diego Argonauts (1st of 9 Race Week Regattas)
 Entries: 9
 Winds: 5-11 knots
 Races Completed: 24
 Scoring System: HMS 2007 V2.2q
 Regatta Committee: Organizer Bob Hirsch; PRO & Scoring: Tom Gardner. Volunteers: Glenda Gardner, Bob Williams, Kim Robbins and Mark Hallberg.

Results after 24 Races with 4 Throw-outs:

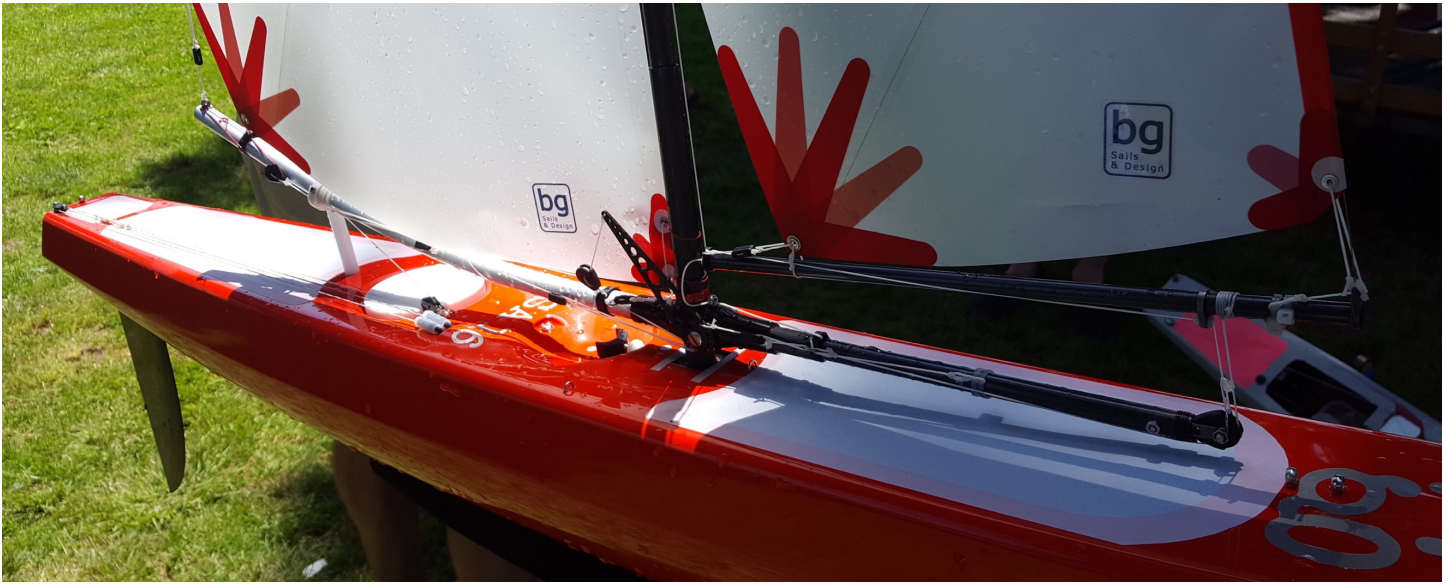
Position	Skipper	State	Hull* (Designer)	Score
1	Bruce Andersen	ID	2018 Grunge (B. Gibson)	34.0
2	Gary Boell	CA	2016 Mantra (J. Byerley)	38.0
3	Mark Golison	CA	1993± Paradox (Bantock)	66.0
4	George Pedrick	CA	1998± RAD (Bantock)	72.0
5	Stan Wallace	Bahamas	1993± Martin Firebrace Design	100.0
6	Al Chernin	CA	2018 Indie (B. Gibson)	100.0
7	Bob Wells	WA	2016 Vickers Design	104.0
8	Ken Weeks	TX	2017 Pencil (Bantock)	145.0
9	Jerry Brower	WA	1993± Viper+ (B. Sterne)	166.0

* Approximate year built (not design year)

Full Results: <http://www.ibextrax.com/RC2018/Results/0801MN.pdf>



A close-up of Bruce's *Grunge* with swing rig. Rake adjusts with plates at deck surface, and Bruce changed to more rake for the second day. His B, C, and D rigs are conventional and would be placed aft a few inches in a shallow recess where the ram is seen. The angled lever is called a "gizmo", which is fiddley to set up, and will allow you flatten the rig for pointing when needed. Notice how low to the deck the booms are. Chris Sullivan image.



Another view of the red Grunge showing more of the deck and rig. I noticed on swing rigs the jib luff is shorter than the leach, and I'm not sure why? Chris Sullivan image.



2018 M Nationals skippers and our steeds. Not sure what's up with Jerry and his spray jug? Tom Gardner image.

End