



B-fleet start in a light air period at the Model Yacht Pond in San Diego with more pressure on left. Four of our top five finishers are in this image, demonstrating again how hard it was to stay in A-fleet on this tricky pond. Jerry Brower photo.

2018 IOM National Championship – San Diego (August 3-5, 2018)

Mission Bay Model Yacht Pond in San Diego, CA

Bob Wells reporting

The wonderful 2018 San Diego Argonauts Race Week was also the Bob Debow Memorial Regatta, and it included this year's IOM National Championship as the 2nd event out of nine. Location is the venerable Mission Bay Model Yacht Pond on Vacation Island in San Diego, and conditions were the usual – sunny and shifty with holes. On this pond, more than any other I can think of, your position changes appreciably with each wind shift until the finish. If you fall behind early, your odds are better here to get back in the hunt. While there are times when the wind is constant in velocity and direction, they don't last long. More likely there are constant gains or losses depending on your choices. The fleet is fast so the difference is in your fleet management skills and how you set yourself up for the wind shifts. You have to accelerate out of lots of wind shifts, so smooth boat handling will add up and matter if you are inefficient. If you sail upwind with sheets in all the time, then you are missing acceleration opportunities and will be gradually slipping back. The usual suspects made the top five, because they manage all this better. The question was who would pull it out in the end, because it wasn't obvious with the top guys relegated to B and occasionally C fleets surprisingly often.

Mark Golison (V9) was hot the first day to take the lead after 6 races, closely followed by Stephan Cohen, who was sailing some of the best heats of his life (new Astbury BP). Steve Landeau (Sedici) was hot for the 7 races of the second day to grab 1st, with Golison solid in 2nd and John Ebey (Fusion) now solid in 3rd. Mikaël Pophillat (Detox) stayed consistent to climb to 4th and wily Craig Mackey (BP) moved up to 5th. This set up the last day and the championship was wide open. The top guys sort of staggered to the finish from there trying to avoid big drops, and in the end a happy Steve Landeau got his first IOM Championship since about 2005. Ebey was 2nd with the most consistent overall finishes as his throw-outs were only mid-teens. Golison was 3rd taking a few scores he didn't want. Craig Mackey in 4th was consistent like Ebey. Kelly Martin (V10) in 5th sailed well the whole regatta with three race wins and only short visits in B-fleet.

How these guys sailed so well for three days in this tricky wind venue remains a mystery to me, and I extend that to all the guys in top ten. I looked it up and I managed top ten finishes just 5 times in 18 races. It never worked for me to get to the front group in A-fleet, as I always found a way to be passed by the pack. What worked on my personal best A-fleet finishes was to be in the back for the last downwind leg, and find a wind band to slowly and patiently pick off a few boats by the leeward gate. On approaching the gate decide the favored side, and pick off a few more with that decision. From there it is simply a matter of avoiding holes and finding some shifts and pressure that the guys ahead missed, especially if it went light near the finish. I know, that is not a sustainable way to finish in the top ten and I need to up my game (boat performs fine)... I'll just

point out that I'm not the only mystified skipper on how to be consistent here.

Thirty-seven skippers traveled from eight states plus Bahamas and Thailand for three days of racing with three heats, and our Thai guests, Tui and Kanita Singhaseni and Mikaël Pophillat, easily win the farthest traveled award. Stan Wallace from Bahamas had a short trip by comparison, but that is not an easy one with IOM kit either. Bob Hirsch was once again Organizer and Fred Rocha did another great job as PRO. Commodore Mike Eldred, Ken Weeks and Bruce Andersen handled measurement compliance Thursday afternoon and Friday morning. Special recognition to Ken Weeks from Texas for towing his incredible laser-based float tank from Texas for measurements. I'm not sure who organized the protest committee, but like all things at this regatta it was handled seamlessly. And the weather cooperated except for an unusual dose of humidity, so another great regatta at the Model Yacht Pond.

I have to admire those that design and build their own boats, and this regatta had three excellent custom examples from guys who get a lot of shop time and then spend even more time to dial it in. Mikaël Pophillat (*Detox*) from Thailand was the highest finisher in this group in 6th, followed closely by New York City's Jon Elmaleh (*Debow 2*) in 7th. Mikaël stands out in that he makes everything – hull, foils, bulb, rig and sails. The quality of his work and finishes is extraordinary, and in his hands, *Detox* is very competitive in the light air he designs too. Fortunately, we'll be able to admire his work when we visit San Diego going forward, because he sold his hull to Race Week Organizer Bob Hirsch. Mikaël has a new *Detox* already started, so he is sticking with this design for now. USA #2 Jon Elmaleh is a tough competitor, who shows up with a fresh new design every time I sail with him. I doubt Jon knows how many he has designed and built, but he has explored a lot of different ideas in the process. Not as competitive this time was Steve Toschi (*Micro Brew 6*) in 23rd. He makes incremental refinements in his *Micro Brew* series, always colored white and his recent versions are always fast.

Other home builders include Tui Singhaseni, who built a beautiful *Alternative* to BG's line plan, which I also admired when visiting Thailand in 2015. SoCal's David Woodward built and sailed his *Flyer* prototype in its first big regatta, which is a new collaboration designed by Italian Alessio Pardini with Malta Project Manager Darren Abdilla. *Flyer's* hull is unusually wide and flat and this has Creed foils. I like the international development team aspect. This is not the venue to judge performance, but David's sailing is improving.



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I like visiting San Diego and hanging at The Pond. We've done this enough now to develop our favorite restaurants over time to enhance the experience. It is always good to stroll from The Pond to adjacent Paradise Point for outdoor dining with poke or a burger at water's edge. The Fishery near Pacific Beach on Cass Street is my favorite for fish tacos or poke, and we find it best to eat early to find parking and be in a smaller group to get a table. Miguel's in old town is our Mexican food preference and it can accommodate a group, and it is not too far from the pond. Again, eat early to find parking – so your shower is after. Fiddler's Green on Shelter Island is our group night out, and it is all good except for finding parking. Now if I could just get Mike Eldred to share his secret sushi place, my dining experiences would be complete.

What a great weekend with three days of racing and socializing. Midwinters in February is next.

Photos by Jerry Brower & Bob Hirsch: <http://www.ibextrax.com/RC2018/0803USN/>

Regatta Summary:

Event: 2018 USA IOM Nationals

Date: August 1-2, 2018

Location: Mission Bay Model Yacht Pond on Vacation Island

Host Club: San Diego Argonauts (2nd of 9 Race Week Regattas)

Entries: 37

Winds: 1 -10 knots

Races Completed: 18

Scoring System: HMS 2016 V3

Regatta Committee: Organizer Bob Hirsch; PRO & Scoring: Fred Rocha; Measurements Mike Eldred, Ken Weeks & Bruce Andersen. Volunteers: Bob Williams, Kim Robbins and Mark Hallberg.

Results after 18 Races with 3 Throw-outs:

Position	Skipper	Sail #	Club/City	Hull	Score
1	Steve Landeau	112	Georgia	Sedici	65.0
2	John Ebey	93	California	FUSION	78.0
3	Mark Golison	55	California	V9	87.0
4	Craig Mackey	29	California	britPOP!	90.0
5	Kelly Martin	77	Washington	V10	97.0
6	Mikael Pophillat	185	Thailand	Detox	101.0
7	Jon Elmaleh	2	New York	DeBow 2	112.0
8	Larry Grant	85	California	V8	113.0
9	Stan Wallace	69	Bahamas	britPOP!	117.0
10	Chris Sullivan	62	California	britPOP!	139.0
11	Barry Donaher	27	Utah	Sedici	145.0
12	Stephan Cohen	28	California	britPOP!	146.0
13	Dennis Rogers	43	California	britPOP!	155.0
14	Roy Langbord	70	New York	britPOP!	156.0
15	John Skinner	46	California	britPOP!	166.0
16	Jerry Brower	42	Washington	Kantun 2	168.0
17	Ken Campbell	81	California	V8	196.0
18	Bob Wells	12	Washington	Kantun 2	209.0
19	Nick Allen	87	California	britPOP!	221.0
20	Michel Roure	19	New Jersey	britPOP!	228.0
21	Gary Boell	71	California	britPOP!	243.0
22	Terry Heyns	44	California	britPOP!	252.0
23	Steve Toschi	94	California	MB5	279.0
24	Steve Washburn	111	California	CHEINZ	313.0
25	David Woodward	66	California	Flyer	322.0
26	Joe D'Amico	86	Washington	V9	338.0
27	Konrad Witt	113	California	V9	341.0
28	Jared Ballman	778	California	FUSION	351.0
29	Larry Stiles	64	Washington	britPOP!	374.2
30	Tui Singhaseni	17	Thailand	britPOP!	397.0
31	Bruce Andersen	16	Idaho	britPOP!	410.0
32	Gerry Wold	11	California	EVO3	416.0
33	Kim Robbins	121	California	Stealth	441.0
34	Nils Andersson	129	California	Kantun 2	476.0
35	Ken Weeks	74	Texas	TBD	478.0
36	Ben Reeve	144	California	TNT	480.0
37	Bob Hirsch	78	California	NITRO	560.0
37	Erik Evens	79	California	britPOP!	560.0

Full Results: <http://www.ibextrax.com/RC2018/Results/0803USN.pdf>



Stern view of Mikaël Pophillat's distinctive *Detox* with the chamfered hull-deck joint. We see rounded hull-deck joints all the time with hulls split down the middle in IOMs. Mikaël builds a separate deck where the join is an overlap at the chamfer. Bob Wells photo.



Rounding the weather mark and a whole lot of boats are approaching on port again because that is where the wind is. Mostly the fleet was well behaved in this less than ideal situation, but not always. Bob Hirsch photo.



Steve Landau and his *Sidici* with BG sails is our 2018 USA champion. Notice the jib boom appears pulled in a bit more than I'm used to seeing. No chines on this design... Bob Hirsch photo.



The group picture and Barry Donaher captioned it best, "38 great guys all a little thinner on top in pull-your-hair-out conditions".