

The 2018 MC Scow National Championship

Pewaukee Yacht Club, WI

By Eric Hood

This week we held our annual National MC Championship at one of the best scow lakes and clubs in the U.S. Pewaukee Yacht Club (PYC) is known as a platinum standard for hosting great regattas once again pulled out all the stops for our 83 teams racing this year. If you look up the word hospitality in the sailing dictionary it would say PYC. Incredible food all morning, noon, evening for all 4 days of the regatta. At every turn, food, getting your boat in and out, buoys in and out, trailer parking, Lou Morgan's famous Rib night was all spectacular. Seems like they had at least 75 volunteers in the total mix, maybe more.

The 2018 MC Nationals Regatta Team Leaders

Lesa Gutenkunst – for leading all things MC Nationals. Thanks for your attention to the details, it was impressive!

Mary Carol Deguire for leading a great team who kept 200+ folks fed and happy for 4 days!

David and Sherri Perrigo – for your hospitality finesse landing folks fantastic housing on the lake for competitors!

Registration With Smiles – Nancy Niedziela, Jan Buckley and Lori Peterson!

Sponsorship – Tim O'Malley found a fantastic group of businesses helping make the regatta happen!

PRO Chip Mann and his crew alongside a fantastic full team from PYC running our races!

Launch team – a ton of people using their organizational and strength helping us in and out all week!

On to some sailing now.

The Regatta –

The National Championship has a slightly different format than our normal regattas. It is a scheduled 7 race series with a drop race included if you get to 7 races.

Our practice day saw some fantastic southwest breezes with nice temps in the high 70s on Thursday. About 30 boats raced in the 3pm practice race and about 45 boats made it out at one point or another to practice. 67 of the 83 boats were launched, in the water and on buoys by 6pm with the rest arriving late and also early on Friday morning. For Friday we had a very unusual weather pattern upon us. Cold in the 60s and south winds. Even the locals were scratching their heads saying we have not seen this one

before in August. The whole upper Midwest was both unstable with converging weather systems and storms. We had big winds but very manageable going into race 1 at 10 am on Friday. The race started on time with winds up and down between 10 and 20 mph. A WA3 was posted for our course. During race 1 on leg three, several times the PRO and other RC boats were getting big shots above our 23 mph max wind limit and also at one point had a max 35 mph gust reported. As the top ten boats rounded mark 3 and were heading downwind the PRO and RC team abandoned this race. Winds increased throughout the day and all racing for Friday (3 races) was lost. It was fun for all the crews though to get to sail. Some of the big single-handed sailors like Devon Howe were loving it though for this one (he was in the top ten) until it was abandoned.

The Sailors –

83 teams sailed which was great with 10 teams signing up in last five days before the regatta. We had folks from Canada, New York, Florida, Texas, Minnesota, Colorado, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Iowa, and Wisconsin sailing at this year's championship. The talent was deep in all categories. It was so much fun to sail with so much talent. From the first sailor to the last sailor it was amazing how engaged everyone was, trying their best, prepping, practicing and more. It showed me the health of our class as they represented their fleets!

The Results –

The results were really exciting. We lost day one of racing which means the series would be a max 5 race series with 3 races on Saturday and 2 on Sunday weather permitting. It was tough for the PRO and team but they pulled off three good but very challenging races in the shifty s.w. winds on Saturday. Velocity ranged from 5-14 mph. Going into Sunday you had several positions where big things could happen. 1st-3rd could have flipped positions easily. 4th through 15th maybe even deeper could have flipped. Then even deeper into the group there were individuals that could have easily gained or lost 15 boats by racing on Sunday with no drop race to be included. The wind however did not cooperate and we ended with no racing on Sunday. The regatta had it's 3 race minimum in and we had a new champion.

This must have felt like ground hog day for Bill Draheim and Ted Keller as they once again tied for first this year. They tied earlier in the year at MC Masters Championship. Bill also tied for first with Scott Harestad & Rob Seidelmann at the MC Midwinters Championship. Bill won the tie-breakers at Lake Eustis, Indy, and then again at Pewaukee to complete a sweep of the three largest championships of the MCSA. So great sailing to both of these skippers and their crews for finishing in a tie for first. As Bill joked at the PYC awards he appreciates the rules committee of our sport for their hard work on tie-breakers.

Ryan Grosch had a 2-2-18 to finish third.

Race winners: Mike Considine race 1, Bill Draheim race 2, Jim Walker race 3
Top Master – Bill Draheim, Top Grand Master – David Koch, Top Mega Master – Tim Fredman, Top Woman – Natalie Sinn, Top Junior – Noah Janssen
For the full list go to www.mcscow.org

Lessons Learned –

Sailing the races over and over in my mind I think two main points come to mind as I look back at the moves I saw on the race course. Starting well and Patience.

Let's break it down.

Starting well- all three races saw 80% of the top 20 boats start well. In all three starts these teams did not start in the same place but simply started fast! They were able to accelerate and tack out from this large starting line. All three starts the top 20 boats jumped out quickly. For sure, good things were happening at the mid-line starting boat. Teams were using the RC boat to create space and escape. It happened every start. The ends provided a couple of folks escape but if you did not act quickly and take chances to cut it close and escape you were a goner. This happened to me once with Richard Blake 2 boats up, he tacks at start, boat next to me sails straight ahead for 60 seconds, we tack and we both end up 30th at first mark while Richard was 2nd. So starting, being fast and having a quick escape plan were big.

Patience – When you have a national championship the chances of the race going the distance are really good. So just racing in the moment, racing the boat next to you, looking up the lake, staying with the group and not straying is really critical. Hard to do once you are outside the top ten. You have to have confidence that your speed is good, your boat handling is good and that the velocity will come as will the shifts. Had you practiced before these races or just replayed in your mind what happened the last beat or run you know this was true. So being patient was huge and really evident in the forward groups.

Clear Air- Hardest thing to do in a 83 boat fleet is to feel like you have clear air. It is probably because you likely do not. If you are not in the top 5-10 boats this now has become a high value and you must pay attention to clear air so you can have 100% horsepower instead of say 60-70-80% horsepower with dirty air.

Other MC Class News –

As the season finishes in some areas just know there is still some great racing going. The MC Blue Chip is coming up. Scott Harestad says he has some loaner boats available. Check in with him. Check www.mcscow.org for all the latest news on upcoming regattas like the Die-Hard, Polar Bear and some southern regattas this fall for anyone not liking cold weather or snow.

Team Melges provided 40 new MC Scows this season which is exciting. Check with them for all the latest news on 2019 MC Scows and plans for the new season.

Be sure to check out the Facebook pages for Melges, MC Scow, ILYA, Harbor Pictures Company for more updates, tons of pictures and video to come . There are some great pictures and videos you simply will not want to miss!

Feel free to reach out to us at Team Melges for any help you need with your MC sailing program. We would love to serve you!!

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