

Submitted by Jackson Timberlake:

From the fantastic views of the Jacksonville skyline to the challenge of the St. John's River, the 2025 Florida Regional Championship was one for the books. Twenty-seven sailors from six states and the Dominican Republic came to compete for one of the last 2026 World Championship berths.

The Florida Yacht Club spared nothing in making this a stellar event. Jacksonville local Hal Gilreath emerged victorious, claiming first overall. Eugene Schmitt placed second overall, with David Mendelblatt seizing third place and the coveted worlds berth. Mary Ellen Ingham claimed the title of top women.

Saint John's River proved challenging all weekend long. Sailors battled a range of conditions from 1.5 knot currents, to no breeze at all to a fair bit and shifty breeze. A steady 1 knot current on Saturday along with very little wind and very large shifts proved extremely challenging, especially to us non river sailors. There was no shortage of complaints of back pain thanks to everyone sitting in their cockpits all day.

Sunday provided some reprieve with a steady breeze and far fewer shifts than the day before. With that being said, the racing on Sunday became very competitive, as us non-river sailors found ourselves in more familiar conditions. The race committee was phenomenal. They finished up our races Sunday afternoon and then rolled straight into a J24 regatta without even coming back to the dock.

We owe a big thanks to the Gilreath's for hosting all the sailors at their home on Friday night, providing us with a deluxe taco bar and beer - I had soda. The Florida Yacht Club served a delicious meal on Saturday night, and I'm pretty sure they had every single college football game that you could imagine on at the bar.

I think I can speak for all the sailors who were at the regatta when I say that it was truly a fantastic event and a good time was had by all. As a junior I haven't been in the class for long, but one thing that is always on display at every Sunfish regatta is the community that this class embodies.

It's about reuniting with old friends or making new friends and competing in the sport we all love. I personally get to see my mentors in action and learn new things that improve my racing skills. This regatta truly reminded me of the sense of community this class brings, and heading home on Monday I started thinking to myself, I may not be the best Sunfish sailor, but I sure am lucky to be one.

Details: <https://theclubspot.com/regatta/cbfw1HAt1B>