

Laser[®] 28

2011 MYC Laser 28 Championships

Newport, VT USA

September 17-18, 2011

Once again this year the Laser 28 fleet was out in force on Lake Memphremagog, only this time the setting was the beautiful surroundings of Newport, Vermont.

Through the gracious efforts of Louis Donahue (Nirvana 6) and many generous sponsors, including the City of Newport and Classen's Cranes, The Memphremagog Yacht Club (MYC) hosted at the Newport City Dock 18 boats and crew on the weekend of September 17-18, 2011.



Principal Race Officer (PRO) Ross Tellier was once again on hand to run the racing, only this time in 25 foot deep water instead of 300 feet in St. Benoit du Lac where the event was hosted previously. Assisting Ross were an army of enthusiastic volunteers and two very capable mark boats. Working against Ross was the weather forecast.

Saturday dawned under clear skies at the Newport City Dock, itself a busy place with crane on hand, having launched the out of town boats right at the side of the clubhouse, and preparations underway for a wedding that evening. In postcard quality settings, the Race Committee (RC) and competitors were about to be challenged on this early fall weekend.



The wind began to fill in under the backdrop of Owl's Head and Jay Peak mountains as the boats paraded out to the sailing area about 20 minutes out. With the wind shifting constantly, often more than 30 degrees, the RC exercised some patience and were able to setup a course after a short delay as the wind seemed to settled in.



Under bright skies and winds of about 7 knots the excitement built and soon enough we were in the start sequence with 18 enthusiastic boats cruising the starting area with a line that wasn't going to offer much spare room. With plenty of prestart action the boats got off the line in good order on their way up the approximately 1 mile weather leg. Concentration abounded as the boats worked their way up the leg with those going left off the start finding a

header not too far out and took the opportunity to tack and focus on boat speed. The first half of the leg saw some great action; it was nice to once again be in a sizeable fleet beating to weather.



It wasn't long before the forecast high pressure system asserted itself and the wind tap was turned off about three quarters of the way to the weather mark. Apparent wind was your friend at that point, and if luck was on your side perhaps a little puff would come your way. Three boats were able to round the weather mark with some speed only to mostly beat back to the leeward mark. There were some spinnakers up briefly on the leg but genoas were most in use. Unfortunately only three boats managed to finish within the time limit (15 minutes after the first boat finishes) and the race was later abandoned by the PRO ashore.

The bright sunshine was cause for some optimism in the hopes a thermal would develop and after about a half hour and a 180 degree wind shift, the RC setup the course and we were ready to go once more.



The second start of the day was just as interesting as the first with lots of manoeuvring in the prestart with everyone off to a decent start. Racing was tight up the first beat until almost at the weather mark when the wind once again dropped. The second place boat (Andanzas) was the unluckiest of all as they went from second at about 5 boat lengths from the mark to about 14th by the time they rounded. The first few boats around got the spinnakers up and with a very light touch were able to coax some boat speed down the run.

Remarkably, even with about 1.25 knots of boat speed there was some tight racing on the run with Convictus maintaining the lead and finishing about 4 inches ahead of Eximer with Colibri 3rd. Even in the light winds all of the boats were able to finish within the time limit making this the only race to count in the series.



Late afternoon was a perfect opportunity to debrief on the docks and get ready for the BBQ that evening. The good folks from Classen's Cranes, and a host of others, were out in force on the BBQs and overseeing the dispensing of free beer. All the food was eaten, the coolers were emptied, regatta t-shirts on-hand for all participants and lots of sailing stories told.

With the wedding carrying on into the night Chinese Lanterns were part of the festivities as perhaps half a dozen were sent up at intervals, easily reaching a couple of thousand feet on a clear, cool early fall night. As things wound down many of the crews drifted back to the Motel where the pool and hot tub were invaded into the small hours.



Sunday rolled around to greet the competitors with dense fog after a night of nearly freezing temperatures. The sun eventually burned through revealing more postcard settings but it wasn't looking like sailboat racing would be in the cards. The boats ventured out to the racing area for some spirited drifting and picture taking. PA Roi from Seagal even took the opportunity to go aloft and take pictures of each boat and crew, cool shots I'm sure.



A few words of encouragement from the PRO on the radio from time to time gave way to an eventual abandonment at about 13h30.

Preparations to lower the masts and haul the boats began on the water so that the prep work was all done by the time the boats arrived at the dock, the only things left to do was drop the mast and secure it and prep any through hulls. Classen's Cranes hauled the boats in spectacular fashion as a hoist over a lamp post was part of the haul out, directly adjacent the clubhouse. The crews all assisted each other in getting the straps in place and then moving to the next boat in record time.

Good times were had in abundance though more racing would have been everyone's preference to cap off the weekend. Even though only one race stood, the prizes were awarded as a commitment to the sponsors whereas the Class Association normally requires three races for a major championship series. No doubt many are already looking forward to going back to Newport Vermont next year in the hopes this wonderful local will offer up some winds and make this a perfect setting.

As ever, thanks go out again to all that helped organise and run the regatta. Louis Donahue, Ross Tellier, the many volunteers and generous sponsors, including [30 Degrés](#), that donated in many ways are much appreciated. See you next year!

Paul White
Convictus
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