

2006 National Championship Star 45 Class

by Phil Geren

Ahhh, the Joys of a Growing Class!

Twenty-One intrepid skippers competed in the 2006 National Championship Regatta for the Star 45 Class! That is almost twice the number of participants from the previous year. What caused this??

Well, I think this is the direct result of hard work on the part of the Organizing Committee and its helpers. More than 6 months prior to the event, the Committee focused on communication, to make sure any Star 45 model yacht owner in North America who might be interested in participating was kept fully informed of the preparations, scheduling, venue information, and registrants. The Chair-people of the Organizing Committee, our erstwhile Don Keeney (who is also the new Star 45 Class Secretary), along with his First Mate, Nelda Tallman, did a mass mailing to update the database of Star 45 owners. Also, an official website was created by Webmaster Bruce Huckaba, and that site was immensely valuable as a medium for posting and exchanging information between interested parties (www.star45houston.com). A Newsletter was prepared on a monthly basis, containing running commentary on preparations, the growing raffle donations, a new writing of the history of the Star 45 Model Yacht and Class, etc., etc. (go to the website to read the issues.) Hard work! But, it paid off.

You will see frequently in this Report, in parentheses, a reference number which corresponds to the last four digits in the captions of photos posted on the website. If you wish, you could print this Report, and then go to the website and view the referenced photos on the website as you read. Example: this years "Good Posture Award" went to Bruce Huckaba (1 013, on page 2 of the Photos section)!

The venue, arranged and managed with excellence by Mark Cooper (1 039, red hat), Commodore of the Clearpoint Model Yacht Club, is an outstanding natural pond, in a beautiful park in Pasadena, TX, a suburb of Houston. Mark thinks of everything, even providing a launching dock to keep Skippers out of the mud. Race Director Brad Lauterbach (1 025) recruited a pro team of judges, rescue boat operators, and assistants, and ran the best Regatta I have ever experienced. Wind conditions were challenging, and Brad had to frequently redesign the race course to provide optimum conditions for the competition. Brad and his team ran things with grace and charm, while maintaining the dignity, professionalism, and discipline needed to make such an event a success.

Nelda Tallman (1 128, on the left) and Zack (2 057) did their always-superb job of scoring, with the expert help of Vicky Gerbig (1 128, on the right), assisted by Matilde Geren (1 028, in red).

Raffle Mania

The Committee wanted to make sure that the Saturday Night Dinner would provide plenty of excitement, so a special focus was placed on Raffle prize solicitation. We wanted to have many prizes, but we especially wanted to have a few blockbusters, big value items that someone could win with just one ticket.

Well, our suppliers came through for us. We received a brand new, red Star 45 Hull in fiberglass, a brand new Kit, containing a gorgeous midnight blue hull, deck, keel, and rudder in fiberglass, a computer-controlled drum winch, a set of laser-cut frames for building a Star 45 (eliminating the tedious scroll sawing normally needed to cut out all the frames for a new hull-building project), a standard Hitec winch for EACH AND EVERY participant in the Regatta, a couple of \$50 gasoline credit cards, two professional jigs (one for aligning the keel and rudder post with the hull; one for applying even pressure all around the hull/deck joint for leak-free installation), Micky Peterson's valuable model yacht tuning course, on DVD, an anemometer, gift certificates from hobby shops, and on, and on, and on. Details on contributors are found in the Newsletters on the website.

Everyone was on the edge of his seat when the ticket was drawn for that \$200 winch.

And, if that weren't enough, Mark Cooper, our venue manager, who doesn't own a Star 45 but has been thinking about it, won the kit! The feel-good story of the Regatta. Mark's son Colin (1 133) did a premier

and very professional job of Ticket Master for the Raffle, and when his Dad won, Colin's eyes really lit up! What a heartwarming and gratifying thing to witness.

Happy Birthday, Bob Blackwell !

It was a great surprise to me to have the opportunity to meet Bob Blackwell, who attended the Regatta. There are many who have contributed selflessly to the development of the Star 45 model yacht and Class, but no one has made the contribution that Bob has made in the areas of design, building, and figuring out how to make them go fast. There is a dogma, subscribed to by many, to the effect that you have to sail a Blackwell-built boat to win a regatta having Blackwell boats in it. Bob taught us the importance of weight and its distribution. He set the standard for a fast configuration of ballast/keel/rudder. I can't begin to do justice to his contributions. Bob attended our Saturday night dinner, too, and we sang happy birthday to him (1 026a). His warm smile in return was great to see. Happy Birthday, again, Bob, and MANY MORE!!

The Boats

All the competing boats were championship quality. There were many Blackwells, Skid-Dos, and scratch-built hulls. All the commercial sailmakers were represented, and several sets of home-made sails were seen. You expect to see great boats at a national championship, and they were there.

However, this year witnessed a truly unique phenomenon. John Fisher, of Colorado, beginning about two and a half months before the event, built two wooden Star 45s, according to the official hull plans, and finished a third boat, based on a new Skid-Do hull, specially for this year's NCR. He prepared one wooden boat for himself, he's from Colorado, another wooden boat for his brother Rob of Houston, TX, and the fiberglass Skid-Do for his father, Bob, of California. John even made his own aluminum deck fittings, and they were beautiful. He also brought a free-standing, gimballed tuning stand which enables a model yacht to sail suspended in the air on land (1 001). Great for sail tuning. See it at <http://star-45.blogspot.com/>. His boats are masterpieces, and they did superbly in the racing, notwithstanding the fact that John didn't even have time to test them prior to the Regatta. Brooks Nolan did us all a great favor by photographing the entire two days of activity, posting the photos on www.star45.houston.com, and mailing a CD to all competitors.

Julie Ayres National Craftsmanship Award

As you can imagine, competition was really tight for the Julie Ayres trophy. Jim Adams of Houston, who is another master craftsman, built a wooden boat having intricate, decorative wood inlays and custom made brass deck fittings that looked like pieces of jewelry (1 030). John Fisher presented his planked wooden hulled beauties. Bruce Simmons of Tyler, TX entered a gorgeous red craft. The trophy was awarded, by only one point, to Phil Geren, for his spar-varnished padouk-decked Skid-Do with a polished aluminum keel, Windjammin' Sails, 2001 Mercedes-Benz Laguna Green Pearl Flake hull paint, and rigging inspired by [Optimizing the East Coast 12-Meter](#), by Larry Richardson and Bob Wells (2 045).

The Dumas Perpetual Trophy

More about the winner is found below, however I thought you might be interested in having a listing of the recipients of the Dumas Star 45 National Championship Trophy through the years, as engraved on the Trophy:

1976	Rod Carr
1977	Rod Carr
1978	John Krick
1979	Charlie Cannon
1980	Bill Rader
1981	Bill Rader
1982	Bill Rader
1983	Manny Costa
1984	Curt Cole
1985	John Workman
1986	Manny Costa

1987 Ray McNair
1988 Ricky Davis
1989 Manny Costa
1990 Greg Gust
1991 Greg Gust
1992 Greg Gust
1993 Greg Gust
1994 Greg Gust
1995 Greg Gust
1996 Greg Gust
1997 Glen Chalder
1998 Greg Gust
1999 Scott Rowland
2000 John Emery
2001 Scott Rowland
2002 Sturla Fjoran
2003 Scott Rowland
2004 Scott Rowland
2005 Gunter Arendt
2006 Sturla Fjoran

The Racing

Three National Champions competed: Greg Gust, eight times National Champion, 1990-1996 and 1998; John Emery, 2000; and, Sturla Fjoran, 2002. The fleet was also replete with Regional Champions and other skilled and experienced skippers, all great sailors. And, here's a special THANK YOU to the many beginners who competed (including me)! It took titanium cojones for newcomers to duke it out with such an exalted fleet, and they had what it took.

Phil Runquist, another master builder, made the Measurement/Registration process truly effortless. Having the Rules committed to memory, he took no more than 30 seconds to comprehensively measure a boat (1 010).

Day one presented challenging, warm, light and variable wind and periods of torrential rain. During the two minute warning of one of the heats, the rain was so intense that it was nearly impossible to see the boats, but there was no postponement. "STARBOARD...!!" The wind direction was not favorable, being from the east and right on our noses. The Race Director had no alternative but to arrange the course so that we sailed away from ourselves to reach the windward mark. There was lots of boat-to-boat "intercourse" (1 051).

Day two was much more comfortable. It was cool and there was plenty of wind, although still on the nose. The sky was frequently decorated with warplanes, as an air show was taking place at an air base not more than 5 miles away. Occasionally, it was impossible to hear the RD or the clock, but it made for a unique Regatta, unforgettable.

Thirty two heats were sailed over the two days, in spite of the lack of wind on day one. Brad and his team really kept the races moving, getting in the maximum of competition. Sportsmanship was impressive, with offenders taking their penalty turns on the course, not requiring even one protest hearing. The action is really best described by the great photos, and I hope you will visit the site and view them.

The top four positions were:

First – Sturla Fjoran (2 050);

Second – Greg Gust (2 048);

Third – John Emery (2 047);

Fourth – John Fisher (2 046).

CONGRATULATIONS, WINNERS!

Finally, here's a big THANKS EVER SO MUCH to all of you who made this great Regatta possible.

See you next year!