

IRIYA Spring Newsletter

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Organized 1947

Toledo Hosts Renegade Regatta

By Greg Whitehorse

It had been nearly thirty years since the last Renegade regatta had been held on the frozen waters of Maumee Bay (Lake Erie) in Toledo, Ohio. Over those decades the officers of the Renegade Association had pledged to return if the ice conditions cooperated. Finally, in 2007 sailable ice returned to the Toledo area and the IRIYA regatta was successfully held there February 9th, 10th, and 11th.

The fifteen skippers who registered with scorer Deb Whitehorse for the three day event were greeted by relatively cold temperatures, clear skies and light winds on the opening day. The mid-west and central states regions of the country were at the tail end of a two week cold snap and everyone was pleased that the mercury had climbed into the low to mid-teens by race time. A light snowfall, after the regatta had been called on, but before the first day of sailing, had blown up into hard drifts several inches deep. Navigating around the drifts, as best one could, would prove difficult in the light breeze.

Sure enough, leader of the first race, Greg Simon (4LIYC), failed to make the time limit (much to the relief of the other competitors) on the last lap and that race was abandoned.

By afternoon, the winds had picked up enough to try again. Greg Simon sailed to the win, edging Les Lashaway (TIYC), Jerry Simon (4LIYC), and Ken Norton (4LIYC). The second and final race of the day, again saw Greg Simon emerge victorious. Jerry Simon crossed the line in second while Les Lashaway edged Ken Norton for third place.

With racing wrapped up for Friday, the competitors barely had time for a quick sprucing up and a bite to eat before heading over to the yacht club for the first night of their annual weekend long winter festival celebrations. A great time was had by all.

Day two of the regatta again saw high temperatures below twenty degrees and tough ice conditions, although with a steadier breeze in the 8-14 mph range. Thankfully the "in and out of the boat to push" conditions of Friday were not the case on Saturday. The third race of the regatta fell to Jerry Simon, who narrowly defeated his son Greg. Ken Norton finished third, with Doug Kolner (4LIYC) taking fourth.



Jerry Simon upon accepting the 2007 championship trophy.



Les Lashaway after his 3rd place finish.

The top two positions did not change for the fourth race, Jerry again topped son Greg. Glen Betzoldt (TIYC) raced to a third place finish while Donny Anderson (4LIYC) claimed fourth. The final race on Saturday was the third one-two finish for team Simon. Greg bested Jerry for the win, while Betzoldt held off Lashaway for third.

Once again the nightlife was found at the yacht club where skippers gathered to consume a few beverages and tell tall tales of the days events.

Sunday dawned with much more wind than the previous two days of the regatta. Mindful of a winter storm approaching from the west, it was decided to hold a sixth and final race and then call the regatta complete. This would allow those who had traveled long distances to get on the road as soon as possible.

Everyone was surprised to find that the ice conditions had improved considerably despite temperatures that had stayed well below the freezing mark. One theory was that the previous days of sailing had knocked down most of the bigger drifts. The sixth and final race of the regatta was by far the fastest. Donny Anderson took advantage of the 20 mph winds to break the Simon and Simon stranglehold on first place finishes. Jerry Simon placed second followed by Glen Betzoldt and Ken Norton.

Greg Simon, who all but had the regatta championship wrapped up before the start of the race, suffered mechanical difficulties in the form of the ratchet block self-destructing. The block came back to hit the side of Greg's helmet but no injuries occurred. It did however make trimming the sail nearly impossible and he was fortunate to hang on to a fifth place finish.

When points were tabulated at the conclusion of sailing, the winner of the 2007 IRIYA Championship Regatta was Jerry Simon. Greg Simon finished second while Donny Anderson's win in the last race propelled him to third place overall. Ken Norton completed a fine regatta in fourth place.

At the trophy presentation, Champion Jerry Simon noted that it had been over 30 years since he had last won the Renegade Championship and that at age 67 he had pretty much reassessed his goals in the sport. Important to him was having a good time sailing, competing with his son, the camaraderie of the group, and to remain somewhat competitive. As his eyes welled up, he described his victory as "very sweet and unexpected".

Overall, the 2007 championship regatta was a very successful event. There were six races held over three days of sailing, in varying conditions, in which boat set-up and sailing skills played the important roles, as they should. The host Toledo Ice Yacht Club did a tremendous job in making everyone feel welcome. While ice conditions weren't great, as can happen at any regatta, the hard work and goodwill of the Toledo iceboating community more than made up for any shortcomings.

Anyone who has sailed iceboats on Maumee Bay knows going in that the lake access is not the greatest. The boats needed to be carried on down a steep embankment and over a bridge (that resembled something out of an Indiana Jones movie). None of this was a detriment to the sailing. There was always plenty of help to make the task surprisingly easy. On the final day of the regatta, when we were packing up, I carried my boom and sail up to my trailer, when I turned to go back to the ice, I saw several TIYC members carrying my hull, mast, and runner plank up the narrow bridge. This is how it went all weekend. Everyone received the needed help when unloading on Thursday and loading up on Sunday. The hospitality was incredible....cookouts while overlooking the ice on Friday and Saturday, great times at the yacht club and plenty of help on the ice to run the regatta. Should the Renegade Championship go back to Toledo? I'd go back tomorrow.

Derusha Wins 2007 NIYA Renegade Title

By Ron Rosten

The 2007 Northwest Ice Yacht Association Renegade Regatta was sailed on the weekend of February 16th, 17th, and 18th in Menominee, MI and was won by Mike Derusha. Mike swept all 3 races to capture his 3rd Northwest title.

On Friday, rock hard black ice, cold temperatures, and high winds were the order of the day. All racing was cancelled early in the afternoon.

The winds and temperatures moderated just enough on Saturday to start the regatta. The first Renegade race turned into a wild affair that can best be described as survival sailing as strong northwest winds continued to blast across the ice. The start of the race saw Greg Simon with an early lead closely followed by Derusha. But the bad luck that plagued Simon a week earlier in Toledo followed him 500 miles to Menominee. A spreader on his mast broke, forcing Greg to take a dreaded DNF. The race was nearly abandoned when an A Stern-Steerer got loose near the start-finish line and threatened the Renegades as they approached for their first rounding. Luckily, the situation in the pits was brought under control and Derusha went on to easily win the first race followed by brothers Andy McCormick and Tim McCormick. By the second Renegade race the winds had diminished to a more controllable 15 mph and Derusha made it 2 for 2 with another of his seemingly effortless wins, followed by Tim McCormick and Mike Ripp. With some large cracks that opened up on the race course, racing was canceled for the day after the completion of the second series of races.



Mike Derusha rounding the bottom mark at the 2007 NIYA Regatta.

By Sunday morning the cracks had healed and the winds were blowing a very moderate 10-15 mph. It didn't matter to Derusha though as he swept the regatta by winning race number 3, followed by Tim McCormick and Jim LaFortune.

When the overall points were tallied, Derusha was the undisputed champion followed by Tim McCormick, Andy McCormick, and Doug Kolner. It should also be noted that Ken Norton won the Elmer Millenbach trophy which is awarded to the highest finisher for the IRIYA and NIYA regattas combined.

While the NIYA Regatta did not go exactly as planned, it certainly did not lack excitement. The conditions were very challenging to say the least. Once again regatta management rose to the occasion. Chip Sawyer deserves a lot of credit for the job he did as chief judge. Deb Whitehorse did her usual fine work with scoring and Arlyn LaFortune was there to lend his invaluable assistance. All of us owe them a huge debt of gratitude.



2007 Elmer Millenbach trophy winner, Ken Norton.