

## THE RACE COURSE HEATS UP

Five of our eight trophy races qualify for season champion. The best of the best have been tearing it up on Tomales Bay. Currently the wooden set is giving the plastic set a run for it. Consider Malcolm Fife's 110 is 60 years old. The Biller's 110 is seven years older, and panting for a splash in the water. Look at Hinkley's and Waddell's; you'd never guess they're that old, either. Mark Darley and Jim Pettigrew's Johnson 18s would be grandchildren by human terms.

So, how are these boats and sailors stacking up out there? It's incredible. At any one race, a bunch of Scots are loaded up and jockeying for a start, keeping a wary eye on those faster boats, and even given the congeniality of IYC, no racer holds back shouting his privilege and another's burden. Next to a spinnaker run, it's one of the most exciting parts of racing.

Mike Meszaros brought back veteran Jim Fox to crew, and together they pretty much shoot out the gate and lead the pack. Mark Darley's 18 has an impressive crewing by Cecilia LeMieux, and we're told when he dumps them in the water you can get a lesson in French that was never included in your high school class. (just kidding) Sometimes the more accomplished the sailor, the more challenge he'll want in a boat and if that's the case, when he gets a real hold on that tiller, look out! Look out, anyway. That boat is fast.

We think we've got it figured about the old hands and their Scots. The old hands are Cardwell, Congdon, Landreth, Phelan, and Noble, among the most active this season. For the longest time we thought it was skill, experience and well tended-to boats. We've been with Ned Congdon, for example, and aside from reading the fog line for wind, staying in or out the current, tight tacks, well trimmed sails, preparing the spinney, and on and on, here's the secret: no foul weather gear. Yep. No foul weather gear. All they wear is shorts and shirts. No, they're athletic sailors and they know how to make a boat go. In the Barnes race, their finish times were within minutes of each other and that was a long race. We must add that the Lassetters are in there mixing it up, but they wear foulies.

And here's an interesting development: our new handicap rating has made an unalloyed issue. For the non-sailors reading this, with the exception of Dave Wallace's Raven, almost all our boats are about 15 to 20 feet, but since the boats are different in design, each design constitutes a class and the handicap for each class is an amalgam of various factors. About six or seven classes will race in a season at IYC. As an example for this, a Dutchman is a faster boat than a Scot; therefore to equalize a race between the two, the faster boat 'gives time' over distance to a slower boats. How much time (handicap) is set and used for a 'corrected time' in a race. Every sailor races to his highest ability, there's no such thing as holding back to benefit the handicap, so if a granted skilled sailor never betters a sailor in another boat, adjustments need to be made. Within a class, adjustments aren't necessary; thus Robert Cardwell's placement against other Scots shows his sailing skill. This is why some sailors prefer one design racing; it's an already equalized race won by skill. Given the handicap equalizing, credit goes to Malcolm Fife and his crew, Todd, on the 110. Five races have been held and the following have qualified, listed in order of placement: Fife, Cardwell, Meszaros, Lassetter, Severson and Darley.

Our thanks to the excellent watch of Izzy LeMieux and Emile Kempf and their helpers.

