

Cutter Smith was in trouble. As he and crew Laura Hutton rounded the last leeward mark in the last race in 15th place they new that Bob and Stephanie Adams were in first place and if they didn't fight back to 8th place or better, they would loose the regatta to the Adams. Luckily for Cutter, the race committee had set a course that finished with a 1 mile weather leg. Sailing in a 8-10 knot breeze, Cutter turned the jets on and fought back to fifth place to become the 2002 JY15 North American Champion.

Forty JY15' from 10 different states turned out for the 2002 North American Championships hosted by Fleet 1 in Stonington CT. The sun shined for three days, the wind held steady and the current changed just enough each day to keep every one guessing. The Wadawanuck Yacht Club did their usual fantastic job in organizing activities and when all was said and done, the bar had been raised in the food category. The food was unbelievable! That along with the Kevin Crandall Blues Band playing on Friday and Saturday night guaranteed that all the competitors had a great time.

Race 1- Friday afternoon, clear skies and 10-12 knots was a good sign. The current was still ebbing which meant, go right. Right at the start, Chris and Vickie Field along with Dave and Wendy Eck banged right. The Fields took off and looked like they had a motor while Dave and Wendy did battle with Jeff Morgan and crew Chris Jagel. At the first mark it was the Fields, Ecks and Morgan followed by #1 Rod Johnstone sailing with Eliza Richartz, followed by past JY15 President Gary Orkney (#5) sailing with Halsey Richartz. (yes he is Elizas brother). Notice the presence of 4 locals in the top five. The Fields kept separating and held on easily to win

followed by Morgan, Ecks, and Rod.

Now, the general rule is that if it worked the first race, do it again in the next race.

But **NO!** As Race two started, the Fields and Ecks started in the middle and stayed left. We are still not sure why. The post race interview revealed possible brain decay brought on by old age. In the meantime, Cutter Smith and Laura Hutton had gone right along with South Carolinians John Potter and Lacy Sproul, and the New York brother and sister team of Bill and Sarah Nightingale. They were followed closely by the Dutch team of Frank and Milli Van Kempen and local junior hotshot Emily Maxwell sailing with her dad Wes. These five held their spots to the finish and yes the Fields finished 10th with the Ecks in 15th.

As the competitors gathered for Friday night dinner and music, Cutter and Laura held first place with 8 points followed by Potter, Field, Orkney and Morgan who all had 11 points. The Fleet was divided into four teams, which has become a JY tradition. The team captains were the top four boats so Cutter, Jeff Morgan, Gary Orkney and John Potter became the team captains. The goal behind the team concept is to help the newer sailors learn some of the JY tricks from the better sailors and also to get everyone to meet new people. Each team had a different color hat so you could recognize your team members on the water.

Saturday morning dawned with beautiful blue skies but a lack of breeze. As the sailors waited for the Stonington Sea Breeze

to fill in, they split into their teams and had a chat session with their fellow team members about how to make their boats go fast.

The boats finally left the dock at 11:00 and had a leisurely sail out to the course. The wind filled in to about 6-8, which was enough to get the races going. The wind was about 30 degrees east of the first day which left everyone wondering which way to go. After a couple general recalls, the Black flag went up and the race got off. The fleet split evenly but this time it was the left side that worked. Newcomer Michael Ferrara (a cat sailor) and crew Julie Walker arrived on a lefty to lead at the windward mark. They were followed closely by Prescott and Ann Littlefield, Gretchen and Martha Freye, the Ecks and Potter/Sproul. Now started the tough part. Downwind against the current in light air. The Fleet spit with Ferrara going low and the Freye's and Littlefields way high. After 30 minutes of searching for puffs and holding the jibs and mains out, the Freyes arrived at the leeward mark in first place followed by the Littlefields and the Ecks. They held these spots up to the finish followed by Potter and Ferrara.

The big news was that Cutter and the team of Bob and Stephanie Adam were both over early and received DSQ's. The Adams team was on of the hottest coming into the regatta but they were having a hard time getting in gear with a 6,12,DSQ in there first three races.

Race four was more of the same, only this time JY newcomers from Fleet 105, Paul Scalisi and Joy DeCarvalho lead the team of Clay Burkhalter and Ann Wilkie around the windward mark. The downwind leg spread the fleet out.

Cutter and the Van Kempen's closed in on the leaders with the Bergmans right behind. This was the way they finished with the Adams back in 10th place.

The last race on Saturday was more of the same. The wind picked up a little and the current slacked a little. Left was still favored but this time the far left didn't pay. Finally the Adams got in gear and led at the first mark followed by Potter and the father/daughter team of Wes and Emily Maxwell. The Fleet again split but this time the Adams turned on the jets and won going away. It was a battle for second between Cutter, the Fields and the Maxwells. (Vickie Field is Wes's Sister so there was more at stake than just second). Cutter held on for second followed by the Fields, Maxwells and Rod.

Saturday night's dinner was fantastic and the Kevin Crandell band provided the music. When the Fleet went to bed, it looked like Cutter had the regatta sewn up. All he had to do on Sunday was not get a DSQ and the Championship was his.

Sunday morning arrived with the wind back over to the right which meant everyone would be going right. At the gun, the Adams and the Ecks won the boat and took off right. The Adams had discovered their speed and they just took off leading from start to finish. The team of David Hoye and Misty Reeder from Texas found the groove and finished second followed by Potter/Sproul and the local team of Lydia Fayal and Mary Wright. Cutter finished in 8th.

This set the stage for the last race with Cutter leading Potter 22 points to 24. Cutters throwout was a DSQ while Potters was an 11th. The Adams were at 30 points followed by the

Fields with 32.

The start was messy with lots of banging. Cutter was buried while the Adams got off to a clean start. Again the Adams had the jets going and led from start to finish. The real battle was back in the pack between Cutter and Potter. Both of them were in the high teens at the first mark and as they rounded the leeward mark they were still in the teens. It looked like the Adams were going to pull off a tremendous come back. The last weather leg was over a mile long in 7-8 knots. Cutter and Laura worked every shift and clawed their way back to 5th place. Potter made the mistake of going left and got buried with a 23rd. The team of Hoye/Reeder again finished second followed by Rod and the Littlefields.

When it was all said and done, Cutter and Laura beat the Adams by 4 points and Potter/Sproul by 8 points to become the 2002 JY15 North American Champions.