

2007 JY15 North Americans Report

She was right! They aren't "a bunch of dirt farmers", they're corn farmers. From the time you hit the Illinois border to the Island Bay Yacht Club and well beyond, I'm sure, there are nothing but corn fields. As we were to learn over the next three days, they also have raised some excellent sailors. Guys like Joe Londrigan (former Star Class world champion) and his brother Tom, Jeff Evans, Lou Dixon and Peter Wise to name just a few. Couple them to their home waters, a small lake in the middle of all those corn fields, and all of us "out of towners" had more than we could handle most of the time.

Friday started out pretty flat and dreary. After a short postponement, we headed out to the racecourse. The wind was basically out of the northeast which meant that it was anywhere from north to east whenever it wasn't totally calm which it seemed to be most of the time. At the end of the day we found ourselves in 6th place and were completely demoralized. Tom Londrigan won the day with a 3-1-3 which already seemed to be an insurmountable lead, The locals seemed to know exactly where to go when the wind went ultra light and the general feeling was that the rest of the regatta would be sailed in similar conditions.

On Friday evening, the Slater's graciously let all of us invade their home for a barbeque dinner. Everyone from the Springfield contingent showed up with an appetizer, side or dessert. It turned out very nice and was much appreciated. The field was also split into four teams of six boats. The team captains were Tom Londrigan, Jay Vann, Jeff Evans and Mark Allen. We ended up on the "pink" team with Jeff as our captain.

On Saturday we woke up to breeze! The day started out at 8-10 and was as high as 15-16 at times. The race committee got off one race in the morning before having to postpone to allow a thunderstorm to pass through. Joe won that race and established himself as the boat to beat. We were second with our Mexican friends, Camillo and Juan Pablo, (son and father) a close third. That afternoon we finally got the real breeze. The shifts were pretty big and seemed to be out on the laylines all day. It was very easy to cross 5-6 boat lengths ahead of someone only to have them cross you by the same distance 2 or 3 minutes later. We spent most of the day left of the rhumb line usually following Joe and Amanda into a persistent lefty that usually got pretty big at the top mark. Tom Londrigan and his crewton son kept banging the right and had it pay big in race six winning by 15 or so boat lengths. We sailed three races Saturday afternoon giving us a total of four for the day. Elise and I were feeling better about our performance having won the day, but we only erased two points of the five that Joe and Amanda had over us. The forecast for Sunday was light which, in our minds, favored the Londrigan's.

At the end of the day Joe and Amanda had a three point lead over us, eight over Jay and Akiko and eleven over Tom and Jack. Rounding out the top five came Jeff Evans, sailing with crewton Sean Patrick Chapin, 21 points back but with a lot more to say before all was said and done. Mark and Lisa Allen posted a couple of double digit finishes and were pretty much out of the running for the top spot. Chris Vann and Amy Williams (go pink!) were slowly climbing the ladder with some very consistent sailing on Saturday.

We had dinner at the club Saturday night. The choices were chicken or steak for the entrée and just about anything you could imagine for dessert. Kudos' to IBYC for an incredible spread. The team standings were posted and, amazingly, there was only a 30 point spread between all four teams with orange (Jay Vann-team captain) in the lead.

Sunday's forecast was for 5-10 out of the southwest. After a short postponement the race committee headed out. What little breeze that had finally appeared was out of the west southwest. It promptly died and we drifted around for an hour or more. As was the case on Saturday, a little breeze came through the course and the race committee immediately started a sequence. The wind had begun to go right and the start resulted in a general recall and a short postponement while the course was reset. I wanted the boat, even if it meant a second row start, so that we could protect the right. The next start was another general, thankfully, as we were shut out at the boat. Another sequence was started and with 30 to go we found room in the second row, at the boat, right on Jay's transom. Joe was directly below Jay and fighting for position. The gun went off and then a second for the individual recall for both Jay and Joe. We found ourselves on the favored right with clear air. This race was just up and back to the finish so the start was incredibly important. We spent the weather leg covering Joe while keeping close tabs on Jay. We rounded in third or fourth with Jay right behind us and Joe a couple of boats further back. The lead boat jybed and headed for the right shore (looking up). He was taking everyone way above an optimum course looking for more pressure I'm guessing. The second big pack, led by Jeff Evans, went the opposite direction and looked to be coming on strong. We ended up jybing out early and took the center of the course just trying to avoid the holes. This is where Elise has done an incredible job for me. The left side paid out over the right and we were just able to jybe ahead of Jeff for the win.

We knew we were now in the lead but didn't know by how much. I think that three boats finished before total mayhem broke out on the finish line as eight or nine boats finished within about ten seconds of one another. After doing the math we figured the only boat we had to concern ourselves with in the last race was Joe. We thought he had finished sixth. (It was only after everything was over that we discovered it was tenth.)

In the last race we, once again, wanted the right. The course was once around a windward-leeward course with a additional weather leg and our first upwind finish of the regatta. The breeze was now a fairly steady 5-8 from the south to southwest. We started two or three boat lengths from the boat while Joe started toward the middle of the line. We won the first cross and employed a hard cover on port tack just trying to bounce him back to the left whenever possible. We rounded the top mark with the lead and several boats between us and Joe. Things tightened up a lot on the run. We rounded in front with Jay, Jeff, Mark, Joe and a few others hot on our heels. Jay was the first to tack for the left and took it almost all of the way to the port tack layline. (It didn't work out quite the way he figured.) We stayed with Joe and led him out to the right corner. The right ended up favored and we won by eight or ten boat lengths over Mark and Lisa who snuck in from the center of the course somewhere.

The overall results are posted on www.jyca.org . The specialty trophies were as follows:

Top Husband/Wife Team: Mark and Lisa Allen

Top Master: Chris Vann sailing with Amy Williams

Top Child/Parent: Camilo and Juan Pablo Hernandez

Top Midfleet: Doug Slater and Max Zanders

Top Female: Susan Herndon sailing with Bill Herndon

Top Junior Team: David and Brian Dixon

Team: Pink (go pink!)

Many thanks go out to Brad Downing and Nancy Perkins who served as co-chairs for this year's regatta and to the many IBYC volunteers who had a hand in making the regatta a success. Their hard work and hospitality will not be forgotten. Thanks also to Hunter Marine and Ted Norris for their continued support.

I hope to see everyone at the next one,
John Potter