



Edgartown Yacht Club 100th Annual Regatta

A Joyful Celebration of Sailing

EDGARTOWN, MASS. (July 18, 2023) – From the very start of planning, the [Edgartown Yacht Club 100th Annual Regatta](#) was destined to be a memorable occasion celebrating a full century of competitive sailing at the historic [Edgartown Yacht Club](#) (EYC). With three sessions of sailing, the first for juniors (Wednesday, July 12 - Thursday, July 13), the second for keelboat sailors (Friday, July 14 - Sunday, July 16) and the third for traditional Catboats (Saturday, July 15), the participants were of all ages and racing levels. Edgartown Yacht Club pulled out all the stops on its well-respected programs for race management and hospitality, while a long list of actively involved regatta sponsors went the extra mile to put smiles on everyone's faces.



Clockwise from top left: Cat Boat Parade in Edgartown Harbor (credit Larry Glick), thumbs up for Bad Martha

Beer's signature 100th Annual Regatta Ale (Rick Bannerot); Race Committee between races (Rick Bannerot),
Bad Martha's Ice Cream enjoyed by juniors (Tot Balay).

"Though we had our challenges with the weather at times, I couldn't be more pleased," said Event and Race Committee Chair Elizabeth Balay. "Everybody, from club members to visiting sailors and families from other clubs, was so filled with joy and pride in pulling this off. Even the four visiting judges (three of them national) said they appreciated the lovely level of enthusiasm and positive atmosphere at the regatta."

Commemorative activities for the Regatta's 100-year milestone ranged from A Catboat Parade of Sail on Saturday through Edgartown Harbor (with 200 spectators catching the sight at Edgartown Yacht Club's waterfront clubhouse), followed by the Regatta Ball that evening; a special "Century of Sail Exhibition" at the Vineyard Preservation Trust's Carnegie Heritage Center, including the premier of a retrospective film; and sponsor [Bad Martha Beer's](#) crafting of a signature 100th Annual Regatta Ale for adults attending post-racing parties and socials.

Juniors

The two-day junior regatta served as a qualifier for the SMSA Grand Prix and hosted 40 C420s and 59 Optimist Dinghies, the latter of which was split into two divisions on two different circles: Optimist Dinghy Championship (39 boats further split into Opti Blue, Red and White Classes) and Optimist Dinghy Green (20 boats).

New Bedford Yacht Club's Peter Herlihy and Finn Sperry posted 12 points to win C420s, and with six points on their closest competitors (second-place finishers Patrick Shachoy/Luke Tougas, Beverly YC) took home the G. Richard Steigler Memorial Trophy for the boat with the highest winning margin in the junior regatta. Herlihy/Sperry won six out of nine races held in predominantly light-moderate breezes.

All Opti classes sailed eight races with Christian Petersen (Saunderstown YC) and Roger Wellington (Buzzards Yacht Club) winning Blue and Red classes, respectively. Wellington was further recognized as the Overall Opti Champion.

Opti Green introduced young sailors to regatta competition in a fun and friendly atmosphere. (This was a participation class only, with no winners.)

"The Opti Green circle was for young sailors who are new to the regatta scene, focusing not so much on winning as on having fun," said Balay. "We also added a Green "Coached" class, which accommodated an even more beginner echelon of Opti sailors. These were kids from our yacht club who wanted to be involved but weren't ready to sail upwind and downwind

around marks by themselves. We set them up on eight of our plastic Zim boats and had coaches on the course helping them learn how to 'regatta.' And they had a blast!"

Further making the junior regatta "joyful" on all accounts was an ice cream trolley serving sponsor [Mad Martha's Ice Cream](#) at the end of the regatta. "It was a huge hit!" said Balay.



Clockwise from top right: Wianno Seniors winner *Aria*, C420 winner Peter Herlihy/Finn Sperry, H12½ winner *Persephone*, Shields winner *Bit O Honey* (*Shenandoah* in background), Opti Overall champion Roger Wellington, J/70 winner *Lynx*, and Rhodes 19 winner *Navicula*, sailing in the Edgartown Yacht Club 100th Annual Regatta. (all photos credit Rick Bannerot)

Keelboats

The Shields class, which was sailing its New England Championship, had a much tougher time of it when they joined the Regatta on Friday. After a shore delay due to thunderstorms and lightning, they sailed three good races, then added three races on Saturday, a perfect Edgartown day of blue skies and south-southwest breezes of 15-17 knots. Their intended three-day regatta was shortened, however, to two days when more inclement weather arrived on Sunday. Starting the class in 22 knots on Sunday, the Race Committee measured

31 knots as the fleet worked its way up the first leg of the course and with more threatening weather on its way, abandoned racing for the day.

“That’s a gear buster, and it wasn’t safe,” said Balay, who explained that racing in all other keelboat classes – Hereshoff 12.5 (H12½), Rhodes 19, and J/70 – that had joined the regatta on Saturday was cancelled before they started racing, thus rendering Saturday’s results as final for those classes. “We made that decision that morning when the wind hit 18 knots, because the boats involved are too small or too fragile. In the case of the Hereshoffs, they are like fine furniture. If you break them, they are expensive to fix.”

Winning the five-boat Shields fleet and the New England Championship was Kenneth Deyett’s (Beverly YC) *Bit O Honey* with a scoreline packed with all first-place finishes. Leading fellow yacht club member Richard Robbins’ *White Rabbit* by five points in final scoring, *Bit O Honey* also won the G. Richard Steigler Memorial Trophy for the boat with the highest winning margin among all keelboat classes.

George Eberstadt (Edgartown YC), with his daughter Maya Eberstadt crewing, won the three-race H12½ series aboard *Persephone*, posting a 2-5-2 for nine points to top the 20-boat fleet and edge out fellow yacht club member Larry Band, skippering *Back Porch*, by a mere one point.

Eberstadt has been sailing a J/70 for the last nine years while *Persephone* sat on a cradle in his garage. He said the combination of several factors made the switch back to the H12½ extra appealing: the promise of a great class turnout of the H12½ fleet in Edgartown, and the chance to brush up in anticipation of the H12½ National Championships coming up in 2024, which EYC will be hosting. “Maya (17) had crewed in the J/70 before but had never set foot in an H12½,” said Eberstadt. “Can I say she did great?! It couldn’t have been closer (between first, second and third place finishes), and it was a special pleasure to race against multi-time H12½ National Champion Warren Vose.... We got a pass from having to defend our slight lead on Sunday, as winds gusting to 30 knots caused the second day to be called off.

“A special thank you goes to the EYC race committee and their whole EYC team, which is at the top of their game and ran the races beautifully. With that and so much talent in the EYC H12½ fleet now, we are eagerly looking forward to the rest of the summer’s racing.”

The four-boat Rhodes 19 class sailed three races, with Rachel Keogh (Edgartown YC) prevailing aboard *Navicula*, while J/70s (five boats) and Wianno Seniors (19 boats) each

sailed two races. Winning J/70s was Crawford Phillips (Edgartown YC) aboard *Lynx*. Tim Fulham's (Wianno YC) *Aria* topped the Wianno Seniors.

"The Wianno Seniors were a grand sight," said Balay, "and we love having them here in Edgartown. At the end of the day (Saturday) everybody in every class came back all smiles."

Cat Boats

Also on Saturday, eight traditional Cat Boats, after their parade and in a nod to the regatta's roots, completed a single race around government marks. Participating in their separately organized [Edgartown Catboat Rendezvous](#), they used Edgartown Yacht Club's Race Committee to start in outer Edgartown Harbor, then reached to a green/red bell buoy at Squash Meadow (shoal) and returned to the Harbor before enjoying an awards celebration later that day at Old Sculpin Gallery.

Sponsor [Barton & Gray Mariners Club](#)'s Hinckley *Talaria Oyster Catcher* was there to catch that and the sailing action on all days, even Sunday when, ultimately, bad weather overruled racing plans. "It was a marvelous and stylish way for non-sailors and others to see the 100th Annual Regatta happening, and such a generous expression of support by our sponsor," said Balay, who also thanked [Sperry Sails, Inc.](#) for providing sailbags, imprinted with regatta logos, to all competitors.



Archive photo of Wianno Seniors sailing in the Edgartown Yacht Club Annual Regatta. (Photo credit Bill Lawrence) ***Ctrl+Click to download***

Edgartown Yacht Club was founded in 1905, and the 100th Annual Regatta first took place in 1924, run from a rented cottage on the waterfront at the Harborside Inn. More than 100 vessels – mainly small gaff-rigged Catboats – took part in a festival of sail that delighted participants and spectators alike. Over the decades since, the event has met with continued success, morphing into its current nine-class event that hosts hundreds of sailors.

Other sponsors for the Edgartown Yacht Club 100th Regatta included [Doughdish](#), [Gannon & Benjamin Marine Railway](#), [Harding Sails](#), [Maritime Solutions](#), [Martha's Vineyard Shipyard](#), and [Vineyard Vines](#).

Full Junior Results: <https://bit.ly/3pTMkfT>

Full Keelboat Results: <https://bit.ly/3K5IE2F>

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