



# North American Championship



ProctorTeam



## North American Championship

North Cape Yacht Club  
LaSalle, Michigan

August 7 – 11, 2011

Champions: Ched Proctor,  
Jamie Ewing, Meredith Killion

I was very fortunate in pulling together a good team for the Lightning North Americans. With the economy the way it is, people have been reluctant to take a full week off from work. Jamie Ewing sailed with me and Jay Mueller last year, and we had a great time. Like so many capable people these days, back in February he found himself looking at unemployment, as his firm was in the process of closing down. In June, he told me that if he still didn't have a permanent position come August, he'd definitely like to sail at North Cape. Some-

time in mid-July he said prospects weren't encouraging for the next few weeks, so let's go to North Cape! At that point I'd pretty much resigned myself to doing something else, but when Jamie suggested it, I just couldn't resist temptation and changed my plans again.

My other long-time teammate Jay was unavailable, as his wife was due to give birth during the championship, so we still needed a third. Meredith Killion, who races with us in the V15 fleet at Cedar Point, was an excel-



The sand artist is Andrew Schmahl  
from Fleet 154,  
Wawasee Yacht Club, Indiana

# North American Championship



lent candidate, but she found it difficult to arrange the whole week away from work. After a close reading of the NOR, it looked highly unlikely that we would be racing on the Friday. So we told her she only needed four days away from the office, flying home late Thursday evening to be back at work Friday. That worked for her, so we were on!

We then organized a couple of evening practice sessions, one of which was in a lovely easterly breeze. We had a good time and so were pretty enthusiastic to get to the regatta.

I also decided to go to Burlington for the ACC championship, and Peter Hall suggested that I sail the Masters' North Americans at North Cape Yacht Club crewing for him. Since coming home from Burlington would allow me only a day before I had to be at North Cape to set up and get organized for the Masters' Championship, the obvious choice was to drive to North Cape straight from Burlington. All of this worked well logistically—it just meant being away from home for two weeks straight. Fortunately, Mallets Bay Boat Club and North Cape Yacht Club are both two great places to sail and spend time.

All the regattas had some great sailing with good competition. They told us at North Cape that they had beautiful wind for the Snipe Nationals the week before, and, true to form, the Masters' ended with a beautiful south easterly on Friday. I suggested to Peter, as we sailed out, that we shouldn't sail too much that day—

after all we didn't want to use up all of the good breeze just before the North Americans!

After a great Masters' event, we were on to the big show. Jamie and Meredith arrived Saturday morning, and we spent the afternoon practicing. The next day opened the qualifying series, which was a bit rough for us, as we found ourselves working out our communication and tactics. We were hoping to get some of this out of our system for the Championship.

The first two qualifiers were held on Sunday, and Monday never supplied a breeze that the Pro David Schaffer felt appropriate to run a race. So the schedule was revised to hold one qualifying race at 10:00 AM on Tuesday, then come in to do the split and head back out for the first two Championship races. We had hoped that this one final race would be enough to get the tactical roughness out of our system before the Championship.

In that qualifying race we won the pin and tacked to cross the fleet. After the fleet crossed behind us and tacked up on our left, they all passed us. We were very deep and had to claw our way back to get a half reasonable finish.

## **Race 1**

The first race was run Tuesday, August 9, in the afternoon after the qualifying Race 3. The wind was again out of the northwest, building in front of a frontal approach that evening.





# North American Championship

On the first beat of the morning qualifying race we had been severely burned by boats to the left of us, so we determined not to let that be the case again. We probably got too far left too early and, therefore, had some distance to make up on the leaders because we rounded the weather mark somewhere out of the top ten. We jibed fairly early to port to get away from the bunch of boats fighting high. Things started to go better after that.

We rounded the second weather mark in third place a few lengths behind Skip Dieball and team, while Allan Terhune's team had a fairly comfortable lead. Tom Allen was a ways behind us in fourth, which was, as it turned out, just the right distance behind. After setting the spinnaker and jibing, I asked, "Is this a four or a five course?" The difference would be that if it were a five course posted, we would need to turn upwind at the leeward gate on a beat to the finish, versus continuing past the leeward gate to the finish line for course four. As it turned out, none of us had seen the course board. The start had come quickly after a postponement, and we had spent the entire sequence towards the pin end, in keeping with our plan to go left.

I noted that the good news was that we were not winning, so we could just follow the leaders. We figured it was probably a four course for two reasons: 1) The PRO had stated that he wanted to run two championship races that afternoon, and 2) the committee boat as still anchored downwind with a pin set, looking like a finish line.

What happened next couldn't have gone better for us, even if we had known. Apparently, Allan in the lead was confused because they put up their jib, dropped their chute and were sailing towards the left hand mark. Meredith noted this, so we started to wonder. Tom Starck, sailing with Skip in the second-place boat, turned around and asked us, "Are we finishing?" Meredith shrugged, as we were a little confused by Allan Terhune's actions. We decided to err on the side of safety, and we hoisted our jib and prepared for the rounding. Skip did the same, and after seeing the two of us with our jibs up, he rounded and hardened up around the mark. As we started to do the same, Jamie turned around and said that Tom was "not taking down his spinnaker." So we bore off and headed down to the committee boat with our jib up and chute down. We had just enough distance on Tom to beat him to the line and got the gun (horn). It seemed like things were beginning to fall our way.

## **Race 2**

The first attempt at Race 2 started shortly after the finish of Race 1 late on Tuesday. The front was moving in, and the breeze and shifts were getting bigger. Again, we were a bit behind at the weather mark, but a quick jibe to port helped us get into the new breeze and move toward the front of the fleet. Todd Wake's team, Neal Fowler and Kristine Wake, rounded in front of us, and were one of the few other boats to jibe early. We both rounded the left gate mark, looking down-



#39 – Starck Team



#45 – Wake Team

# North American Championship



wind. The leaders turned the other mark but were not much ahead of us. We followed Todd out to the right side on port tack.

The new weather had been pulling the wind to the right, and the cloud cover was greater in that direction. Before long, it looked like we would be in good position to lead or be second at the weather mark. When we were two thirds of the way up the leg, the race was abandoned, as the RC had heard reports of severe weather. Oh well, it was good fun while it lasted.

Wednesday was going to be a big day, as the start was again moved up to 10:00 AM, and the RC told us they would run three races if conditions allowed. The breeze was quite strong when we arrived at the race course early Wednesday morning.

## **The Real Race 2**

The real Race 2 got underway on schedule. The details have become a little fuzzy in my head with time, as the three races on one big breeze day, and the first two in particular, have begun to blend together. As I reread the event blog, thanks to the team that put that together, I see we had a small lead over Dave Starck at the weather mark. That brings back the memory of the first leg a bit.

We started fairly well and tried to favor the middle left of the course. Dave Starck was a little to the left of us for the second half of the beat. We were well left of the rhumb line early on. Dave sailed behind us on

starboard, heading toward the left, and set up on our weather hip on port tack. With a long port to sail, it seemed the wind would come back right some time, and we'd be able to extend on David. As it turned out, he held the breeze on the left, and we fell out of it.

That is how Dave narrowed our early lead to round close behind us. Dave jibed to port first and gained in a puff. At the bottom we elected the right gate, looking downwind, and David rounded the left at pretty much the same time. Ryan Ruhlman rounded the left gate also, while we tacked to defend to the left of David. Ryan continued on port to the right side. The wind went right, and Ryan came through to win. Juan Santos also held out to the right early in the leg and, thus, got in front of us. Juan tacked on us, and left David clean on our right while the wind was in left phase. We tacked away from Juan Santos' wind shadow and lost considerable distance at the top left.

## **Race 3**

We won the pin hoping the left side would do its thing. We had a challenge since there was a bit of a right shift near the time of the start that we failed to notice. We missed a few waves right off the line and the boat on our weather hip was able to work off us, while Tito had started well a few boat lengths up and was holding us out to the left. A lot of the fleet from the weather end seemed to be wound up, so our plan to tack and cross looked more like a tack and duck—of about thirty sterns. Not a great feeling! We continued on out until we



#13 – Fastiggi Team  
#19 – Frost Team

#01 – Allen Team  
#33 – Robinson Team



# North American Championship

were able to tack without ducking because all the boats, including Tito, had already tacked. This had us very near the port tack layline in the corner. This was definitely a place I like to avoid, as all the cards are already played, and we just have to hope for some breaks.

Our biggest break was when Tito was tacked on by one of the boats coming in ahead from the right. He tacked to clear his wind. He crossed us and tacked to weather to our left instead of tacking on us. So we had a pretty clear lane until we got fairly close to the mark. Despite missing the main shift, our clear lane allowed us to round not too far behind the leaders.

Todd Wake started near the weather end of the line, apparently fairly late. He cleared out to the right and rounded the first weather mark with an eight-boat length lead. They continued to extend for the rest of the race and won easily. How we got to our 5th place finish, I can't remember too clearly. However, I do think this is the race where we had a very dramatic leeward mark rounding. We were nearly overlapped with a large group of boats as we approached the left gate. There was quite a sudden left shift, putting us severely by the lee. My thinking suddenly went from tactical position to surviving, which seemed to work OK, as we doused early and rounded behind the group, but cleanly and with our own lane.

When we rounded the second weather mark, we were again right behind Skip. Another early jibe once again put us in a strong puff, and we gained several hundred meters on all the boats around us, including Skip.

## **Race 4**

The wind had shifted further right. The course for this race was a five. We used every bit of it to climb back after a pretty mediocre start and completely missing the first shift. Having been burned at the leeward end of the line in the prior race, we chose to start near the middle. But this time a large group of boats were able to tack to port and cross off the leeward end. We ended up in the middle and getting bounced around by the winds on each side. Part way up the leg we were not doing well and elected to try cutting our losses by getting to the right. We rounded fairly deep and started chipping away one boat at a time.

Allan Terhune and Bill Faude started near the weather end and tacked immediately to port. They hooked into an early right shift that lifted them to the mark, and Allan, in particular, had an unassailable lead at the weather mark. We again jibed early, using the port jibe on the run to gain considerable distance. On the second beat we took a long port tack and sailed through what we had previously regarded as port tack headers to get to the vein of breeze that seemed to be hanging out on the right. This worked pretty well. We were a little behind Dave Starck and continually working similar shifts. Near the starboard tack layline we ducked to the right of him and missed an opportunity to pass him. We rounded the weather mark much closer to the leaders and again jibed fairly early. We gained on the next boat ahead, which was Kevin Robinson sailing



#16 – Faude Team



#41 – Terhune Team

# North American Championship



with his daughter Paige and Kathryn Moloney. Lacking a bit of the he-man beef, they were probably sailing a little conservatively in the breezy conditions. We gained an overlap inside to the right of them. When they jibed to starboard, we probably should have given up a little distance and ducked them to hold our port tack. As it was we sailed a little out of phase to keep clear and went to the right mark rounding inside them. This allowed David to get a bit ahead, but, surprisingly, we had by then broken through the main pack and had very few boats left in our vicinity.

Upwind we again tried to work back to the right every chance we got. Jamie and I had the same reaction at one point—Allan Terhune and Bill Faude were well extended and probably out of reach. Then there was Tim Scanlon, who had been sailing well, then David and us. We had no idea what had happened to the rest of the fleet, but suddenly a 3rd or 4th was in sight if we sailed smart and fast.

Somehow we got to David and were able to tack on him, sending him a little too far right near the end. We took one more wiggle on port later on, and Bill Faude and Tim Scanlon allowed us to the right of them. Tim took a dig back to the right but was behind us and tacked on the layline. Faude barely crossed us at the pin end of the line, but we were able to tack across Tim to gain third place. As we sailed in, we realized that the day had gone pretty well for us. In the first race we gave up a lead. But in the other two races

we had struggled back from fairly deep positions to finish strong, and it looked like with no throw out we'd be leading.

## Thursday

On the score sheet, David Starck was the closest to us, at 18 points to our 13. But Allan had a 5-4-1, and if there were two races the last day, he'd likely drop a DNF, so he'd be counting 10 plus whatever he got on Thursday. And if we missed a few opportunities and got behind, we'd certainly be tacked on, making it difficult to stay in the lead. It felt like there was a long way to go.

With the front already a day gone, this day brought a weakening northerly wind, and PRO Dave Schaffer elected to have us out for a 10:00 AM start time to try and get a race in before the wind died. But as the fleet sailed downwind toward the starting area, the wind died, and the Committee postponed. At 12:30 Dave Schaffer felt the wind was sufficient to start a race and lowered the postponement. With the length of time left before our 2:00 PM cut off, it was beginning to look like a one race day, so Allan would have to count his DNF.

Our closest competitor then was David. What was left of the wind was still out of the northwest and seemed full of holes, so we hung out around the mid line area trying to figure out where the first puff would come from.

At a minute and a half to go, we were near the pin heading toward the boat on port tack. Much of the fleet



#35 – Ryan Ruhlman Team



seemed to be lining up at the boat in what seemed like a right puff. We wondered how close we could get to the fleet, with David Starck a little ahead of us and Allan Terhune behind us to our left.

When David tacked around I decided this would probably be as good a place as any, so we took our spot. No one was all that close to weather of us, and we were a little closer to the line than David. Just before the gun, the breeze shifted left, and we found ourselves able to easily cross everyone to weather of us. We tacked in the final seconds of the countdown.

At the start, we were on port with speed, crossing the fleet below us and bow-out on those above us. Todd Wake was the closest on our hip, with Allan above and behind him. Everyone to leeward of us found themselves parked in a hole, while those of us on the left side were sailing a one-tack beat to the mark. With more breeze to the left, Todd eventually rolled us, but the RC made the right call and abandoned the race.

Though N over H was signaled, it still took a second before it sunk in—that the prior results stood, and we were the 2011 North American Champions!

## **Overall Thoughts/Lessons Learned**

### **1. Boat Speed and Clear Lanes**

We found that good boat speed and clear lanes could make up for tactical mistakes. More specifically, while in clear lanes sailing upwind, we concentrated on making the boat go fast. Meredith was calling immediate puffs and lulls while I was focused on driving the boat through the waves. At the same time, Jamie was paying attention to the larger wind patterns and fleet management.

All three of us were hiking very hard as we were overpowered in many of the upwind legs! This allowed us to make headway up the course, even if we were pinned at times from tacking exactly where we wanted to. Luckily we were always able to round in the top half of the fleet and put ourselves in a position to make gains downwind.

With Jamie concentrating on flying the spinnaker, tactical decisions were left to Meredith and me. We were perhaps too conservative in a couple of the earlier windward mark roundings and sailed too long on starboard before jibing. As the wind shifted right during Races 3 and 4, we were more proactive about jibing earlier, not only to catch the breeze but also to separate ourselves from the other boats.



#57 – Scanlan Team

# North American Championship



It was great fun to sail in surfing conditions downwind, and we continued to focus on speed. Clean air downwind was a premium, and we would frequently up or jibe to clear our air from other boats.

We often seemed to be more centered on the runs compared to the boats around us, but were careful to watch for wind pressure bleeding down the side of the course. Sometimes heading up only a boat length or two made the difference between getting into more pressure and just missing a puff.

## 2. Know the Course

This is one of the basics and should go without saying, but we were guilty of not knowing the course during the first championship race.

## 3. Observe/Practice

On all of our sails out to the race courses, we tried to glean as much information as possible—shifts, pressure differences, movement of puffs, etc. Watching the other fleet sail around the course was helpful, as well to see how wind changes actually affected the boats.

Additionally, because it was the first time the three of us had sailed together, we took advantage of extra practice time. After racing was cancelled for the

day on Monday, we stayed out on the water to tune with a few other boats. It felt good to get some light air speed tuning in and also to work on team coordination through the jibes to keep the spinnaker full and the boat moving.

## 4. Have Fun!

While our ultimate goal was to do well at the event, part of the equation was certainly to have fun, and sailing at North Cape Yacht Club made this easy to do.

PRO Dave Schaffer and his team of RC volunteers did an excellent job of running quality races. Hank and the other hoist operators made sure that the launching/hauling process moved as quickly as possible. A big thank you goes to Laurie and Skip Dieball for all of their off-the-water organizing. Everything from registration, after-racing entertainment, and the dinners were top notch! Thanks to all of the other members and staff at North Cape for making us feel really welcomed and we look forward to coming back for future events. I still don't exactly know what is in a Painkiller, but it's probably better that way!



#07 – de Rienzo Team





# North American Championship

Pos	Bow#	Crew
1	32	Ched Proctor, Jamie Ewing & Meredith Killion
2	39	David Starck, Jody Starck & Ian Jones
3	45	Todd Wake, Kristine Wake & Neal Fowler
4	60	Tito Gonzalez, Alberto Gonzalez & Christian Herran
5	13	Bill Fastiggi, Suzy Coburn & Jamie Allan
6	57	Tim Scanlon, Christine Moloney & Becky Scanlon
7	9	Tom Allen, Valerie Tardif-Holly & Mike Holly
8	16	William Faude, Jared Drake & Lauren Jones
9	88	Skip Dieball, Tom Starck & Meghan Jordan
10	41	Allan Terhune, Katie Terhune & Sarah Paisley
11	54	Charlie Wardwell, Ron Buchanan & Mark Buchanan
12	35	Ryan Ruhlman, Patrick Wilson & Tesse LaPlante
13	34	Rob Ruhlman, Abby Ruhlman & Maegan Ruhlman
14	20	Juan Garces Santos, Juan Andres Santos-Dillon & Sebastian Herrera
15	61	Caroline Patten, Michael Crann & Tyler Menninger
16	28	Clarke Newman, Gavin Rudolph & Hamrick Morgan
17	53	Bob King, Steve Cox & Steve Frazier
18	46	Richard Walsh, Tina Walsh & Alex Cox
19	1	Jim Allen, Ernie Dieball & Christy McGee
20	7	Aroldo De Rienzo, Kenneth Porter & Gerritt Gentry
21	19	Lawrence Frost, Chance Miller & Jack Sawyer
22	33	Kevin Robinson, Kathryn Moloney & Paige Robinson
23	10	Jed Dodge, Bill Dodge & Sarah Costich
24	31	Fernando Rabago, Yon Belausteguigoit & Joaquin Bargallo
25	59	Justin Coplan, Danielle Prior & Nick Troche
26	25	John McCree, Dave Corcoran & Nina Polis
27	2	Mark Allen, Beth Grobsbeck & Brian Smith
28	47	Bob Wardwell, Mike Healy & Kent Derbyshire
29	40	James Taylor, George Auer & Carl Taylor
30	38	George Sipel, Jeff Hagman & Chris Snyder
31	50	Tim Werley, Katie Werley & Ben Goldberg
32	4	Bill Buckles, Wes Wallace & Stewart Wallace
33	22	Chris Hamilton, Terry Hamilton & Kevin Bradley
34	30	Thomas Post, Steve Varnum & Tim Johnson
35	21	Josh Goldman, Derek Gauger & Monica Trejo
36	42	Will Tyner, Reese Wilkins & Conner Brade
37	15	Debbie Probst, Tanner Probst & Jenna Probst
38	12	Bill Cabrall, Jim England & Rebecca Bevirt
39	36	Jeffrey Schmahl, Michael Schmahl & Andrew Schmahl

# North American Championship



	R1	R2	R3	R4	Total
	1	4	5	3	13
	7	3	3	5	18
	6	10	1	10	27
	8	5	11	9	33
	4	6	16	11	37
	13	13	12	4	42
	2	8	9	26	45
	11	19	13	2	45
	3	17	7	20	47
	5	40\DNF	4	1	50
	27	12	6	12	57
	15	1	8	34	58
	19	16	2	30	67
	41\DSQ	2	18	8	69
	20	7	15	27	69
	10	11	31	18	70
	17	26	14	17	74
	14	18	19	28	79
	21	14	21	23	79
	9	29	17	32	87
	29	31	10	19	89
	31	33	22	6	92
	40\DNF	9	32	15	96
	23	24	35	16	98
	12	40\DNF	40\DNS	7	99
	35	20	33	13	101
	32	30	26	14	102
	16	21	25	40\DNF	102
	18	32	30	22	102
	22	25	23	33	103
	34	15	20	35	104
	30	23	27	24	104
	26	22	40\DNF	21	109
	28	28	28	25	109
	25	27	29	31	112
	33	34	24	29	120
	24	36	36	40\DNS	136
	37	35	34	36	142
	36	40\DNC	40\DNC	40\DNC	156