

2011 Champions Regatta and the Sir Francis of Graham Trophy

We recently lost our good friend and mentor Frank Angel who was often known as Sir Francis of Graham. This regatta was his creation and the purpose was to have the best sailors of the EC-12 class model yacht on the water, all together, battling it out without the hassle of multiple fleet racing. It was to be "the best of the best." The Regatta began as a 16 boat event with the top five sailors from the Florida regatta series, The Dixie Cup, the Colonial Cup and the previous year's winner. Charleston provided a venue that was centrally located and was capable of handling large fleets. With class population growing in New England, a northeast regatta series was added to the event and now there are 21 possible slots. Winning this event is considered by many to be just as meaningful as having the title "National Champion." This year was the first time that Uncle Frank was not present and he is already greatly missed. He taught Ricky and me everything we know about preparing for and running a successful model yacht regatta and I think there are many who can say the same.

After a few words and a moment of silence for Frank during the skipper's meeting, a course was reluctantly set to get things moving but the breeze had not made up its mind which direction to come from. The pressure was up and down but on the very light side for the first half of the day, much like what we experience at Elon College, Frank's home venue. We were certain the he was there with us in spirit, laughing at the conditions, and the only thing missing was for a fountain to appear in the middle of lake providing an obstacle to avoid in going from one end of the course to the other. Our current National Champ, Baron Bremer, took advantage of the conditions like a pro and posted four firsts and a second before he developed a sheeting issue which brought him to the shore in the final race before lunch arrived. That race would be his first of three throw-outs.

After lunch, the breeze settled in but was coming from out in the lake forcing us to set the weather mark a little further out than ideal. Dick Hedderick put a bullet on the board and was tied for the lead until his luck ran out and all three of his discards were recorded. Danny Thomas started sailing like himself again and Luscomb, Ramos and Rinehart remained consistent. At the end of the day with one throw-out factored in, the top

five were Dave Ramos, Chuck Luscomb, Baron Bremer, Mark Rinehart and Scott Vernon. Then, after a little rest for some and happy hour for others, we gathered at Gilligan's restaurant for dinner in a private room where we were able to carry on like children. It was discovered that hush puppies are useful for more than just appetizers.

Sunday brought us more of the same with a little more pressure and the wind eventually clocked to the left giving us a better weather leg. Nine more races were scored for a total of 21, which allowed each skipper to toss their three worst scores as per the sailing instructions. Ramos, having been the runner up in quite a few major EC-12 regattas, decided enough with that and just put the hammer down. His scores for the day were 1, 3, 1, 4, 2, 1, 1, 3, and 2 which is quite impressive considering the company he was with on the water.

Overall, it was a great weekend for sailing without a cloud in the sky. The wind could have been closer to what we experience here normally, but what are you going to do? Some skippers were dying to get their B rigs on, which they did at one point, but that was a short lived mistake. There is always next time or maybe at the National's which will be here in Charleston in the beginning of November. I had fun this year watching all of the talented skippers doing their thing and was taking notes but I have to admit, it was tough not being on the water. A big thank you goes to Ricky, Becky, Liz and Carter Cain for your time and help running the races. Congratulations to Dave Ramos for the fine performance! I know that lake was cold.

Reichard Kahle