

## Liberty Bell Report and Results

*By David Brawner posted Monday 23 April*

We had nineteen EC-12 skippers make it to the start line for this, the 40th Liberty Bell regatta at Laurel Acres Park this past weekend. The varied conditions went from hot and sunny on Saturday to cold and wet on Sunday. The fact that we even got to sail on Sunday was quite surprising considering the fast approaching Nor'easter.

Dave Ramos proved that consistency is king by winning his first Liberty Bell with just one bullet in non-seeding races but his worst races were two sixths that both got thrown out. Defending champion Jarl Wathne right there with Dave until a last race malfunction took away what may have been another victory.

We decided to go with two fleets because our pond really isn't ideal place to put 19 boats on the line, especially with the breeze out of the SSW. We set up the two seeding heats using an old fashion school yard pick'em with our two past national champions, Jarl Wathne and Danny Thomas, as the captains picking their respective group, or so they thought. After the picking was done, Jarl and Danny were assigned to the group they didn't pick. Jarl must have figured this was coming as he loaded up his group with some heavy hitters. It was sort of fun to watch this unfold.

The SSW breeze left us with two options for a course that were both less than desirable. The starting line had to be in the corner closest to the bathrooms. Choosing to stay away from walking the great circle and avoiding the fishermen, we set the windward mark towards the middle of lake giving the sailors a much shorter walk, but a little tougher windward mark rounding.

Just a quick side note: Twelve hours before the skipper's meeting, Danny Thomas still didn't have fiberglass on the deck of his boat. My guess is that he drove up the Jersey Turnpike with the heat on high to get the epoxy to cure.

Thanks to a cooperative group of sailors, we got through the seeding heats in quick order. Dave Ramos, Jake Leo, Harry Mote and newcomer Jamie Betz each won a seeding heat. From there, it was non stop fleet racing all day in the ever changing breeze and hot sunshine. After 9 races on Saturday, Danny Thomas and Dave Ramos were tied at the top of the standings with Jarl lurking just behind them. There was very little energy left in anybody after the 22 heats run on Saturday.

Dinner was at my house with Jake Leo taking his usual spot as the grill master keeping the grease fire from the Bubba Burgers under control. The food, beer and BS were all served in great portions.

Sunday's weather forecast appeared to be better suited for building an ark than for sailing EC-12's. Thankfully, the storm took its time moving northward, which gave us time to get in some racing before all hell broke loose. With the breeze coming out of the north and two less skippers, we sailed with just one fleet on Sunday. The starting line was off Sinclair point with the windward mark up near the parking lot. Eventually, we used a leeward gate down well below the start line.

Danny's Sunday got off to a rough start, as it appeared that many in fleet wanted to test the strength of his new deck. Trouble continued to find him throughout most of the day. On a positive note, his rig remained upright the entire regatta, which has been unusual the past couple years. Danny won four races in the regatta. DT with at reliable means we all just moved down a spot in the standings. Darn.

We got in seven races before the rain really became obnoxious. Jarl Wathne led the day with 10 points followed by Jamie Betz with 11, Don Barker and Dave Ramos each with 12 points and Doug Wotring with 13. Those are some terrific results in a fleet of seventeen boats.

In the battle of Vermont, Ken Shaw came out the winner with his 10th overall finish with his fellow Vermonters Tim Stone in 13th and Phil Tonks in 15th. Doug Wotring and Don Barker each won two races, which is twice as many as Dave Ramos. Jarl won four races. One of those was rather funky considering the two boats in front of him decided to sail a third lap in a two lap race.

Dick Bardsley is sort of thought of as a newcomer because last year he wasn't able to finish a race. This year it went much better for him with only two DNS. He left with greater confidence and a goal. John Kircher made his first appearance at a Liberty Bell regatta finishing with a very competitive mid-pack finish.

Harry Mote ended the regatta with a horizon job in the last race. Skip Hall worked a little magic on the outside in a race to earn a 5th late in the day.

As everyone knows, these events don't happen without a lot of help. A huge thank you to Nick Mortgu, who was in charge of trophies, giveaways, calling the line and reminding me of everything I would normally forget, Dave Branning handling the scoring, and Joe Cole at 79.9 years old handling all dinghy duties. I would have been lost without these guys. Thanks.

Also, the R/C Laser fleet has had a terrific recent influence on our club. The Laser sailors, Jamie Betz, Don Barker and Ryan Lippincott sailed in the regatta. Nick and Dave are also from R/C Laser class. We've sucked them into this class without much effort and glad they joined us.

Next up on the Colonial Cup schedule is the White Rose regatta. See you there.

#### 40th Liberty Bell Results:

1st Ramos 41  
2nd Wathne 46  
3rd Thomas 51  
4th Betz 57  
5th Mote 81  
6th Barker 81  
7th Wotring 85  
8th Leo 91  
9th Ewing 127  
10th Shaw 169  
11th Kircher 171  
12th Bock 172  
13th Stone 175  
14th Oberg 175  
15th Tonks 187  
16th Walton 189

17th Hall 212  
18th Lippincott 226  
19th Bardsley 241