

# NANTUCKET WINS IOD NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIP



Imagine disembarking onto Steamboat Wharf from the *Nobska* in 1950. That's the feeling the two Nantucket IOD teams when they arrived in Chester, Nova Scotia to compete in the 2014 North American Championship Regatta. There are a few shops, two cafes and a bakery (which serves up a lemon square much like the Nantucket Bakery's). A few elegant houses belonging to summer residents dot the landscape, but no McMansions, and the local folks are comfortably mixed in with the seasonal population. The atmosphere is very casual; it seems that anybody hosting a party expects a come-one-come-all guest list, which might include the local lobstermen, outboard mechanic and anybody else who just 'happened by'. A stocked bar and table of snacks is an open invitation for the whole town to show up.

For those who haven't visited Nova Scotia's eastern coast, think Maine, only with warmer water due to its proximity to the Gulf Stream. The village of Chester is nestled in Mahone Bay, a deep body of water dotted with verdant islands and rocky shores. The Chester Yacht Club, dating back to 1902, is like many of the small clubs along New England's coastline—one big room, a bar and a veranda overlooking its fleet.

The Chester IOD Fleet, founded in 2005 by Rick Thompson, a summer transplant from Bermuda, is the newest Fleet in the IOD World Class. Already, they've assembled 11 boats, which include the oldest surviving woodie, Cornelius Shields's original *Aileen*, and the brand new, all-wood *Enigma*, completed in 2010 by Chester's own Tern Boatworks.

Nantucket was represented by the Peoples Boat (crewed by the author, Commodores Geoff Verney and Matt Judson, Oliver Coolidge, and guest main-trimmer Courtenay Jenkins) and Team Golf, with Peter McCausland helming, joined by Fritz McClure, Graham Kilvert, Peter Ernst and Steve Mead. Other participating teams hailed from Bermuda, Chester, Fishers Island, Marblehead, Northeast Harbor, and San Francisco. The line-up of teams was strong, including two-time World Champion John Burnham from Fishers, and past North American Champions Craig Davis, Tom Fremont-Smith and our own Peoples Boat, as well as three-time World Champion Charlie Van Voorhis calling tactics for the local Chester team.

Day One got underway as Hurricane Cristobal spun several hundred miles to the east. The sky was iron gray and winds were steady in the high teens, with gusts reported as high as 28 knots. The few well-prepared crews were dressed in long-johns

and woolen hats; the rest of us dealt with the chill breeze. The teams were greeted by a bundled-up Race Committee aboard a retired Canadian Navy iron tugboat, the *Miss Jenna*, a unique vessel among the world's collection of committee boats. In the opening race of the day, as crews were getting the feel of the conditions and learning to control their boats in the gusty conditions, Burnham took a first place, and San Francisco a second, rewards for being on the correct side of a left-hand windshift. The Peoples Boat caught their own favorable shift in the second race to secure a win, with Burnham close on their transom, San Francisco in third and McCausland's Team Golf in a tight fourth-place finish. The final race of day had Burnham and The People swapping places again, with Fishers taking the bullet and Nantucket a boatlength back in second.

On Day Two, the wind abated to a brisk but manageable mid-teens level, and fleet was sent to the Outer Bay—a broader body of water that gave the teams more room to work the sides of the course—and more opportunity for big gains or losses if they made bets on the corners. The Peoples Boat sailed Rick Thompson's own *Mighty Mo*, one of Scotland's original IODs, and got her into high gear. They swept the day with three wins, putting some distance on the score sheet between them and second place Burnham, who sailed a 4-2-2 score line. Nantucket's Golf pulled into third place for the regatta with a solid 2-4-4 day.

With a 2-point lead over Burnham going into the final day, The People knew that he was going to come after them in the first race. Known for their



*IOD North Americans continued...*

aggressive tactical style, the Fishers Island team didn't wait long. In the pre-start, they pinned the Peoples Boat out beyond the starboard layline, hoping to force the regatta leader into the back of the fleet, and put some points between them in the race. Burning up the clock with match-race style maneuvers, both boats started nearly thirty seconds behind the rest of the fleet, with the Peoples Boat trailing...dead last. Burnham put a tight cover on The People, preventing them from breaking out to find a clean breeze lane. The two boats made more than a half dozen tacks on the first leg alone. The People saw an opening when a several slower boats converged with the two battlers. The Nantucketers were able to use the starboard tackers as a screen to split with Burnham and sail into clear air. The next time the boats came together, Peoples crossed ahead by a few feet. For the next four legs of the race, their relative positions changed a number of times, but on the final windward leg, the Peoples Boat was able

to force the Fishers Island team to the unfavored side of the course and pull ahead of them for the final downwind leg of the race, finishing in second place. Fishers finished in fifth. The Nantucket crew exhaled for the first

time in forty minutes and exchanged hearty high-fives for having prevailed in a tough come-from-behind scrum. With the three-point spread, the Peoples Boat had secured the regatta title.

Capping off the Nantucket achievement was Team Golf's consistent performance throughout the event, which earned them a third place in the regatta and a spot on the podium.



The Chester IOD North Americans finished off a fine year for the Nantucket IOD Fleet. Team Sierra, skippered by Roy Weedon and Colin Sykes won the 2013 North Americans in San Francisco Bay last fall. Pierre Crosby and his Team Delta finished one point out of first place in the World Championship this past June in Norway. The next twelve months will be busy as the Nantucket Fleet prepares to host the World Championship in September 2015.

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