

## Craig & Cindy Tovell 2015 Midwestern Champions

May 30-31 brought a 16-boat fleet with 5 states other than Ohio (9 of the entries being from the host Hoover Sailing Club) represented on the starting line and wonderful sailing conditions for this longest-standing Windmill regatta held at the same club—Hoover Sailing Club in Westerville (Columbus), Ohio. Sailing with his wife Cindy, Craig Tovell (4200) started off 1-1-1 and then consolidated with steady 3-3-2-4 finishes (taking a DNS in the last race) to win by 6 points over Lon Ethington/Meg Gimmi from Florida (5070).

Saturday brought 8-12 mph winds for the 11 AM start and the committee, headed by HSC Flying Scot sailor Ross Long, set a Triangle, WLW course for the first race. The starting lines were an appropriate challenge as they were well set and either end might be favored at a given time! The class greatly appreciates the fine work by Ross and the Flying Scot fleet in running an outstanding event.

The Tovells jumped in front at the start and steadily opened his lead—the only race in which he was never seriously challenged. Pat & Janet Huntley continued their good sailing in 5703, a new Johansen hull in sailing, like its owners, in the initial year of competition and took second with good speed and alertly detecting shifts to finish ahead of Lon & Meg (5070) who were followed by Nate & Tim Bachman (4689) who showed great windward performance until their mainsheet fitting pulled out from the aft end of the DB well but held on for 4<sup>th</sup> ahead of Chris & Nancy Demler sailing their Johansen 5705 (with 5045 sails)---first time in the water for the newest boat in the class!

The race committee was very efficient at getting races off in a timely fashion and mixed the Triangle WLW course with 2 laps around a triangle (one race was only one lap).

The second race saw the Demlers adapting to their new boat and pushing Tovell at all times, though they had to settle for second behind Craig & Cindy. Lon & Meg were 3<sup>rd</sup> again, staying ahead of Allen Chauvenet & Erik Arnesen (5586) while the Huntleys beat the Bachmans for the 5<sup>th</sup> position.

The final race before lunch found the fleet bunched very tightly around the course but the Tovells and Demlers repeated 1-2 while Chauvenet/Arnesen moved up to 3<sup>rd</sup> just ahead of the Huntleys with Lon & Meg dropping back to 5<sup>th</sup>. In this race, Bernie & Julie Himmelsbach found wind and a great shift to the right (west) and rounded the weather mark first. Allen & Erik were boxed in at the start, actually luffed to allow a boat to weather to pass them, tacked port for clear air and did so well following the Himmelsbachs that they rounded second. Moral is if your start is not good, find a way to get a lane of clear air and get your boat moving to get back in the race!

The HSC served the usual outstanding lunch and even arranged for the predicted thunderstorm/rain to take place during lunch, enabling the fleet to return to the course for 3 more afternoon races! In this race, Allen & Erik made an excellent start, moved the boat well at all times, and stayed just out of congestion and bad air from other boats. In other words, they did everything necessary to win, even beating the Tovells for the first time in the regatta. Their problem was that the Demlers just continued to sail better and better and won the race by a couple of decisive boat lengths! At this point the thought

was that the Demlers would be mistaken for the Bixbys if they continued this type of improvement! Ralph & Matt Sponar (5060) shook off pre-lunch results with a 4<sup>th</sup> with Lon & Meg again 5<sup>th</sup>.

The 5<sup>th</sup> race found the Demlers repeating their win with a superbly sailed race around the entire course. Lon & Meg sailed very well, especially on the second weather leg and run to the leeward mark to beat the Tovells for the runner up spot followed by the Sponars who kept control of Allen & Erik on the beat to the finish as those rounded out the top 5. At this point, the Demlers were essentially tied with the Tovells after their 2-2-1-1 streak post the first race, in spite of the 1-1-1 opening by the Tovells.

The sixth and final race on Saturday restored the Tovells regatta lead. Although Lon & Meg sailed one of those “perfect” races we all hope for—great start, early lead with clear wind, never to wrong side of the course and a decisive lead running down to the last mark—the Tovells “bounced back” from their two 3<sup>rds</sup> with a runner up result, holding off Allen & Erik who placed 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Bachmans, in spite of having to lead the mainsheet directly off the boom to the hand of the skipper (which they were not used to doing) sorted things out and bounced back into 4<sup>th</sup>, leaving the Demlers in 5<sup>th</sup> and restoring control of the regatta to the Tovells.

Just after the boats got in, we were faced with thunderstorm #2, again scheduled with no one out sailing. Boats were put away and secured and the snacks were followed by the always fantastic HSC dinner along with beer, wine and deserts. During dinner (with all boats tied down), an even stronger thunderstorm occurred which included a lightning strike on a tree near the clubhouse (peeling off bark, but leaving the tree otherwise intact). That third storm cleared and we were then provided with the usual beautiful sunset over the water as the evening wound down while the usual outstanding Hoover dinner was provided by Fleet 60 members (and supporters) including Carol & Ed Prebihalo, Kathy Bachman, Dixie & Mike Mickelson, Evelyn Ferguson, Julie Himmelsbach, Ed Yingling and Chris Bunge.

Sunday brought very similar conditions with cloudy skies. The race committee decided to run two races, both Triangle WLW and set for an exciting conclusion to the regatta. The first race found the top boats engaged in a very close struggle but the Huntley team emerged on top at the second weather mark with Chauvenet/Arnesen and the Sponars providing the closest pursuit. They turned in that order at the leeward mark and Chauvenet gradually worked to weather of Huntley while the latter moved a bit ahead. Sponar tacked to starboard and came back to port aiming to just fetch the committee boat. Huntley tacked to starboard right on the layline so Chauvenet followed as an earlier tack might lose Sponar. In a very close finish, Huntley had a boat length of open water on Chauvenet while Sponar was faced with two starboard tack boats—which allowed Chauvenet to shoot the line and hold second. In the battle for the regatta title, Tovell sailed carefully and well to take 4<sup>th</sup> which clinched the series when the Demlers wound up with their throwout, a 7<sup>th</sup>. Tovell then sailed in and used the last race as a throwout. With Ethington 6<sup>th</sup> behind Bachman, the battle for 2-5 overall was entirely unsettled.

Lon & Meg made a great start in the last race—right at the committee boat, perfectly timed, and led the fleet toward the first mark. Unfortunately, they hit the mark while rounding with the resulting leg to the jib mark having the top six boats bunched within 3 boat lengths. The Sponars took a small lead at the leeward mark with the 5 other leaders all quite close behind. The second beat featured several shift and

the Huntleys played them perfectly (along with excellent boat speed) to lead at the weather mark. Lon & Meg were a solid second, followed by the Sponars and this order was retained to the leeward mark and finish. Chauvenet & Arnesen were 4<sup>th</sup> but the Bachmans established an inside overlap at the leeward mark. Knowing the need to beat the Demlers to save regatta 4<sup>th</sup>, Chauvenet covered them on the short final beat. This order incidentally not only saved 4<sup>th</sup> for Chauvenet but moved Lon & Meg into 2<sup>nd</sup> place overall, just a point ahead of the Demlers who took series third. In spite of two outstanding wins on Sunday, the Huntleys fell a point short and settled for the 5<sup>th</sup> place trophies.

Although the scores show that the top 7 boats dominated the finishes, there was much close racing among the rest of the fleet and numerous other boats were often in the mix on the first lap or were not far behind in distance. Virtually everyone is improving which only makes for more rewarding, interesting and exciting racing!

After all scoring and marking of slats was done by Randy Piersall (ably assisted by his daughter Juliann), each entry received a personal slat with race places and a "goodie bag" from Fleet 60. The top 5 also received skipper and crew trophies designed and made by Tim Bachman. Special recognition should also go to the youngest skipper, Hoover's Grace Yingling, who completed all races and continues to move up with steadily improving results.

This event continues to be one of the outstanding regattas & greatest social gatherings in the class and we look forward to 2016 with the hope & expectation that even more sailors will be participating!