



U20 NATIONALS - HOLLAND MICHIGAN

August 11th - 14th, 2011

By Joel McGuire

The U-20 fleet descended on the sleepy little town of Holland Michigan with six guns blazing last week as the Nationals kicked off on Lake Michigan. Our Rocky Mountain armada was well represented with three boats and crew out of 15 competitors overall. Marty May got there first with *Red Line*, taking the week to see friends and get acclimated to near sea level conditions. Brad Lawson and his crew of fierce pirates showed up next with *Red Beard* on Wednesday, while Mark Allen made a sleepless appearance on Thursday, just in time to put *Junta* over for the practice race.



The class was well represented with boats from Canada, North Carolina, Ohio, Kansas and of course the local talent. The venue was first rate, with an honest to goodness blue-blooded Yacht Club populated by friendly and humble third and fourth generation sailors. The event, held at the Macatawa Bay Yacht Club was well run by a capable race committee with just the right mix of panache, pomp and circumstance.

Conditions could not have been better with winds consistently between 15 and 20 knots, 2-3 foot waves and clear blue skies in the 70's. It was the kind of weather you write home to mom about. The races got underway at the crack of dawn Friday, with a skipper's meeting at 9:15 and the first gun at 10:30. For many, the trip out of the inlet and onto lake Michigan was their first taste of sailing big water with real waves and a current to make things just a little more interesting. The course was a simple windward lee x2 with a short offset at the windward mark to keep everything orderly and civilized.



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The first race Friday got started right on time, with Mark Allen, Dave McVeigh and Michigan native and Chicago-Mac veteran Katie in the first wave. The crew of Red Line, helmed by our colorful west coast yachtie Marty May and accompanied by his long time friend Brett and son Evan weighing in at sprightly 80 pounds was a bit light in the heavy air but made a good showing as half the fleet was over early and suffered the indignity of a general recall.



The second start was more orderly with the usual fight for position near the favored end resulting in two rows with some stragglers. *Red Beard* made her move early, slipping into a favored slot compliments of our hot shot tactician, Darek Buczynski, then promptly fell flat on her side in the strong winds, mooning the whole fleet. Sensing a note of derision and contempt coming from the RC boat, we decided to ram her to let them know we were taking none of that. We commenced a beat to

windward at the tail of the pack, gaining considerable ground on the first rounding. Confronted by an offset far too close to the mark for her liking, *Red Beard* found herself up to her usual unruly behavior, and wound up doing turns. The rest of the day was catch up, as we watched *Salt Fish*, helmed by Doyle sail maker Tak Boston with a crew of windward islanders win nearly every race while *Slippery*, helmed by Jim Pearson followed in hot pursuit.

Tak showed a taste of true sportsmanship later that afternoon by holding a workshop with all gathered around listening intently as he shared his secrets and experience with an open discussion forum. The mood quickly turned silly though as Greg Henning, president of our little association and grand mixologist shared with us a batch of his Goombay Smash, a dangerous concoction which required signing of waivers and general release forms.



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Saturday dawned with thunder showers that quickly scattered and left another blue-bird sky. The racing was fast and furious with leads won and then quickly lost as the sailors, acclimated to the waves and current now turned to their own homebrew of tactics and skill. The pirates aboard *Red Beard* were delighted as their first attempt setting the spinnaker was met with a resounding POP as she snapped instantly into place, compliments of tips and trix gleaned from Tak Boston and crew. With the mark set further out for the wind, the laps around went from a sprint to a marathon, the first race taking over an hour. Milling about behind the line prior to the second race munching a sandwich and twisting turnbuckles, the crew of *Red Beard* practiced their fight song:

*With a Yo Ho Ho and a Fiddle Dee Dee,
we're Red Beard's pirates one and three!*

*We're mariners right
and we've come for a fight,
And we're not leaving here
Till you've felt our bite!*

*We likes our women
strong and salty;
We likes our beer
just a little bit malty.*

*By the time we're done
with having our fun,
your women will taste malty
and your beer will be gone!*

*Oh Yo Ho Ho and a Fiddle Dee Dee,
we're Red Beard's pirates one and three!*

(more there is, but fit for print it is not!)

Clouds began approaching as we finally made a respectable start, trailing Salt Fish by only a few boat lengths much of the first leg. As the breeze stiffened we rounded the windward mark and prepped for another flawless POP set. Then we were in for the best sled ride of the series, as we discovered that moving my butt even a few inches back helped pull the nose up, the hull out of the water and, as *Red Beard* went super-sonic down the first wave, everyone looked like they had coat hangers in their mouths with grins from ear to ear!



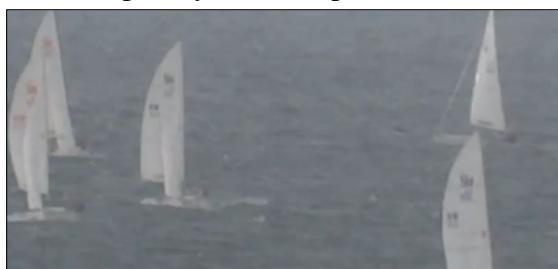
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Gybing back and forth down to the lee mark, we couldn't help but notice the darkening skies to the west, and halfway up the second windward leg we saw the committee boat go by with the shorten course flag aloft. We looked to the west as they went by at a scene guaranteed to make the most seasoned mariner queasy. A large green locomotive shaped



squall line was bearing down on us with malintent and as the water became greasy and waves put on their little white caps, I know I was not the only one thinking of bailing. But on we pressed, as this was our best race ever. We came up to the windward mark, now the finish line, just as the lights



went out. I literally had to take off my sunglasses to see anything, and I could feel the wind turn cold and angry in the time it took to say "holy shit!" We managed to get the headsail furled as the first blast of rain hit and the wind took on a very serious demeanor. Brad called for a chicken gybe, which I managed to foul completely and dump him off the transom. By the

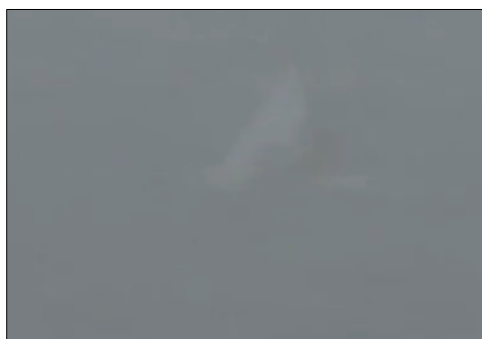
time I pulled him back aboard sputtering and cursing with threats of keel hauling, we had no choice but to hunker down and heave to, while we watched the rest of the fleet skitter off into the mist.



Running down a little bit later at 8-10 under main alone, we began to see that prudence had served us well. Broken boats littered the way back; sails in the water, boats with no masts, a rescue boat pulling a man out of the water. Just another reminder that at sea, even a fierce pirate is no match for mother nature.

See the full video at:

<http://www.mbyc.com/joomla-site/>



The banquet that night was filled with the animated chatter of heroics and valor, and of a day well lived. Thankfully, no one was injured except for the insurance companies. Sunday was short and cloudy, Lake Michigan had had her fill of us and ordered us ashore for the day. The RC called the show by 10:30, and by 1:00 we were stuffing down the last decent food we would eat for a couple of days of travel. The event closed,

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hands were shook, shoulders hugged, and we all left enriched with memories we did not have only a few days before. I am grateful for the experience, the camaraderie and mostly for another day on the water.

Race results were as follows:

2011 North Americans - Macatawa Bay, Michigan, USA

Rank	Boat	Sail No.	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	Total
1st	Salt Fish US	38	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
2nd	Slippery	200	2	2	2	2	2	2	12
3rd	Who's the Boss	152	4	4	5	4	3	5	25
4th	No Name	173	3	3	6	6	5	3	26
5th	Rumbullion	151	7	7	7	3	8	4	36
6th	Junta	26	6	6	4	8	6	7	37
7th	Free Ride	147	5	5	3	14	4	16DNF	47
8th	Nitro	14	9	8	11	7	11	8	54
9th	Red Line	78	12	10	12	9	9	6	58
10th	Scram	159	8	9	8	10	10	16DNF	61
11th	Fast Lane	17	10	12	13	12	7	10	64
12th	Red Beard	63	15	14	10	11	14	9	73
13th	Dragon Bait	158	11	11	14	15	12	11	74
14th	Pocket Rocket	124	14	13	9	13	15	12	76
15th	Kinda Busy	187	13	16DNF	16DNS	5	13	16DNF	79

