

MISSA Cressy Championship Qualifying Regatta

Twenty four sailors representing high schools from Illinois, Michigan, and Minnesota, traveled to Minneapolis over Columbus Day weekend to compete in the Midwest qualifier for the ISSA Single-handed Championship. Participants competed in separate Laser full rig and radial rig divisions on the waters of Lake Minnetonka. The event was hosted by Gordy Bowers and the Lake Minnetonka Sailing School. PRO Jerrod Silverman and his race management team ran in thirteen races in two days.

On Saturday, the competitors were treated to breezy winds, but summer-like temperatures. Winds were from the south at 12-16 with gusts to 20, but very shifty. Waves were flat at the top and ten inches at the leeward mark. In the morning, the race committee ran a windward/leeward-1 for both Laser divisions. In the Radial division, Loyola's Tom Holmberg started strongly and held on to win the first race over local favorite Colin Thompson of Minnetonka. Stephanie Hudson of New Trier won the next two races before William Haeger of Lake Forest closed out the morning with his first race win. After lunch, the competitors sailed a trapezoid-1 course. The top and bottom reaches were fast and fun for all as winds increased to 24 knots, challenging conditions for lighter weight sailors. Haeger found these conditions to be much to his liking, winning the final four radial races of the day. Loyola's Alex Post and New Trier's Drew Shea also sailed well, moving up in the standings with strong finishes in each of the next four races. At the close of day one, Haeger led followed by Thompson, Post, Holmberg, and Shea in second, third, fourth, and fifth, respectively.

In the Full Rig Division, Chris Loew-Blosser of The International School of Minnesota took the first of his two race wins by beating out William Howard of Lake Forest in a close finish. Brady Savage of Grosse Pointe North took the second race, followed by Ryan Pesch of Lake Forest Academy and Loew-Blosser. With building breezes, the heavier sailors took control, Howard winning two races and Pesch winning the final four races of the day. Pesch held the overnight lead followed by Howard, Gavin Potts of Hill-Murray, Loew-Blosser, and Savage (last year's MISSA Full Rig representative).

Racing on Sunday began with conditions similar to those of the previous day; however, after building briefly, the winds began to subside around noon ensuring that the winning racers would have to demonstrate their skills in multiple types of wind conditions. The Sunday morning trapezoid races started in southerly winds of 10-12 with gusts to 15. As the day progressed the wind went to the right and dropped to 3-5 mph for the last race. The racing was incredibly close and the skill level continued to be very high. In the radial division, Haeger continued his winning ways of the previous day by taking the first race over Mike Hanson of Minnetonka who finished second. After disappointing starts, New Trier's Hudson won the next two races followed by Thompson and Shea. Entering the final two races, the competition for Cressy qualification was very tight. While Haeger carried a commanding lead, just two points separated Thompson, Post and Shea for the second qualification spot. With the winds getting lighter, Drew won both of the remaining races, outlasting Alex Post by two points and Colin Thompson by three to take the final qualifying spot. Tom Holmberg also closed strongly and placed fourth overall,

winning a tie breaker with Thompson who finished fifth overall. The top female finisher was Hudson in sixth.

Back in the Full Rig division, a DSQ in race 8 made the standings close with four races remaining. Loew-Blosser, Eric Sauter (Wayzata), and Savage each won one of the next three races. Although, Ryan Pesch continued to lead the division, Howard, who was competing with one hand in a cast, lead Savage for second place by just two points with one race remaining. In that final race, Savage sailed to a second place finish (behind Loew-Blosser who won his fourth race of the series) and watched for Howard to complete the race. While Gavin Potts took third place, Will closed in fourth placing him in a points tie with Brady for the second Full rig qualification slot at Nationals. Based upon a race by race analysis, Howard was determined to be the winner of the tie breaker, joining Ryan Pesch as a Cressy National qualifier.

In summary, the following high schools will represent MISSA at the upcoming Cressy Championship which will be hosted by Corinthian Yacht Club in Seattle, WA from October 27-28, 2007.

Full Rig:

- Lake Forest Academy - Ryan Pesch
- Lake Forest High School - William Howard

Radial Rig:

- Lake Forest High School - William Haeger
- New Trier High School - Drew Shea