



St. Francis Yacht Club

# RACE COMMITTEE REPORT



July 1, 2021

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## Regattas big and small as we enter summer

Hello Race Committee volunteers. The racing season is well underway, with multi-day regattas and the continuation of some popular weeknight events. As the city shifts out of pandemic mode, the Race Committee routine returns to something approaching “normal” operations.

Since the last newsletter the RC team has conducted three two-day events, one three-day regatta and added an exciting new Friday night event. The Wednesday Evening series and Thursday Night Kites have been ongoing. One constant throughout these spring races has been strong winds and cool temperatures; RC volunteers should need no reminder to *prepare for cold and wet!* Resuming major, multi-day regattas after a long hiatus has added to the challenge this spring, but by being *adaptable and flexible* in response we’ve overcome each challenge and fielded a series of great events.

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### *ELVSTROM-ZELLERBACH REGATTA – MAY 15-16*

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This long running two-day event for dinghy racers returned in 2021 with four fleets competing, the fast and exciting 505’s and three classes of ILCA boats. These small but fast-moving boats can present special challenges for a race committee, so PRO John Siegel used this regatta as a dress rehearsal for the much larger ICLA North American Championships coming to our waters in July.



On race day the wind took a more southerly direction than usual, challenging the RC team to fit the course geometry into the available space. John chose to separate the race starts and finishes, which reduces workloads and confusion, but can introduce communication challenges.

On the finish boat, a team of Recorders noted sail numbers and times on sheets wet with fog as the racers flashed by.

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*The RC Team for Elvstrom/Zellerbach Photo by [Chris Ray](#)*

Acting on advice from PRO Siegel and DRO Tony Chargin, they made an audio recording of all the sail number call-outs. Then, huddled on the floor of the Barrows to escape the wind, they listened to the recording to clarify and confirm their

hasty notes. The process worked well, and the results were then photographed and emailed to the race office for scoring. Another example of a race committee adapting in response to the challenge.



*Start Boat (left) and Finish Boat (right) at Elvstrom/Zellerbach Regatta Photos by [Chris Ray](#)*

## **SPRINGFEST – MAY 22-23**

Three very competitive keelboat fleets, the J/105, Knarr and Folkboats, met on our cityfront course for the SpringFest regatta in late May. This marked the first time since the resumption of racing that our larger committee boat, the **James Wilhite**, was deployed. New to our fleet in late 2019, and idle during the pandemic, the *Wilhite* is new to most of the RC team. On this first outing there were glitches and confusion that required visits from the “bosun boat” to clear.



To accommodate the differing sizes of fleets, PRO John Siegel wanted to alternate two different start line lengths. Rather than spend valuable time moving a start pin repeatedly, John employed a markset RIB, captained by Ian McClelland, as a “pin boat”, alternating between two pre-positioned anchors. By mid-day on Saturday the team had the procedure perfected, and the starts proceeded quickly.

*Start line pin boat in the thick of the action  
Photo by [Jay Dean](#)*



Recording finishes in these large fleets, prone to close, overlapping finishes, also proved tricky. On Sunday, John deployed another markset boat to record finishes from the opposite side of the finish line, where sail numbers blanketed to the signal boat can be seen. Again, the fix worked, and earlier issues were overcome.

*John Siegel sights the line for a close finish  
Photo by [Jay Dean](#)*

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## *OPTI HEAVY WEATHER REGATTA – JUNE 19-20*

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This annual regatta offers young sailors, ages 8 to 14, a chance to experience the challenging conditions on our bay. For the Race Committee, this regatta adds a special challenge as it adds a second course; the beginner sailors race on their own course in the more protected area off Marina Green.

Opti regattas also require the RC team to take on a vital safety role for these young sailors and coordinate safety oversight with the many coaches on the course.

This year, PRO Ian McClelland added another challenge, an unusual trapezoid-shaped course with a leeward gate, that challenged the racers, but pushed the markset team to get those reach angles right and keep the course geometry correct though the event.

For this youth-oriented event the committee was augmented by three StFYC Junior sailors, Arthur Serra, Akira Bratti and Sydney Lange, and by members of club leadership who have been prominent in supporting our Juniors and youth sailing, Staff Commodore Kimball Livingston and former Director, and Olympian, Pam Healy.



*Junior sailor Sydney Lange has eyes on the Opti starters*  
*Photo by Chris Ray*



*Signal team included Juniors Akira Bratti and Arthur Serra*  
*Photo by Chris Ray*



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## *WOODIES INVITATIONAL – JUNE 26-28*

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In a season where every event seems quite distinct, “Woodies” was noted for an unusual schedule. The event began with a single race on Friday evening. Racing on the weekend began at 11 and was wrapped up by mid-afternoon, an unusual but very pleasant schedule. For these very traditional sailboats, PRO Ian McClelland set a relatively traditional course layout; a mark and offset at the top, a gate at the bottom, and a start/finish line between.

The Friday contest was raced in that unhappy combination of strong ebb and fierce west winds, which tossed the crew of the Cressey. Finishes that night were taken from the race deck. Conditions on the weekend were near perfect. After a brief issue with the anchor windlass, the regatta ran smoothly. Perhaps we are clearing out those “cobwebs” from our long hiatus. Bring on the summer regattas!



*Nataly Funk, Mike Mahoney and Wood Banthin covered the weather end of the course  
Photo by Gerard Sheridan*



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*Race Committee Team for Woodies Invitational (Saturday)  
Photo by Chris Ray*

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## WEDNESDAY EVENING SERIES, TNKS AND WINDSURFERS & WINGS!

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Our weekday evening series have continued through the Spring. The Wednesday Evening Series (WES), for the “Woodies” fleets plus J/22’s, is largely a race deck event. The committee stays comfortably dry and enjoys refreshments and fun chat while running great races under the leadership of PRO Chris Perkins.

In contrast, the Thursday Night Kites race committee works on the water, in the wild winds kite racers prefer. High-performance kite racers often need rescue when they fall and are unable to re-fly their kites from the water. Markset crews on these nights get a wet workout bringing both gear and racers into our boats. It’s never dull when the kites are racing!

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### *The WES Recorder team check their work*

*Photo by Jay Dean*

This Spring we expanded the Friday Windsurf Slalom series, adding the new Wing Sailors, a class that sprung into existence while racing was curtailed due to Covid. The inaugural “Wings” races drew 33 competitors, an enthusiastic response from this rapidly growing fleet

For these races the RC sends a single RIB out to set marks and become the start boat. The finishes are taken from the race deck.

The WES is on hiatus during July, when the J/22’s claim that time slot but will return in August for four more weeks. TNKS continues through the summer on every other Thursday. The Windsurf & Wings event will be monthly.



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### *Wing Sailors compete in our first Wing event*

*Photo by Bryan McDonald*

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## WELCOME TO THE RC TEAM:

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Congratulations and “welcome” to the Race Committee volunteers who joined our team this month for their first days of RC service. Great to have you aboard and we look forward to seeing you on the roster for the exciting events upcoming!

- Katie Aspell
- Akira Bratti
- Meryl Burton
- Angelo Camarda
- Sydney Chaney
- Nataly Funk
- Molly Gordon
- Lizzie Guynn
- Sydney Lange
- Kristin Lighttiser
- Anne McIntyre
- Sophia O’Hara
- PJ Panzica
- Melissa Purdy
- Rosemary Richard
- Meg Ruxton
- Jay Ryan
- Arthur Serra
- Xander Subashi
- Mary Ann Zarembinski

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## RACE COMMITTEE TRAINING:

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Our Training and Development Subcommittee is offering hands-on Race Committee training sessions, both shoreside and on-the-water. The sessions are for those new to Race Committee, eager to learn, or who want to brush up on their skills. Some shoreside courses are a prerequisite for on-the-water sessions.

- Knots and Line Handling (shoreside)
- Markset Boat: Flags, Sounds and Signals (shoreside)
- Signal Boat/Race Deck: Flags, Sounds, and Signals (shoreside)
- Markset Boat: Setup (shoreside)
- Markset Boat Ops: Markset and Retrieval (on-the-water)

Two sessions shoreside will be held **on July 24**. Two sessions shoreside and on-the-water will be held on **July 31 and August 7**. For on-the-water sessions, dress in layers as you may get wet.

These trainings are free and class sizes are limited – to sign up, register on CERVIS, then navigate to Training Course Selection. We look forward to seeing you!

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## UPCOMING EVENTS:

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- J/22 Summer Series – July 7,14,21,28
- TNKS – July 8,22,29
- **ILCA North American Champs – July 14-18**
- SF Classic/UN Challenge – July 24-25
- Windsurf & Wings Slalom – July 23

...And many more throughout the season! [Get signed up now!](#)

Questions? Contact Marianne Dean at [mqdean@gmail.com](mailto:mqdean@gmail.com)

Get [great Race Committee gear at the StFYC – RC Shop!](#) (password is “StFYCrc”)

[RC Resources and training videos: On the website!](#)

See more of [Chris Ray’s photos at crayivp.com](#)

