

The 2008 U.S. Match Race Championship was held this year from September 25 – 28 at Seawanhaka Corinthian Yacht Club on Center Island in Oyster Bay, NY. This was the third time our LYC team was competing in the USMRC (7<sup>th</sup> in 2006 in Texas; 3<sup>rd</sup> in 2007 in Newport), but the level of competition for this year's event had taken a decided step forward. As the head of the US Match Race Committee noted, of the 12 teams competing for the Prince of Wales Bowl there were 3 former USMRC champions, 1 former America's Cup skipper, the reigning ISAF World Champion Match Race tactician (sailing with a new team) and current Etchells World Champion, one Beijing Olympian, multiple National and World Champion fleet racing titles, and numerous College All-Americans. It was a tough crowd and we were in for a brawl.

Our team consisted of: Ben Bardwell (Newport, RI), a sailing professional who has worked on a number of local boats, including "Speedboat;" Ben Jarashow, a sail designer for Quantum Sails in Annapolis; and Jon Singsen from LYC. The three of us have sailed together in various boats, but as a team this was our first try in the three-man Sonar.

Conditions over the first three days ranged from breezy (18 – 20 knots) on Thursday; too breezy in the morning on Friday (30 knots and a two hour postponement), moderate on Saturday (8 – 15 knots), and light and very fluky on Sunday (under 5 knots). For the most part we sailed in the West Harbor area of Oyster Bay, which gave us flat water and somewhat more protection during the heaviest wind.

With the twelve attending teams the schedule was going to be tight over the four days – 2 Round Robins were on the initial docket, meaning a minimum of 22 races for each team. Each flight of 6 head-to-head matches were run on a rolling 5 minute sequence, so that there were always two or more matches on the race course at the same time. This kind of sailing puts a premium on endurance and also being able to mentally regroup after a good win or a bad defeat. Consistency is the key to success and for us it paid off in the final tally.

The first Round Robin was held on Thursday into the beginning of Friday, and Team LYC was in the thick of a 4-way tie for 4<sup>th</sup> place, 5<sup>th</sup> after tie-breakers. Our record was 7 – 4 with good wins against two of the top three teams; one or two lucky wins where we scrubbed a penalty in the last feet of the race, and a couple of questionable losses. We headed into the second Round Robin feeling we were contenders, and over the remainder of Friday and into Saturday we continued sailing consistently. When the dust had settled at the end of the second Round Robin, Dave Perry was in first place with a record of 16 – 6, Brian Angel (of Kings Harbor YC, CA) was second with a record of 15 – 7, and Taylor Canfield (St. Thomas YC, US Virgin Islands), Scott DeCurtis (King Harbor YC, CA), and Team LYC were tied with 15 – 8 records.

What followed was a 30-minute meeting between the assembled Judges and Umpires (some of whom spent time judging the finals in the 32<sup>nd</sup> America's Cup, and are unsung heroes for the amount of time and effort they put into our sport) to break the tie for 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> places. Based on ISAF Match Racing rules, the results came out as follows: Canfield, DeCurtis and Singsen are set into a separate "Round Robin" group of for head-to-head

matches, which resulted in an unbreakable tie between the three. The next step was to consider who had the most wins against the top skipper from the two general Round Robins (in this case, Dave Perry). Team LYC held the trump card and took 3<sup>rd</sup> place into the Semi-Final Round, having beaten Dave Perry in both of their matches on Thursday and Saturday. With Team LYC out of the way, the tie between Canfield and DeCurtis was then settled by who-beat-who last – with Canfield winning the last spot in the final four.

Sadly, the racing on Sunday was fluky at best even as the race committee tried to bring the fleet where the wind was best. With the Semi-Finals only partly completed, the Umpires decided at 2:00 PM to move on to the Finals between Dave Perry and Brian Angel. By 3:00 PM on Sunday the time limit had run out, giving Dave Perry his 3<sup>rd</sup> US Match Race title based on his exemplary form and top record from the two Round Robins. Dave goes on to represent the United States in a Regional Final (North America and Caribbean Countries) for the ISAF Nations Cup, a world-wide elimination Match Race series. If Dave is successful there he will move on to the ISAF Nations Cup Finals, to be held in Malaysia in December.

All of Team LYC would like to thank the membership, flag officers, and staff of Larchmont Yacht Club for their support. Without this support we would not be able to realize our goal of becoming a top-ranked international match race team. Our next event is the King Edward VII Bermuda Gold Cup (<http://www.bermudagoldcup.com/>), October 7 – 12 at Royal Bermuda YC in Hamilton, BER. We will keep you posted on our progress at this World Championship level match race event.

Sincerely,

Jon Singsen  
Ben Bardwell  
Ben Jarashow