

## Etchells Sid Doren Memorial Regatta

January 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018

The 2018 Etchells Biscayne Bay Series had its second regatta in Miami this weekend with the Sid Doren Memorial. Hosted by Etchells Fleet 20 and the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club five races were competed over two days. Thirty-eight boats took part for this regatta, with several Etchells world champion skippers on the starting line.

Michael Gavin from Westport Connecticut pointed towards the reduced number of entries, and said, "If you were trying to get out of the Northeast and didn't make it out by Wednesday, you couldn't get here. I know of several boats where some of the crew from Connecticut or Boston, couldn't make it."



Saturday's weather was beautiful, if a little bit chilly. But, compared to the weather most of the sailors left behind up north, 60 degrees and sunny skies were just fine. The first race went off right on time with a bearing of 350 degrees, a distance of 1.4 nautical miles, with the breeze at a nice 11 knots.

First to the top mark was Jim Cunningham on *Lifted* from San Francisco, leaving off where he ended the last regatta, the Piana Cup, which he won. In second was Jay Cross from New York on *Skanky Gene*. Following those to was local Miami sailor Buddy Crib on *Victory*.

By the first gate Scott Kaufman of New York had eased into second place with Jay Cross dropping back to third. A right shift to 005 degrees necessitated a Charlie flag at the gate, and the fleet headed back upwind.

At the second weather mark, the first two boats remained the same with Dirk Kneulman from Ontario Canada on *Tiburon* easing into third. The breeze was holding steady at 12 knots but had sifted farther right to 020 degrees.

Winning race one after leading wire to wire was Jim Cunningham. He was followed by Scott Kaufman in second, Dirk Kneulman in third, Jay Cross in fourth and Andrew Cumming in fifth.



Race two was another course 4 set at 025 degrees with a distance of 1.5 nautical miles. By now the wind had freshened to 15 knots and Biscayne Bay was beginning to get choppy.

New competitor in the Etchells class William Douglass from Annapolis on *Goombay Smash* was first to the top, followed closely by local fleet captain Jeff Nehms on *Nemesis* and Michael Gavin on *Clean Execution*.

By the end of the first downwind Dirk Kneulman had taken over the lead with Michael Gavin in second and William Douglas in third. Jim Cunningham was lurking back in fourth with Michael Goldfarb from Seattle, Washington on *War Canoe* in fifth. Winds were now up to 16 knots with higher gusts.

After some slight jockeying for position on the final legs, race two went to Dirk Kneulman. He was followed by Jim Cunningham and Michael Gavin. William Douglas and Michael Goldfarb rounded out the top five.

Race three was a course 5 with a heading of 020 degrees and a length of 1.4 nautical miles. PRO Stuart Childerley (a former Etchells world champion himself) was really firing off the races in quick succession.

At the top mark it was Jay Cross in first with Peter Duncan from New York sailing his brand new Etchells *Raging Rooster* for the first time, and Jim Cunningham close on his heels. Those three held their positions to the leeward gate where they were joined by Ernie Pomerleau of Burlington Vermont in fourth, and reigning Etchells world champion Steve Benjamin in fifth.

The last two legs saw big wind shifts as showers blew across the bay. The direction oscillated between 010 and 045 degrees with velocity ranging from 6 to 18 knots. Peter Duncan passed Jay Cross to take the horn with Jim Cunningham finishing third. Mike Goldfarb took fourth and Ernie Pomerleau finished fifth.

At the end of the first day of racing, it was Jim Cunningham in the lead with 6 points. In second was Dirk Kneulman with 11 points. Third through seventh were Peter Duncan, Jay Cross, Steve Benjamin, Michael Gavin and Scott Kaufman respectively, with just 5 points separating the five boats.

Sunday turned out to be a warmer day, albeit overcast. PRO Stuart Chiderley started race four at a bearing of 065 degrees with a fresh 16-18 knot breeze chopping up the bay. Course 4 was set with a 1.5 mile weather leg. With an "all clear" start the 38 teams started across the bay.



At the top mark, Ched Proctor on *Something Good* led the fleet. He was followed by Senet Bischoff on *KGB* and Steve Benjamin on *SCIMITAR*. Senet and his Corinthian crew of Ben Kinney and his brother Clay, all from New York are traditionally one of the top Corinthian teams sailing the Etchells.

Steve Benjamin, as he often does, pulled into the lead on the downwind and rounded first. He was followed by Ched Proctor, Jay Cross, former world champion Marvin Beckmann, and Senet Bischoff.

By the time the fleet made it back to the top mark the wind had sifted right 5-10 degrees. That didn't faze Steve Benjamin as he was still leading, followed by Ched Proctor and Marvin Beckmann.

That order held to the finish. Jim Cunningham finished the race in 8<sup>th</sup>, good enough to hold onto first, but Dirk Kneulman suffered a 21<sup>st</sup> which he will hope to drop.

Speaking with Dirk Kneulman after racing he said about their 21<sup>st</sup>, "We got hung up at the weather mark and had to tack out. We still had trouble getting back in the line." He continued, "You think about all the places where you could lose or gain a point and they were all so important this weekend." Speaking about their team Dirk said, "We had former world champion Andy Beadsworth on the boat this week. I've known and sailed with him for years, and he's a great guy to be around. You always learn new stuff from the guys on the boat, and we learned a lot from Andy that we'll use in the future."

For race 5, PRO Stuart Chiderley set course 5 (five legs) at a bearing of 075 degrees with the wind now up to 16-18 knots. With Dirk Kneulman being the only boat with a mathematical chance of catching Jim Cunningham the race was on. All of the other trophies were on the line.

At the top mark it was Kevin Granger in the lead followed by Mike Goldfarb and Craig Mense. Granger held on to the top spot at the first leeward gate with Craig Mense moving up to second and Steve Benjamin moving into third. A Charlie flag indicated the left shift of the course axis to 060 degrees.

Back at the top it was Benjamin, Mense and Cunningham, one-two-three. After a speedy downwind and a fifth leg back upwind, Steve Benjamin took the horn. He was followed by Craig Mense, Kevin Grainger, Marvin Beckmann and Jim Cunningham.

Speaking with Jay Cross after racing, he said, "As always there was some good solid racing. It was really tight with unpredictable oscillations." Jay pointed out how tight the racing was at the top, "Second through fifth were separated by three points."

Winning the 2018 Sid Doren was Jim Cunningham with his crew of Jeff Madrigali, Mark Ivey, and Serena Vilage. Finishing second was Steve Benjamin sailing with Michael Menninger, Ian Liberty, and Evan Aras. Third place went to the crew of Michael Goldfarb, Morten Henriksen, and Skip Dieball. Rounding out the top five were Dirk Kneulman, Andy Beadsworth, and Rob Scribner in fourth and Jay Cross, Michael Buckley, George Peet and Wilson Stout in fifth. I think Dirk summed up part of the popularity of the Etchells Winter Series, "I am so happy to not be freezing back in Canada. I can't remember it being so bitterly cold."

Next up in the Series is the Tom Piper Memorial Florida State Championship in February 3 & 4.