

2017 J105 Canadian Championships

The 2017 J105 Canadian Championships were hosted by RCYC on September 22-24. Atypical late September weather brought temperatures in the lower thirties and light winds for the three days of racing. The regatta's first event was the 8 AM Thursday morning crew weigh-in, this year held at the RCYC City Station. To celebrate this first-time location, the Fleet Captain went to the trouble to arrange for some unpaid entertainment for those lucky sailors who showed up right at 8 AM. This very well received entertainment may, or may not, have violated the Club's public space dress code rules.

The race committee, led by Mike Milner did a good job completing 7 races in challenging conditions. With good size starting lines, and boats being called over early from both ends, there were no General Recalls, I Flags, U Flags or Black Flag starts in the whole regatta. In the usually aggressive J105 fleet, this was an anomaly and helped to get the races off quickly.

In the light air and flat water, the racing was very close with the fleet often bunched up at the first windward and leeward gate marks. The approach to the windward mark, and the exit from the leeward gate, often were key elements in determining one's race finish.

On Friday, sixteen boats appeared on the starting line. After the two races, Hey Jude led (3, 1) followed by Starcross (2, 3) and Mandate (6, 2). The next day, after a delay on shore waiting for wind to appear, three races were held where Mandate took over the regatta lead with a 3, 1, 1. Both Hey Jude and Starcross had two good and one not as good races to stay in contention. Sentient scored three top four finishes and Full Tilt had a 1, 5, 6 to move into the top 5 overall.

Saturday evening was the traditional Canadian Championship dinner held in the RCYC dining room with the Master of Ceremonies Sentient's Andrew Chapman taking good humoured shots at as many competitors as he could fit in. Michael Mountford presented Fleet Captain Doug Bullock with a beautiful framed photo of Doug steering his True Blue to a nice leeward end start as a thank you for his years of service acting as the Fleet 4 Fleet Captain. Doug is going on to bigger and better things taking over as President of the J105 Class Association. Doug will still be around though sailing True Blue next year and has even offered to continue running the J105 regattas at RCYC.

After another delay on shore Sunday morning, enough wind appeared in the early afternoon to hold two races before the daily start time limit of 3 PM came and went. Starcross led the first race from wire to wire with Mandate on their tail. Hey Jude made an amazing come back to finish third. Full Tilt and Sentient once again rounded out the top five in the race. With one race to go, Mandate held a 5 point lead over both Hey Jude and Starcross. Mandate started the last race at the committee boat end with Jude and Starcross further down the line. Mandate felt that they had a good start but as boats from the left came across strong combined with starboard layline dirty air their race went downhill quickly rounding the first mark in 10th or 11th with Jude and Starcross both in good shape. As the regatta lead was at this point lost, for the first time all regatta there could be no guarantee that Mandate's tightly whities were both so. Working the left on the second beat, Mandate managed to climb back to 7th place in the race and with Jude finishing 3rd Mandate was able to hold onto a slim 1 point victory in the regatta.

In the end, the top five boats Mandate, Hey Jude, Starcross, Sentient and Full Tilt were separated by only 6 points making it one of the closest Canadian Championships ever held. Jamaica finished 6th and True Blue, showing great improvement over the season, finished 7th. Nine of the sixteen boats recorded at least one top five finish.

By: Terry McLaughlin