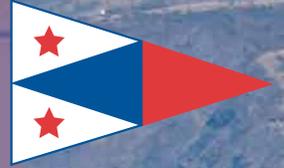


St. Francis Yacht Club

# MAINSHEET



August 2018



# RACE REPORTS

By Amanda Witherell, Communications Manager

## StFYC to Compete in NYYC's "Big Three"

Multiple StFYC sailors will travel to the East Coast this August to represent our club at the New York Yacht Club's "Big Three" regattas: the Morgan Cup, the Hinman Masters and NYYC's Grandmasters Team Race. Since June, our sailors have been practicing on the Club's J/22s, honing their skills and gelling as crew members in preparation to race aboard NYYC's Sonars.

### MORGAN CUP AUGUST 4-6, 2018

**Sailing for StFYC:** Michael Menninger, Halsey Richartz, Russ Silvestri, Ben Lezin, Oliver Toole, James Moody, Tyler Baeder, Chris Smith, Kevin Laube, Yuri Namika, Craig Healy, Sammy Shea

The Morgan Cup has been described as "the toughest trophy in keelboat team racing." StFYC's Team Captain **Michael Menninger** says, "It's certainly one of them. The Morgan Cup routinely attracts the best yacht clubs and team racers from around the country, and NYYC Harbour Court does a nice job running the regatta."

San Diego Yacht Club won the Morgan the past two years, but Menninger maintains, "I'm focused on our team and we have a great team assembled. **Oliver Toole** and **Kevin Laube** are the most recent winners of the Hinman Trophy [U.S. Team Racing National Championship], and I've won the Morgan Cup in the past, so we have the personnel to win regardless of the competition.

The crew has been diligently selected and we have a great mix of the 'older guard,' like **Russ Silvestri** and **Craig Healy**, who are incredible sailors and have the know-how to win regattas, mixed with other young StFYC members with recent team racing experience. The regatta will come down to how focused our team is on winning races, if we are meshing well as a team and just staying loose and having fun. We're ready to do so, so I like our chances."

### HINMAN MASTERS TEAM RACE AUGUST 18-20

**Sailing for StFYC:** Steve Marsh, Shawn Bennett, Mike Martin, Nicole Breault, Stephanie Martin, Joe McCoy, John Collins, Dennis George, Craig Healy, Rolf Kaiser, Melissa Purdy, Tom Ducharme

StFYC returns to the Hinman Masters Team Race to defend our 2017 victory, with many of the winning crew aboard, including Team Captain **Steve Marsh**. Overall, the Club has had strong results in this race, including a string of wins from 2011 to 2013; NYYC is the only club to have won it more times overall since 2000. (Six times compared to StFYC's four.)

### NYYC GRANDMASTERS TEAM RACE AUGUST 25-27

**Sailing for StFYC:** Jon Andron, Phil Perkins, Peter Wagner, Allie Rowe, Tracy Usher, Gerard Sheridan, Mike Bishop, Commodore Theresa Brandner, Craig Healy, Keith Nilne, Jennifer Swett Chrisman, Joe McCoy

The month of high-stakes racing caps off with the NYYC Grandmasters Team Race: crewmembers over 50 years old and

skippers at least 60 who have not skipped in either the Morgan or the Hinman.

"That leads to people who have an extensive career in sailing, but may not have team-raced in college because they come from a generation without team racing in college," says Team Captain **Jon Andron**. "What matriculates from that reality is that, with coaching, you can have a superior team."

That's the case with Yacht Club, which has only lost this regatta once—last year—to NYYC. "They have a coach, a regular Thursday night practice, and the guys put the time in," says Andron.

Scuttlebutt is they haven't been putting in the time recently. "Is there an opening there?" muses Andron. "In theory, there is, but there are ten teams, this is the biggest regatta of the year and some teams have Olympians. We're have **Craig Healy** this year, because he just turned 60, and we're going to put the time in. We've learned the tactics and tendencies of the rival teams."

"I'm delighted with our chances," Andron adds. "We're going to have a wonderful time." 🇺🇸



We're going for a repeat victory at this year's Hinman Masters, with many of the same team from 2017, pictured here.

## Legendary Trophy Returns to StFYC

The San Francisco Perpetual Cup is the oldest yachting trophy, originating in America, still in competition—and it's back at St. Francis Yacht Club! After 25 years in the hands of other clubs and several heartbreaking efforts to win it back, **Russ Silvestri** and his team of **Tom Ducharme, Phil Perkins, Domenic Bove, John Collins** and **Joe McCoy** won the San Francisco Perpetual Challenge Cup in a match race with Long Beach Yacht Club on June 30, 2018.

Encinal Yacht Club's 52-foot *El Sueno* won the inaugural SF Perpetual on August 31, 1895. StFYC's first win was with *Widgeon* in 1938, exactly 80 years ago. Overall, StFYC has won it 16 times, and Silvestri and **S/C Doug Holm** have been involved in many of those campaigns. We caught up with them after the celebrations.

**MS: How does it feel to be part of winning a trophy with so much history and tradition?**

**Silvestri:** Winning brings back lots of memories of each of the races I competed in, but what made it special this time was having Domenic Bove aboard. He's 23, a year out of college and had not match-raced at a competitive level. On Friday, we were practice-racing against legends **Paul Cayard** and Dennis Durgan, who have won the Congressional Cup, America's Cup and Volvo. For a younger racer, I was thinking, 'What a privilege.'

When we won, I thought, 'In 20 years, Domenic will still be racing for this trophy and I will be watching him.' StFYC is incredibly rich in resources, namely our membership, and we can continue to represent excellence by supporting future generations. Paul and I both want to incubate our talent and pass on the torch.

**MS: Our longest hold on the Cup was from 1987-1993 (won by *High Risk, Blade Runner, Wall Street Duck, The St. Francis IX, Swiftsure, Mongoose, High Risk*). Any war stories to share?**

**Silvestri:** On *High Risk*, I remember going with Paul Cayard to race Balboa. We brought the Commodore at the time, **George Sayre**. He was bigger than most and his useful position upwind was hiking. His useful position downwind was below deck and, in Paul's words, as "Hug the Keel" Commodore.

The second time was skippering *Swiftsure*. We had an army for crew and before the race, **Ken Keefe** did not like the condition of the bottom. So, we took our army to the boatyard and sanded the bottom for the next two hours as **Sy Kleinman** watched, probably



The San Francisco Perpetual Cup winning team

thinking: 'Who are these guys and what are they doing to my boat?'

Racing downwind, our bowman jumped the foreguy and had to hand-over-hand climb out to the end of the pole to trip the guy. Sy thought he was going overboard and was frantic, but the bowman made it to the end, cleared the guy and was back on board in a few seconds. Sy asked, "Who is that guy? Where did he come from?" On the last beat to the finish we broke a jib halyard. We scampered to re-hoist the jib, then broke that halyard! We were down to our last halyard and we nursed the boat across the finish line.

**MS: What do you think was the greatest contributing factor to success this time around?**

**Silvestri:** On Thursday, practicing and getting familiar with the boat and crew work. On Friday, having 20 starts against Cayard and Durgan got our time and distance dialed in, which led to us winning all the starts on Saturday. **Chris Raab**, who races the Catalina 37 a lot, is genius on speed and coached us on boat trim. That gave us confidence we would be in the game, speed-wise, and that it would all come down to racing. In match racing, if you win the start with control, you're hard to beat. Our crew was familiar with each other and got along well. Tom Ducharme, in the middle of the boat, is a beast. He and Phil Perkins crushed LBYC in the tacking duels off the starts. Joe McCoy in the pit kept John Collins honest on the bow. John did a great job getting us to the starting line and Domenic endured the physical aspects of trimming the main. His youth and energy gave him a perfect place on our totem pole.

**MS: During the celebration at the Club, you said it felt a little underwhelming when you won, in part because you were the "away" team.**

**Silvestri:** Winning on their territory feels a bit like going to a party where you're not invited. They want to congratulate you and move on. Fortunately, we had support from Doug Holm and Steve Taft and *Faster Horses* to celebrate after the trophy ceremony.

During the last race, they were over early and we started fast and kept gaining. Coming into the finish, we were a fair distance ahead, and felt that oncoming rush of a win. But, when you have a big lead, all you want is to avoid some random event that causes you to lose. When you finish, and the random card was not dealt to you, there is a sense of relief.



TRICK ROBERTS

Doug Holm served as this year's Committee Chair for the challenge. As a racing member since 1969, his first involvement with the Cup was in 1980 with Tom Blackaller, sailing *Leading Lady* to victory over San Diego Yacht Club's Robbie Haines, sailing *Dustem*.

**MS: What was your involvement this time? How did it feel to be there to witness our team in action?**

**Holm:** Both clubs had committees of three, with disputes settled by a seventh independent committee member. S/C Steve Taft and Dennis Durgan served on our committee with me and helped negotiate the terms and rules of the race, boat and crew selection and any on-the-water issues. Long Beach Yacht Club was professional, accommodating and generous with everything and could not have displayed better sportsmanship. To support Russ and his crew, we chartered another race boat to facilitate two-boat training the day before the Cup race. Paul Cayard joined us,

and along with Dennis Durgan, put Russ and his crew through their paces.

We took my boat *Faster Horses* down the coast to provide a home base for the team on the LBYC guest dock. That's where we held constructive, and spirited, debriefs each afternoon. After the win, we used it to ferry the Cup back to StFYC. The trip down and up was an adventure in itself, but that's a story for another day!

**MS: Do you think a win like this will galvanize and inspire Team StFYC as we head into the August challenges at NYYC?**

**Holm:** This is a significant win for our Club! As Paul Cayard said, following the racing, 'This effort is what St. Francis Yacht Club is all about: Competition, camaraderie, sportsmanship and winning!' The lesson from the challenge is for all our sailors to remember the importance of representing StFYC in a competitive, sportsmanship-like manner. Be organized, have the right team, practice – and then practice some more! 🇺🇸



The Royal Yacht Squadron at StFYC last Labor Day

COURTESY COMMODORE KIRIAKIS

## StFYC to Team Race Royal Yacht Squadron

By Staff Commodore Jim Kiriakis

You get what you give.

Such is the case with the Royal Yacht Squadron who have graciously invited us to sail in a team race regatta August 25–27 on the Solent at the Castle, Cowes, Isle of Wight in the UK. This follows last year's Labor Day event in which we hosted RYS to a weekend of on- and off-water competition featuring 3v3, 2v2 team and distance racing that was so enjoyable that, immediately following, RYS Commodore Jaimie Sheldon and rear Commodore Patrick Seely invited us to England in 2018.

Now, Kathleen and I are looking forward to traveling across the Pond with Paul and Janet Heineken to cheer on our able team of **Sally Mace** (Team Captain), **Nick Dugdale**, **Domenic Bove**, **Brandon Paine**, **Cassidy Lynch**, **Max Rohr**, **Samantha Steele**, **McKenzie Wilson** and **Claire Dennis**.

With strong support from StFYC club membership, it is our intention, and the intention of our friends at RYS that this should become a recurring regatta, allowing our young team racers the opportunity to race, travel and get to know sailors from around the world.

By the way, RYS won on away turf last year; our aspiration is that the away team wins this year as well. 🇺🇸

## UPCOMING REGATTAS

**August 1, 8, 15, 22:** Wednesday Evening Series (IOD, Knarr, Folkboat)

**August 8–12:** 5o5 North Americans

**August 8:** Ronstan Bridge to Bridge

**August 17, 31:** Slalom Windsurf Series

**August 17:** Aldo Alessio

**August 17–19:** J/70 PCCs & Melges 24 Cal Cup

**August 18–19:** Phyllis Kleinman Swiftsure Cup

**August 23, September 6, 20:** StFYC Kite Series

**August 23–26:** US Women's Match Race Championship

**September 13–16:** Rolex Big Boat Series

**September 14, 28:** Formula Windsurf Series

**September 22:** Joe Logan

**September 23:** Calvin Paige

**September 28–30:** Pac52 Cup

## One Design Entries Stack up for 2018 Rolex Big Boat Series



J/88s, J/105s, J/111s, Express 37s, J/120s, Farr 40s and Pac 52s have all met the NOR requirement of six or more entrants—we'll see them at RBBS.

SHARON GREEN/ROLEX

It's hard to find a purer form of sailing than a lineup of polished teams on identical platforms, all with an equal shot at racecourse glory. This is what makes One Design racing the heart and soul of the Rolex Big Boat Series. From September 12-16, top teams will race in at least seven One Design fleets, as well as several highly-competitive handicap fleets, which is what makes this the West Coast's most competitive regatta.

As of this writing, J/88s, J/105s, J/111s, Express 37s, J/120s, Farr 40s and Pac 52s have all met the NOR requirement of six or more entrants.

Held on the Bay's always-challenging waters, prepared teams will benefit from the conditions by creating micro-advantages in stacked fleets. The J/105 class has shown impressive pre-event motivation, with 22 boats currently registered and more expected.

"We love racing in the big fleet—it's without a doubt one of the most attractive aspects to racing J/105s," says Ryan Simmons, skipper of *Blackhawk* (USA 40). "It's our biggest regatta of the year and something we all enjoy being a part of."

Others agree. "The Rolex Big Boat Series is the preeminent regatta on the West

Coast and arguably in the U.S.," says **Ian Charles**, skipper of the J/105 *Maverick* (USA 385). "The StFYC does a truly exceptional job producing, hosting and managing, which makes it a 'must-not-miss' event."

Charles should know, having recently returned to the class after a 12-year hiatus competing in Ironman Triathlons. "I bought my boat last August on the East Coast and

had it shipped to the West Coast in anticipation of the 2018 racing season," he says, adding that—depending on how *Maverick's* crew weight pencils-out—he hopes to draft his wife and two sons, ages 13 and 16. "I've finished second at the Rolex Big Boat Series twice, so stepping onto the top of the podium this year is the number one goal for me and our team."

While not all classes can draw the numbers of the J/105 fleet, the J/88 class pulled enough entries to enjoy their inaugural Rolex Big Boat Series as a One Design class.

"I think it changes our approach to our preparations in that we need to practice as best we can given the short time remaining," says Aya Yamanouchi, skipper of the J/88 *Benny* (79169). "We're a new boat and new team still gelling. We're planning to race in the StFYC's Aldo Alessio and Phyllis Kleinman Swiftsure Cup as a warm-up, and hopefully some of the other J/88s come out so we can get a 'sneak-preview' of Rolex Big Boat Series."

Weather depending, the StFYC aims to score seven races at this year's Rolex Big Boat Series, with two scheduled races per class per day from Thursday through Saturday, followed by Sunday's planned "Bay Tour" race. Stay tuned at [rolexbigboatseries.com](http://rolexbigboatseries.com). 🇺🇸



Christian Gianni recently won the International Dragon Class French Open with Pedro Rebelo and Charles Nankin. Says Christian, "I am excited to represent the St. Francis globally."