

Thistle East Coast Fall Series Preview 2008

Now that the dust has started to settle from Nationals, some of you may feel somewhat cut adrift. Do not despair – relief is in sight. The East Coast Fall Series will soon be upon us – with great fall colors, brisk winds and incredible competition.

Here is this year's line-up.

Schedule

- September 6-7, Fall Frontier Regatta, Rochester Canoe Club, Rochester, NY
Contact: Daniel Fien, danfien@rochester.rr.com, 585 230-9629
- September 13-14, Horrocks/Palmer Regatta, Sayville Yacht Club, Sayville, NY
Contacts: Paul-Jon Patin, pjpatin@nyc.rr.com, 917 749-4284
Mike McBride, mcbriemw@sbcglobal.net, 203 536-0372
- September 20-21, Goetz Memorial, Lake Hopatcong Yacht Club, Mt. Arlington, NJ
Contact: Lloyd Kitchin: kitchindmd@hotmail.com
- September 27-28, Fontelieu Invitational, Cedar Point Yacht Club, Westport, CT
Contact: Tom Lawton, Thistle1678@aol.com, 609 865-0175
- October 4-5 - Kayaderoseras Kup, Saratoga Lake Sailing Club, Ballston Spa, NY
Contact: Dave Hudson, hudsod@rpi.edu, 518 276-8836
- October 11-12, Oyster Roast, Severn Sailing Association, Annapolis, MD
Contacts: Joe McCorkell, JoeMcCorkell@comcast.net, 410 295-5292
Peter & Susan Hale, peterandsusanhale@atlanticbb.net, 410 643-1104
- October 18-19, LoGerfo Memorial, Nyack Boat Club, Nyack, NY
Contact: Jared Ridder, jared3602@yahoo.com
- October 25-26, Heather Bowl, Red Dragon Canoe Club, Edgewater Park, NJ
Contact: Brent Barbehenn, bbarbehenn@metrocommercial.com

Google Maps

This is a link to a handy Google Maps contact list for all of the eight ECFS regatta venues, with links to club websites, addresses, phone numbers and much much more (courtesy of Seneca Yacht Club's Bob Strong):

<http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF8&hl=en&msa=0&msid=110599555285350739919.000444f6d37a5d2f4d7ff&z=7&om=0>

Another way of finding this information is by going to the TCA website's homepage. Click on the green "Events" tab at the top of the page – then click on "East Coast Fall Series" under "Regatta Maps."

Registration Fee (& Other Cool Stuff!!!)

The bad news is that there will be a one-time \$5 registration fee per boat for the East Coast Fall Series, payable at the first event you attend. The good news is that this will qualify you for all eight regattas. In addition, the money will be well spent. There is a pressing need to refurbish, update and – in some cases – re-engrave the perpetual trophies for first, second and third places.

Moreover, we will also purchase and introduce perpetual trophies (again, first through third places) for Best Crew. You guys never get enough credit – but this year you will! For every regatta, the crew on each boat will receive the same Cox-Sprague score as the skipper – weighted for the number of boats participating in the event. At the awards presentation at the season finale at the Red Dragon Canoe Club, the magical ECFS secret and proprietary Excel spreadsheet (developed painstakingly over the years by current TCA President Charlie Kreitler) will spit out the names of not only the three winning skippers, but the three crew people who have turned in the best average scores for the season – even if they’ve sailed on a different boat in each regatta.

Now, you gotta admit – *that’s* cool!!!

A portion of the entry fees will also be used to improve the ECFS website-in-progress, and to enhance the quality and quantity of the various paraphernalia that is given away each year to regatta participants – T-shirts, sailing caps, coasters, gift certificates, beer huggies, autographed Croakies, stained glass windows and other souvenirs of the game.

Last year, we had a total of 91 boats participate in all eight fall series events. We hope to do better this year – weather and no blow-outs permitting – so we should have a starting “kitty” of some \$450 to help manage our operations. The money will be kept in a bank account with no monthly fee, and a year-end financial report will be provided to all participants.

Race Results and Bookkeeping

To make this ambitious agenda a reality, we will need the help and cooperation of race committees, fleet captains and regatta organizers at each event. ECFS registration forms will be e-mailed to you well in advance to help with your bookkeeping. Also, if you do not currently use a computerized score sheet (such as St. Pete Scorer or whatever), we will provide pre-formatted Excel spreadsheets to record the first and last names of all skippers and crew, as well as race-by-race scores for your regatta.

It is absolutely essential that we receive these scores on the day of the event so that we can post the results to the Thistle listserv and the ECFS website – hopefully on the same day, but certainly no later than Monday morning.

Not all of you may have noticed, but last year Patty Lawrence and TCA webmaster Mary Amburgey were instrumental in making this happen. HTML versions of the score sheets were available on an almost real-time basis. You can’t have a pennant race unless you know who’s beating whom – and by how much. And this year, there will be two pennant races – one for skippers and one for crew!

As Yogi Berra once famously said: “If you come to a fork in the road, take it!”

NORs

The Rochester Canoe Club has already posted the NOR for its annual Fall Frontier Regatta on the TCA listserv. It is also available on the RCC website (www.rochestercc.org). This is one of the most competitive Thistle fleets in the country, and there are almost always more than 30 boats on the line for this event. Every effort will be made to hold the races “outside” on Lake Ontario on both Saturday and Sunday, and five-time National Champion Mike Ingham will conduct an advanced Thistle clinic beginning at 2 p.m. Friday with a chalk session and on-the-water practice

races and video. Mike will also lead competitors to a raucous TGIF dinner at Rochester's infamous Dinosaur Bar B Que Pit (<http://www.dinosaurbarbque.com/>).

There has been some minor grumbling over the past couple of years because of the comparative distance to Rochester from most of the other ECFS venues. This is true. It's about a six-hour drive from most of the other clubs. But "they" come to "our" events too, so let's try to suck it up and make the trek if at all possible. Another way of putting this in perspective is to appreciate how spoiled we northeasterners are. Everyone on the ECFS circuit (other than Rochesterites) seems to live in everyone's relative backyard. But Greg Griffin and his compatriots down south run one of the TCA's most competitive (and well-attended) fall series, where everyone is *at least* six hours from everyone else – and sometimes more. If you don't believe me, take a look at *their* Regatta Map:

<http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF8&hl=en&msa=0&msid=104954260440130059483.000443f5cef8d7b93fb4e&z=6&om=0>

NORs for the remaining seven regattas will be posted as we receive them, but certainly no later than two weeks before the events in question. News reports, hot flashes, rumors and other essential information will be filed and provided as needed.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at any time (610 486-6810, slatham@scottlatham.com). Or contact the regatta chairs for each event – they will probably know more than I do, and that way I won't have to make anything up.

In putting together this year's preview, I had a lot of helpful suggestions from the following ECFS veterans, in no particular order: Craig Smith, Mike McBride, Brent Barbehenn, Lloyd Kitchin, Dave Hudson, Mike Ingham, Dan Fien, Chris Connelly, Doug Kaukeinen, Peter Hale, Joe McCorkell, Jared Ridder, Greg Fisher and Skip Dieball.

Any errors, omissions or oversights are mine, not theirs.

Good Sailing!

Scott Latham
ECFS – 2008 Chair
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