

Folkboat International Cup in San Francisco

by Simon Osgood 9 Oct 2019 12:50 UTC 29 September - 4 October 2019



US team of Tom Reed (US 111) and British team, Simon Osgood (GBR673) at finish - Folkboat International Cup 2019 © Jim Erskine

The venue of San Francisco bay has held an International Folkboat regatta since the 70's with the Folkboat being adopted and actively raced in the bay since 1957. The event is hosted every two years in odd years and is an invitational event to encourage European sailors to participate against the Americans on home turf.

This year saw entries from Holland, Sweden, Germany, Denmark and the UK. This is for the Europeans, a must attend event as over the years as they have struggled to beat the Americans and this year saw a quality European presence, including two Gold Cup winners, one Kiel week winner and two of the top five from this years Gold Cup, this coupled with the US having a seven times

International Cup winner and a runner up no less than eight times, making the small but quality fleet interesting.

The week was split over two racecourses and hosted under the burgee and race management of The Corinthian Yacht Club in Tiburon. The club has great views overlooking the Bay and provided a great setting for the week.



Folkboat International Cup 2019 - photo © Jim Erskine

The event began with a welcoming ceremony for all competing countries and national anthems. The first day on the water saw a couple of practice races being

held on the 'Knox' racecourse closest to the club and the opposite side to the city front. The race areas used for the event had significant tide, running up to three knots in places and their own little quirks, which took some research and observation to get a clear understanding. As for the wind, it behaved all week with 240 degrees coming in most days after 11:00am on the whole.

The racing kicked off on the now familiar 'knox' course, and involved three windward/leeward races. Soren Kaestel's Danish team (DEN 873) faired well with a scoreline of 5,2,1 faired the best from the local US team of Tom Reed (US 111) second with 1,6,3. The British team, Simon Osgood (GBR673) put in a decent first day with 3,8,2 to lie third overall, with a long regatta ahead of everyone.

Day two and a new race course, the 'city front'. Now this was an experience for the European teams. Three races completed in a strong flood tide beating up the shoreline on a windward leeward course. There was only one way to go, was flavour of the day, inshore on the beat out of the tide and downwind in the tide. Some mastered this better than others and the US even with local knowledge of where to tack and where not to tack, didn't have it their own way. DEN 873, had a consistent day and mastered the conditions well with a 2,4,1 to retain their overall lead, with David Wilson (seven times winner) US 106 recovering from a poor previous day by his standards scoring a 5,1,3 and Christoph Nielsen two times Gold Cup winner GER 1111 having a solid 1,5,2.



Folkboats at Corinthian Yacht Club - Folkboat International Cup 2019 - photo © Jim Erskine

Every evening saw the daily prizegiving and the previous night had a fantastically hosted Taco evening at Tom Reed's house overlooking the bay.

The penultimate day had everything to play for, as the competitors returned to the 'City front' course for more of the same, except with bigger breeze which suited some more than others. The wind topped out at 23 knots and glorious sunshine greeted the the competitors. Things got interesting with the results as US 111 continued their consistent charge with a great 4,1,1 score and the other top scoring US boat of David Wilson putting in a 1,3,2, putting pressure on the overall leader DEN 873 who managed a 3,4,3. Another boat making the most of the day was GER 1111 with an ever consistent 2,2,4. Things at the top were now getting tight as the next day would see the second discard kick in and only one point separating the top three.



Winners - Soren Kaestel's Danish team (DEN 873) - Folkboat International Cup 2019 - photo © Gemma Osgood

The final day brought lighter winds, a return to my favourite course 'The Knox' and a tense final race. DEN 873, had to keep the two US boats astern to take the title on their first attempt. A short windward leeward course was set up and we were off. Whether it was tactical or simply covering each other, the top three found themselves mid fleet slugging it out. The race was won by GBR 673, followed by Jens Thuroe in DEN 634 and Tom Hermann in US 125, meanwhile Soren, Erik and Alex in DEN 873 had crossed the line in seventh and done what they needed to do, and keep Tom Reed US 111 and David Wilson US 106 behind them, and that was it! The cup was there's at their first attempt and breaking the US dominance which had dated back to 2011.

The prizegiving was an entertaining event with the US incorporating their domestic trophies as well as the overall presentations for the International Cup. The Danes and Swedes did sketches and music as part of the entertainment and everyone toasted a successful event. As they say in Europe, Folkboats Forever!