

Setting sail



Newsletter of the Disabled Sailing Association of British Columbia
Fall 2007 edition

Say 'bonjour' to Mobility Cup 2008

Mobility Cup, Canada's annual international regatta for sailors with disabilities, will be in Montreal next year.

The AbleSail Network board voted unanimously at its annual general meeting – held in Halifax during Mobility Cup 2007 – to accept AQVA Montreal's bid to host the 2008 event.

The regatta will be held at Pointe Claire Yacht Club, between Monday, Aug. 25 and Friday, Aug. 29, 2008. This will include one training day and four days of racing.

Mobility Cup has a long history of advancing adaptive sailing, both inspiring new technology and promoting the sport. Sam Sullivan started planning the first such regatta immediately after his 1989 launch of the Disabled Sailing Association of British Columbia (DSA BC).

"We had the idea for the Mobility Cup right at the beginning, around 1989 or 1990," he explained. "It was important to have people come together and celebrate their achievements, and to do that in the form of a race."

The first Mobility Cup, held in Vancouver in August 1991, was an immediate success. It has been growing ever since, traveling to different venues coast to coast across Canada, inspiring new adaptive sailing clubs in its wake.

"Sailing is total freedom," said Paralympic sailor Danny McCoy, a Mobility Cup competitor turned coach. "You leave your wheelchair at the dock. Most people that are disabled would like to compete on a level playing field. Well, there are no handicaps involved in sailing – you can sail against anyone, and the first guy across the line wins."

Participant Terry LeBlanc, 52, of Vancouver, quadriplegic as a result of a 1978 diving accident, explained his love of sailing: "There aren't that many opportunities to be competitive at my level of disability, unless you want to be a passive participant. You get back exhausted, but at the same time sailing totally refreshes you."

Longtime AQVA volunteer Paula Stone will be 2008 regatta chairperson. She stated that the organizers aim to host 40-50 sailors over two fleets, gold and silver, and that venues have already been lined up to provide accessible accommodation.



Windward: Mobility Cup 2006, in Vancouver, BC.

DSA – 2007 review

This year's DSA BC season was a huge success. Total sails were up 12 per cent to 719 – from 642 in 2006.

More than 200 sailors with disabilities took to the water in 2007, including 73 adults who sailed for the first time and 58 children. DSA sailors accomplished a number of impressive outcomes, including more than 100 solo sailings and 31 by people using mouth-operated Sip n' Puff technology to steer the boat and trim the sails.

DSA BC ran three regattas, Cascadia, New Beginnings and the Integration Regatta, and supported two more in BC, the Jericho Classic and Waves Regatta.

The annual Bowen Island trip was another success. Five sailors went on the day visit, which included lunch at Doc Morgan's Inn.

DSA BC also ran its traditional Race Club on Sundays, which involved four or five sailors competing.

A successful DSA Kids Day, on July 11, promoted sailing to the next generation. The children taking part found sailing to be inspiring and left feeling empowered.

Theory sessions

Once again DSA BC will be running theory sessions from January to May for sailors looking to improve their understanding of the sport.

“It’s all about getting a better understanding of the rules of sailing,” said DSA BC program administrator Eric Molendyk. “There’s a big social component to the sailing program, the people that want to go for lunch and an outing on the water, but we also do something for the people that want to learn to sail solo.”

While the DSA BC program involves people of all abilities and interest levels, he finds it satisfying to see people progressing to become competent solo sailors.

Last year’s classes were quite rigidly structured around the rules of racing, but the 2008 sessions will depend on what the participants want.

For information, call Eric: 604-688-6464 ext. 117.

Volunteer vacancies

As anyone that has sailed with DSA BC can attest, the programs cannot run without volunteers – in both land and sailing positions. People with any interest in being a part of the programs should contact Eric at 604-688-6464 ext. 117.

Congratulations

Four DSA BC sailors took part in Mobility Cup 2007, in Halifax: Linda McGowan and Dan LeBlanc (Silver Fleet); Terry LeBlanc and Wayne Phillips (Gold Fleet).



On the water: Just one of 719 sailings launched by DSA BC in 2007.

Looking to a new season: 2008 ahoy!

The Disabled Sailing Association of British Columbia (DSA BC) is looking ahead to its 2008 sailing season.

The coming season will build on that of 2007, without aiming to rewrite the formula. The familiar components will be there and the same attitude, to keep the program enjoyable for people with a wide range of sailing skills.

What the organization did so well last year was recruiting the right people. Head sailing instructor Daniel Maldoff energized the staff and volunteers, and Jericho office coordinator Anita Bernado did an outstanding job relating to clients while never shying away from hands-on work rigging and bringing in boats. Then there was the team of enthusiastic volunteers that kept things running every day.

According to DSA BC program administrator Eric Molendyk, having the crew running like clockwork means “you get it down so that as one boat is coming in, another is going out.”

DSA BC will aim to replicate such a set-up in 2008, according to Molendyk, posting for volunteers early – focusing on Jericho Sailing Centre and The Royal Vancouver Yacht Club, but including other clubs and marinas – with volunteer orientation sessions planned for the start of the season and every effort made to make them feel appreciated.

The 2008 sailing season, which will again run from late May to the end of August, will feature the much-loved regattas (Cascadia, the Jericho Classic, Waves, New Beginnings and the Integration Regatta) and the Bowen Island trip in August. There will be more Kids Days and Race Club days, says Molendyk.

Behind-the-scenes work in preparation for the new season has included buying a new safety boat, getting new slings for transfers and new cushions for each Martin 16. Maintenance of the fleet was also needed, with three boats needing repairs as a result of keel lift damage. Keel lift kill switches are being installed by marine engineer Mark Isaak to eliminate this problem.

In addition, the False Creek Yacht Club donated a new launch dolly in the memory of Ron Parker, past commodore of the club and longtime supporter of DSA BC.

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