

Regatta Report: Seattle Open March 17, 2007

WSC's brand new high school sailing team proved they are a force to be reckoned with at their debut regatta in Seattle March 10. Nineteen sailors, 10 parents, and two coaches made the trip from Portland to Sail Sand Point on Seattle's Lake Washington to compete in the second event of the 2007 NWISA season against 10 other teams from throughout the Northwest.

Many of the Portland area high schoolers were sailing in their first ever formal competition. Nevertheless, under rainy skies and moderate winds WSC teams were consistently showing up at the top of the fleet. Veterans Elliott Drake (Central Catholic), sailing with crew Risa Reichelt (St Marys), Hugh Runyan and Emma Clark (Grant), Casey Tane and Kyle Murphy (Lincoln), and Aegir Olson and Jesse Regen (Lincoln) all recorded first place finishes, arriving back on the dock to cheers and high fives.

Monica Mader and Liza Holtz (St Marys) were consistently in the hunt, as were Sonja Unrau (Cleveland) and John Mayer (Wilson), Mitchell Burke (Beaverton) and Jaratt Ater (Cleveland), Andy Newton and Sam Weiss (Grant), Andrew Cannard and Cody Reese (Catlin Gable), and Mike Mayer (Lincoln) sailing with various crews. In a field of nearly 90 high school sailors, most of whom have had much more experience, WSC teams always finished with at least several boats astern!

"Our boys and girls did exceptionally well," said coach George Yioulos, owner of West Coast Sailing. "We were all very proud of the way they conducted themselves and the way they raced. It was professional, fun and simply outstanding."

Yioulos and co-coach Bill Symes have been working with the high school team since mid-February, drilling them in basic sailing and racing skills three days a week after school at WSC. "The program is off to an extraordinarily good start," said Symes. "We've filled 28 of the 30 available slots, with more kids knocking on the door to get in. I think this is going to be huge for the future of small boat sailing in Portland."

Next up for the WSC high school sailing team is the Port Townsend Open March 24-25, followed by district qualifiers for the high school national sailing championships, April 21-22 at North Kitsap, WA. "We hope to go all the way," said Symes, "if not this year, then soon!"

The coaches want to express their sincere gratitude to all the parents who have been so helpful and supportive in making this program a success. Special thanks must go to Rose Burris, whose enormous energy and dedication turned this dream into a reality.

Bill Symes