

By Harry Lund - Jan. 19 1936

The Oshkosh Ice Yacht Club can trace its history back almost to the time of the Civil War. No definite records can be found at the moment, but the fact that class racing had been sponsored by the Club for some time is evidenced by the Club's BOWEN Trophy, which is dated 1875, to be competed for by yachts of the "first" class. Other trophies, variously dated from 1878 to 1905, to be raced for by various classes, indicate intense activity, and plenty of competition. Most of these trophies, and others since given to the Club, are engraved with the names of many winners, indicating that some of them, at least, were up for competition yearly. Apparently, nothing but absolutely impossible ice conditions ever prevented the annual racing for the Club's perpetual trophies, and many yachts were built for the express purpose of defending them, or attempting to wrest them from some one else. The Oshkosh Club has a dozen or more of these trophies, ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ all filled with tradition, and they are raced for every year in classes A, B, C, and E, ice and weather conditions permitting.

Long known as a hot-bed of ice-yacht racing, and referred to by many as the ice-yacht center of the world, Oshkosh has been the prime mover in the fostering of class racing for years. Realizing that better competition could be had through proper classification of yachts, the Winnebago Ice Yachting Association was formed in 1897, the member clubs being Neenah, Fond du Lac, and Oshkosh. Classes were divided as follows; First Class, 350 to 650 square feet of sail; second class, 225 to 350; third class, 175 to 225; fourth class, 175. The Association functioned until 1905, staging races annually at Neenah, Fond du Lac and Oshkosh, but with other clubs temporarily losing interest, the Oshkosh Club was left to its own activity of staging Club races from 1906 to

1910. About this time, an interested group of skippers, including John Buckstaff of Oshkosh, Frisco Wall of Menominee, Mich., and others, formed the Northwest Ice Yacht Association, composed of member-clubs in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Illinois. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Yachts were re-classified, and uniform racing rules adopted, ~~xxxx~~ which, with very few changes, govern the racing of the Association and its member-clubs today. That the Association is successful is evidenced by large ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ active membership, and by the large attendance at the annual regatta. The racing is conducted along the lines of the I.L.Y.A. regatta, with the exception that, in addition to the class racing, a free-for-all race is staged each day of the regatta to give the various classes the opportunity of comparing speeds. The classes are now divided as follows; Class A, 350 square feet of sail; Class B, 250 sq. ft.; Class C, 175 sq. ft.; Class E, 75 sq. ft. The latter class, commonly known as the Skeeter, introduced for the first time in 1931 by Roger Joys and the Meyer brothers of Milwaukee, has grown to be the largest class of all.

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As these lines are written, the annual N.W.I.Y.A. regatta has been announced to take place on January 26, 27, and 28, with the Skeeter Ice Yacht Club, of Lake Geneva acting as host. Yachts from most of the member-clubs will compete, and the series this year promises to be one of the best. The following Clubs have announced their intention of sending contenders to the Regatta; Four Lakes Ice Yacht Club, Madison, Wis., Fox Lake Ice Yacht Club, Fox Lake, Illinois., Neenah Ice Yacht Club, Neenah, Wis., Oconomowoc Ice Yacht Club, Oshkosh Ice Yacht Club, Pewaukee Ice Yacht Club. The Skeeter Ice Yacht Club, as host, will also compete in the series, and others who may send boats are, Menominee Ice Yacht Club, Battle Creek Ice Yacht Club, Kalamazoo Ice Yacht Club, and the Lake St. Clair Ice

Yacht Club, of Detroit - all of the latter being from Michigan.

The Association's Championship Trophies will again be at stake, and most of the present holders will be on hand to defend them. In class A, last year's champion, BLUEBILL II, owned by John Buckstaff and sailed by Tom Anger of the Oshkosh Club, will not be ready for this year's series. In the ~~XXXXXXX~~ final race last year, BLUEBILL II cracked up in a spin, but had accumulated enough points to win the Championship. She has been rebuilt, but as she is as yet untried, she will not be taken to Lake Geneva. Her skipper and crew, Tom Anger and Jim Wells of Oshkosh, will ~~be~~ sail Jim Kimberly's PHANTOM IV, of the Neenah Club. Also racing in the A class will be FRITZ, of Madison; DORLA, of Pewaukee; Chip Lenz' SNOWSHOES, of Oshkosh; and Frank Meyer's ZERO HOUR, of Pewaukee. Others will no doubt enter before the races start, and the competition in the class should be closer than ever.

In class B, 'Schmalz Friedrich of the Oshkosh Club, will be on hand with Joe Dichtl's DONNIE D, to defend the Championship he won last year against Clarence Thieles EVA. ~~XXX~~ Racing between these two boats was very close last year, and with the possibility of another yacht or two entering the class this year, almost anything might happen.

The Neenah C class entry, Jim Kimberly's undefeated FRISKY PHANTOM, will defend her Championship against re-vamped Oshkosh C boats - the Lampert-Stroschine 6-time champion CRAZY-CRAFT, and Joe Meyer's DUCHESS. FRISKY PHANTOM, with Ray Schroeder of Oshkosh at the tiller, won last year's series in three straight races, but with new pivoting, streamlined masts like that on FRISKY PHANTOM, and other ~~improvements~~ to the boats, the two Oshkosh entries are determined that it isn't going to be so easy this year.

Class E, which last year found the three top boats separated by only a few points, promises to be a battle royal this year. Fred

Tomczyk, who found himself on top of the heap last year, will have his hands full with such skippers as Ted Mead (2nd place last year), Don Campbell (3rd place last year), Harry Nye, Mel Jones, Stan Johnson, Jack Clifford, and many others giving him something to think about. Reports indicate a record entry for the Class, with boats from nearly all member-clubs competing. The Neenah Club, which entered for the first time last year, will ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ have Jim Kimberly sailing his FLYING PHANTOM, and Jack Kimberly's SEAGULL, sailed by Strep Kuehl of Oshkosh, in the regatta this year.

The Free-for-all series, which is usually anybody's race until five races are sailed but was won last year by Jim Kimberly's C class Champion, FRISKY PHANTOM, in three straight, is quite certain to be a dinger this year with boats like the FRITZ, DORIA, and other large yachts competing. Much depends on the condition of the ice, because FRISKY PHANTOM won in soft going, and the big boats do better on hard ice. CRAZY CRAFT won the Free-for-all in snowy going at Madison in 1938, defeating the FRITZ, but the outcome might have been different had the ice and wind been a bit harder. Commodore Lampert, Vice-Commodore Frank Meyers, Secretary Lyman Dwight, and ~~every~~^{ALL} members of the Association are praying for good, smooth ice, and ~~no~~ no snow, so that ~~the~~^{THE} question of superior speed may be in some measure settled, with no arguments and alibis about wrong and right conditions from anyone.