



WELCOME BACK ONE-DESIGN!

Racing in Cowichan Bay's Martin 242 Canadian Championships

The Martin 242 is an enduring BC born one-design keelboat with a loyal local following, plus this little speedster has drawn enough fans from elsewhere to see additional fleets formed in California, Washington and even Japan. This Labour Day weekend saw the return of 242 class racing, with the Canadian Championships being contested among 16 teams at Cowichan Bay on Vancouver Island. Here's my report from on board Team *Crantini*.

MYSELF, I'VE BEEN a fan of Martin racing since the early days, having competed in at least a dozen North Americans, three Canadians (I think) and oh my gosh, too many other 242 divisions to remember, at regattas like THRASH, SIN, Cow Bay, Maple Bay and Thermopylae. I proudly call myself a veteran of 242 racing. What makes this boat so appealing is its simplicity; it has a light displacement and an easy-to-tune rig with three simple sails (a number of different sailmakers currently make very competitive sails) that are easy to set up. The layout of the Martin is also extremely

ergonomic, while providing all the tweaks and adjustments necessary for a crew of four to get the most out of this spirited—but not intimidating—vessel. The racing is always tight, and crews are definitely rewarded for paying attention to the smallest details of sail and boat trim. What's not to love!

No successful regatta is ever possible without the efforts of event organizers and volunteers and once again the 242 fleet is blessed with many. I'd like to mention a few, beginning with class stalwarts Alex and Sue Foley, who donated the use of their powerboat *Gatsby* for the Canadians, not

to mention their time, as always. Perhaps the most difficult job, and dare I say, occasionally the job that we sailors could be more appreciative of, is that of the race officer. Jenn Ross did a great job coordinating her teams, which include the mark setters, timers, recorders, jurors and any number of other support jobs. So, thank-you to Jenn and everyone who gave their time so generously. It is always much appreciated. Now on to what we came for: the racing, yeah!

FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE on *Crantini*, we were super excited to be racing in a fleet this size again. The boat was in great shape with some new sails that had been sitting rolled up at the UK Sails loft since June of 2020, plus a shiny new paint job and refurbish and some bottom sanding. Lucky number 11 had never looked so good and we were ready to jump back into the fray. My crew for the Canadians included Suze Cumming, a fantastic sailor, originally from Toronto; Lou Hamel, a converted cruising sailor, who lives aboard a boat and began racing on the Martin four years ago; and newcomer Carl Blau, racing in his very first one-design regatta. We were somewhat short on practice heading into the regatta, but we were still feeling very keen and optimistic about coming together and competing well. So, onward to race one.


COW BAY IS known for a consistent breeze nicknamed the Doctor. When the Doctor is in, the thermal-generated breeze shows up around 11:00 and typically builds to between 12 or 15 knots during the day. Unfortunately, the Doctor must have had too many other things going on and looked to be passing on the Canadians this weekend. There was still, however, a very raceable five to seven-knot carpet laying down from the southwest as the start time approached.

There's nothing quite like the first start lineup in any regatta. The butterflies of not really knowing if we'll be fast or slow. Do I even remember how to get a good start? There's the five-

minute signal, this is it everyone, now don't forget to breathe! As we jostle in the final minute, it looks like the fleet has been pretty well behaved, spread out from committee boat to pin with very few raised voices, all indications of a nicely set line. START! We


find ourselves two thirds down with a decent gap to leeward, now speed, speed, speed.

A minute into the race and we're hanging in well, managing to gap off the leeward pack, led by *No Worries* but unable to cross *M&M* on our ▶



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weather hip. One by one, the fleet tacked onto port headed for the Cherry Point expressway... Wait, what? Ha! Those who've sailed at Cow Bay over the years will know that I'm referring to the current runs up the west shore, which may flow at half a knot or more. In my own experiences, it's a tricky balance between hooking into that current with a clear lane, while staying in the best pressure and then not missing one of the swinging left or right shifts that pepper the race-course. We've got a lane, "tacking." Our speed seems good and we're in the game on the long port tack into Cherry Point. This is feeling like a favourite old movie, with a slightly changing plotline. Crossing the first starboard tacker, but maybe not the next two. We dip them and then we're crossing the next group, but just.

The goal is to get to the right of the

fleet, hit the shore somewhere around the marina breakwater tanks and maybe get a small righty. This time we're beaten to the punch by *Scarlett* and a couple more... We better lead them back out. "Ready about... tacking." Now how are those left side boats doing? Well, no surprise there's Bob on *No Worries* crossing us all, how 'bout that. Progressing up the beat, we're happy to be in touch with the lead group, most playing inshore and a small faction heading to the left. The breeze looked a bit stronger offshore, and we opted to dig into that pressure, which included a bonus left shift in the final 20 lengths to the mark. "How we lookin'? Bob and Spooner tacked off the shore yet?" "Yup, here they come, and it looks like they may have overstood a bit, we've closed up for sure... Can we tack inside?" "Ready? Tacking,"

We're laying, but being rolled. We'll make it though. "Pole up!" The three of us, *Scarlett*, *No Worries* and *Cran-tini*, round overlapped, with *Blackadder* and *Swift* only a few boat lengths back. How good is this!

THE 242 IS a very responsive and sensitive boat downwind, small changes to fore and aft trim and apparent wind angle can make a big difference. As the lead group settled in, we did our best to stake our claim for clear air and stay in the better pressure. Looking back, it was a sea of colours. There's Betsy with her purple, black, green and white chute, Tara sporting pink as always, *Too Wicked* solid blue, with reds, yellows, black, grey and lime filling in the palette. Now that's a sight I've missed. A momentary indulgence then back to the race, looking for some sort of an



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edge; gain a foot, lose two, gain three back. There's nothing in this, but Fraser and the gang on *Swift* have drawn even, halfway down the run; four of us bow. In what would become a re-occurring theme throughout the Canadians, *Swift* inched ahead, finding a small but significant extra gear on the run. We tried to match, weight forward, weight aft, pole forward, pole aft, a little heel, a little flatter, more curl, pole tip down. We were working hard and gaining on the fleet but *Swift* still squirted ahead. Once in the lead they clamped down on us hard for the final beat to the finish. A few too many tacks trying to break cover and our secure second was being challenged by *Blackadder*. In fact, they crossed us maybe 10 boat lengths from the line. We managed to foot through again though, on their slightly quick slam dunk cover, work-

ing through to a lee bow before the starboard lay line to the finish came up. *Swift* won comfortably, we hung on for second, *Blackadder* third, *No Worries* fourth and *Scarlett* fifth. It was close, tight one-design racing at its best, with places changing every leg from start to finish. What a blast!

RACE ONE WAS something of a foreshadowing of the racing yet to come during the Canadians, as each and every race was a hard-fought tussle, much of the fleet getting into the fray at one time or another. Seven different boats finished in the top three of a race. In the end there was no denying *Swift*, with Fraser, Alex, Aidan and Drew winning four of five races and a well-deserved Canadian Championship. We were very happy with our second-place finish as we managed to take one bullet and counted

seconds otherwise. Long-time friend and dare I say sailing rival, Bob and the *No Worries* crew sailed with characteristic consistency to fill the final podium spot.

IT WAS SO great to get the Martin fleet out again. With so much fantastic racing over the years, it looks like the fleet will remain strong and active for many years to come. "Martin sailors always win the party," and it's a class for everyone, any age. The youngest competitor in the regatta was seen climbing a mast between races to straighten a windex on day two. Special thanks to the two teams from Orcas Island who made the trip north to compete. Good sailing everyone and welcome back one-design!

Full results and information can be found at m242fleetone.org. 

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