

SHACKLES & CRINGLESS

SUMMER/FALL 2024



# NOTE FROM THE COMMODORE

Alive and very well! That's what comes to mind when I think what to write about in our Canadian Albacore world. A bounce back from Covid is not the measurement point anymore, that happened last year. The barometer for me is racing. Time to brag. The numbers are up! Be it Friday night races, our recent Canadian Champs, Ontario Champs, etc. The last FNR had 42 participants! I believe that's the first time it's jumped over 40 boats in years. Whenever I tell sailors from other classes our participation numbers their jaws drop.

Speaking of Canadian Championships, we had 34 boats which included 4 from the US and one a GBR sailor. RCYC, who hosted the event, thought it was international enough to award the Queen's Trophy. This ornate silver beauty is randomly awarded every few years, and this year because they were so jacked about our fleet. Very cool indeed. RCYC ran a great regatta with competitors spoiled by three social events on the classic RCYC front lawn. What's very exciting is they want to reintroduce the Albacores to their dinghy docks. RCYC was the backbone of the class back in the 60's, 70's and 80's. Discussions are underway to make that happen.

Our Ontario Champs saw 20 boats travel to cottage country. Peterborough Sailing Club on Clear Lake did an awesome job. It was early season in June and we had the lake to ourselves. I love travel regattas where you can adventure to a new lakes and countryside. A bit further down the highway, the Admiral of the East, Henry Pedro, hosted a mix of US and Canadian boats at the East Coast Canadian's in Shelburne, NS. Community Clubs and OHCC ran regattas as well. It's a packed schedule which runs into October.

Speaking with a J-Town member, memberships were booked out for 2024. Lessons are booked out. I don't recall heading out for a race and not seeing Albacores teaching new blood. My hats off to the community clubs for doing an amazing job of turning people onto sailing, some of which join our fleet.

TO thinks they are the centre of the universe, but Albacore fleets are alive and well elsewhere: Port Sydney YC, Peterborough SC, West Hawk LSC, Shelburne HYC, Nepean SC, Kanata SC, Hamilton Bay SC and The Gatineau River YC.

Apart from running the Canadian's and Ontario's, the CAA also put on a couple excellent race clinics. Thank you, Alan Measor and Ralph Glass! We offered a great discount on Dave Dellenbaugh webinars, measured people's sails, managed the class website, play a role in the IAA, class membership, class treasury, Shackles etc. I'm blessed to work with fellow board members who care and do their part. THANKS! A special shout out to retiring board member Michael Williamson managing IT for CAA over the past 10 years. Another shout to our beloved Ken Yamazaki. In addition to being CAA's chief measurer, Ken took on the role of IAA's World Chief of Specifications.

The CAA wishes to acknowledge, now for the second year in a row, a very generous donation from Mike Crombie, a class member from OHCC. THANKS!

Almost forgot to update the Rondar project. CAA is co-investor with Rondar Raceboats UK on a new Albacore. The initial hull is currently being glued together. There's more of an update in the newsletter.

As I write this, What's App is beeping with the enthusiasm from sailors planning to attend the US Nationals at Rockhall, Maryland. Got to love it!

Sail on sailors!  
Raines Kobay

# THE ONTARIO'S 2024

BY STEPHANIE MAH

The 2024 Albacore Ontario Championships took place on June 15 and 16 and were hosted by the charming Peterborough Sailing Club on the inaccurately named Clear Lake (for reasons that will soon be clear).

It was obvious from the start that PSC's members had put a lot of planning, work, and care into this regatta, as any possible parking chaos was immediately contained by the young and efficient walkie talkie wielding Spencer. He moved the visiting cars and trailers around the club like he was conducting a symphony, and better luck next year to Spencer's dad who was denied his much sought after promotion to assistant supervisor. The club hosted a campfire on Friday, provided a very generous breakfast before racing started Saturday, and laid out a ton of snacks after racing was done. The big dinner was at the picturesque Burleigh Falls Inn where competitors with polished "paper, rock, scissors" skills made off with some nice prizes, and an admission that the start sequence was a new experience earned one skipper a brand new PFD.

And now to the boring stuff: the racing. The conditions on the first day were very light, very patchy, and very shifty, which was to be expected on a small lake. What was a bit of a surprise was how private the wind was. Sailing has been called high-speed chess, but on Clear Lake, it felt more like playing snakes and ladders...sometimes on your own board. It was mind blowing to see two boats going upwind on the exact same path, but on opposite tacks, or to watch a competitor who was less than two boat lengths away from you suddenly sail off 10 degrees higher and two knots faster. The feeling of the day was captured by a certain Canadian Albacore Association Race Chair who was heard yelling "what is going on here?!?" in a boat that had come to a screeching halt while those right around her sailed on by. The race committee miraculously pulled off three races, and unsurprisingly there were some inconsistent results, although JJ and Tracy Hall found some success on the right side of the course. Day 2 opened with cloudy skies and breeze in the 6-8 knot range from the opposite direction of the day before. The race committee pulled off five great races, but the shifts, puffs, and wind sinkholes meant every race was tight and places traded right up to the finish. While Barney Harris and Ernest Ayukawa managed to snag the big trophy, it was noteworthy that Barney had a 14th in race 7. I think they were still in the process of inventing the wheel the last time he saw a double digit finish.

Congratulations to all who made the trip to Peterborough to race in some challenging conditions, and a huge thanks to PSC's volunteers, the Race Committee, Steph Stalinski, Pam and Richard Spirk, and Spencer.

The photos are [here](#).

The results are [here](#).



Photo credit Rob Thomas



# The Canadians 2024: Recap by Narges Fazel

Sailing is new to me. I started just over 2 years ago, and like countless others, have developed a passion for the sport. It is my hope that by sharing some of the ways sailing has intimidated yet rewarded me, I can contribute towards encouraging the participation of others who share similar sentiments.

My decision to take up sailing was rooted in a few factors. First, I was eager to add adventure to my life in lieu of the traveling I once did. I missed thinking on my feet, surprising myself with my problem-solving skills, and enriching my life through building friendships with people around our world. Second, I am afraid of the water (near death capsized at sea as a child). But, I had learned in my 20's that if I equip myself with knowledge and skills, I am capable of facing my fears; more so, it is actually indescribably rewarding to do so. Third, it felt like a shame to live so close to Toronto's beautiful waterfront, yet not engage with our natural environment in a more meaningful way. Once I started sailing, I practiced weaving in the new ways I was now interacting with this land, air, and water in my land acknowledgements to express my honour and respect to the Indigenous Peoples, Treaties, and Territories of this area.

These factors also explain my decision to participate in the 2024 Canadians. The adventure-seeking, fear-facing, people-loving parts of me felt ready (sort of) to sail a multi-day regatta. Yet, the morning of, I found myself questioning my decision. Three days out on Lake Ontario in an albacore? What was I thinking? How did I convince myself this was a good idea? (Spoiler alert: it was a fabulous decision!)

Enter the 2024 Canadians. It's Friday August 30, 2024 08:30 am, and there's a serious bustle on Regatta Road. This year, the Albacore Canadian National Championship was hosted by the Royal Canadian Yacht Club (RCYC) on Lake Ontario. Before any racing had started, a group chat initiated by RCYC was sharing the sailing instructions (SI's) and photographs of the multiple trophies up for grabs. Excitement and competition were flowing over our foils even before Friday morning. Some sailors were busy sanding and buffing their boats right up until Thursday evening. Others had traveled long distances across Ontario and the United States to join the competitive contingent of albacore sailors fortunately situated near the site of the 2024 Canadians. My helm, Paul Gerlich, had sailed his keelboat across Lake Ontario with his family to participate in the Canadians. Come Friday morning, there we all were, beaming, nervous, excited, and ready to compete.

The first day saw moderate winds. The race area was beyond the channel, south of the Toronto Islands and west of the most western point of Tommy Thompson Park. I sighed relief when our hosts at RCYC announced a slight delay to the start of the first race, as they resituated the upwind mark to the most optimal position. It took one race to realize the extraordinary commitment and leadership RCYC was bringing to the 2024 Canadians. Their unwavering professionalism and dedication towards our fleet and this competition were unmistakable throughout all three days. Melissa, Hannah, Roger, John, Colin, and everyone else at RCYC, thank you for creating a most memorable 2024 Albacore Canadian Championship for us!

We sailed past the committee boat to see the course: LA2. LA what? I had competed in a few regattas in the Outer Harbour (OH), but these courses were new to me. Although I had reviewed the SIs and had tried to visualize sailing a 'Hollywood finish,' I had forgotten the patterns. Fortunately for me, my helm Paul knew exactly how to sail the course. Unfortunately for us, our tiller extension snapped off on the first leg of the first race. Unbeknownst to my helm, I love these moments. They require creativity, positivity, growth mindsets, and typically result in laughter, maybe some cursing, and bonding. It is these precisely these kinds of experiences that fill our lives with lasting memories. Paul worked hard to tie the extension through some extra line he had wisely packed, but it kept loosening. Back to fortunately for us: a little later on, the kindness of Stephanie Stalinski and Ralph Glass saw some tape flying into our boat—thank you.

The first day ended with Paul Clifford and Mia Brandt leading the fleet after four races. They earned one bullet, two second place finishes, and one fourth place finish. In packs, we found our way to the RCYC tender to the Toronto islands, where we were treated to cold beers and a delicious dinner while we debriefed about the day. Back on land, I took the opportunity to ask Paul Clifford the reasons he chose to go left (only a few boats did). One reason, he explained, was less chop. I quickly filed that in my memory, hopeful for a day that I can put that knowledge to good use.

The second day started with pancakes at OHCC, hosted by Dave Harris with a big assist from Albert Chau, who together filled the energy reserves of hungry sailors. The winds were lower and ranged from about 4 to 6 knots. The course stayed windward/leeward with an offset and Hollywood finish. The atmosphere was different the second day. Friends were enjoying overdue reunions on the water, sharing jokes between races, and sneaking in greetings whenever possible. The unforgettable father-son duo, Adam Nicholson and Cole, continued to make sailing look effortless and joyful—after all, Cole may have taken a nap in the bow at some point. It was also on the second day that I realized just how skilled this fleet was. There were races where it felt like we were doing well; yet, and though we came close, we could not squeeze in a top 10 finish. The fleet stayed close in all the races. To put it mildly, there was serious competition. I felt both intimidated and inspired.

After three races, Raines Koby and Stephanie Mah were now in the lead. They earned one bullet and two second place finishes. We retreated once more to the comfort of our hosts, RCYC. On Saturday, we enjoyed a delicious steak dinner on their front lawn, while taking in a perfect view of the sunset over the Toronto skyline and the energy of a live band. Multiple hints were dropped that RCYC was keen to host the Internationals in Toronto in 2029.

On the third and last day of the regatta, the winds picked up, a motivating factor for many. We were hiking on the way to the course, and the water felt choppier. When I first started sailing, I thought that I would never leave the safety of the OH. I occasionally ventured into the Inner Harbour, but almost always nervously. Here I was, two years after I learned words like port and starboard, sailing farther away on Lake Ontario than I ever thought I would, in a dinghy, and oh, in swells. These were rollers; they were so big that I can only describe them as swells. The conditions elevated my heartbeat. I was growing nervous, and my helm could tell. I thought to myself, "if we capsize, will I be able to get back into the boat, without injury?"

I trusted my helm, and decided I would try my best. Now, looking back, having sailed in those conditions has made wavier days in the OH less scary and more manageable. The course was T2 (triangle, 6 legs with a finish at the boat). There were times when it felt like the wind was dropping to 10 or 11 knots; but by the time each race started, the winds would pick back up. This was a challenging day on the water. It was the day I grew the most.

An albacore is a kind of lab experiment for teamwork. Two people, in close quarters, typically too hot or too cold, maybe wet, presumably slouched and undeniably uncomfortable, burning under the sun despite a thick and uneven layer of sunscreen, and definitely dehydrating. Now, put all of that aside and focus instead on trimming your sails perfectly, at every point of sail. Oh, and do that and everything else in perfect synchronicity with your teammate. If something your teammate is doing does not perfectly align (okay, almost perfectly) with what you are doing, it can alter your speed, your point of sail, the outcome of your maneuvers, and you may lose a boat length—gasp, who ever wants that? Whether it's a roll tack, planing, a quick gybe, flying the jib leech telltales, hiking out or leaning leeward—maybe an arm out or a hip in, whatever it takes to balance the boat—it all has to be done in sync.

Sail harmony is beautiful when it happens, so beautiful that it can feel like a kind of miracle when it works. It feels like the fifth movement of your favourite symphony, the one that gives you goosebumps. The questions you asked and all the ways you struggled in the earlier movements bring you to the miracle of sail harmony. It's not just that you adjusted the sails just right, or that you stayed in the wind just right, or that you maintained just the right heel. It's that you did that together. The Canadians was a three-day unforgettable journey of searching for sail harmony.

Sailing requires clear communication, the humility to recognize your partner is not to blame for everything, perseverance, and forgiveness (for yourself and your teammate). From having sailed with people who have unknowingly acted as role models to me, I have learned the value of these soft skills in sailing, and that some of the best sailors remain positive, calm, focused, and solution-oriented.

There will always be something you can do better. When you are new, the list is long. We can all strive for that. But, make sure to relish in everything you did really well too.

If you have ever been near me after a race, you have probably heard me say, “nailed it.” But, you may not know that that has multiple meanings. It is a victorious vocal commendation to my partner and I for our successes. It is also an admission of my blunders. And finally, it is a reminder that I did my best, and that I will try, try again. At the end of the Canadians, I felt so fortunate for the opportunity to have participated in this regatta, with this fleet, and for all the ways I grew that all I really wanted to say was, “sailed it.”

Speaking of successes, here are your champions for the 2024 Albacore Canadians: finishing in third place were George Carter and Robbin Coedy, who helmed some races. Paul Clifford and Mia Brandt took a second place finish. In first place, taking home four trophies, were Raines Koby and Stephanie Mah. The winners of the Challenger Fleet were Tristan Laing and Margaret Cyrzan, who also helmed some of the races. In addition to those on the podium, I sincerely hope that everyone who competed in this regatta is congratulating themselves.

I end with a note of gratitude for this community. To all the sailors who take the time to share their knowledge, who take us out to build our skills, who help us push our limits, who show us the importance of soft skills, and who encourage and facilitate our participation, thank you. Your impact is greater than you know.