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The photo of Sonar fleet winners (left to right) Tim Angle, Bill Donahue and Rick Doerr is editorial free with use of the event title: 2008 Clagett Regatta and photo credit to Amory Ross/ amoryross.com. It is also available in high resolution on request.

2008 Clagett Regatta

Winners and Paralympians Celebrate Before Heading to China

NEWPORT, R.I. (August 21, 2008) – The five American and six Canadian sailors who will represent their nations in the three sailing events of the 2008 Paralympic Games wrapped up their final day of racing for the 2008 C. Thomas Clagett Jr. Memorial Regatta being run from Sail Newport, Rhode Island's Public Sailing Center. Their participation in "The Clagett" was the final step in preparing for the competition in China and illustrated perfectly the regatta's mission of developing and building the competitive skills of sailors with disabilities. It was an emotional finale for all the competitors and event organizers -- their collective support was vocalized in urging the Paralympic teams to make the medal podium in Qingdao.

The final races of the regatta took place after the exit of a very light breeze which caused several races to be abandoned and also postponed racing for about an hour. The arrival of the sea breeze, which built to eight knots, allowed the final races of the regatta to take place.

The USA's 2008 Paralympic representatives in the Sonar class resumed their winning ways after yesterday's collision with a submerged concrete slab damaged their boat and put them off the pace for a day. Defending champions, Rick Doerr (Clifton, N.J.), Tim Angle (Somerville, Mass.) and Bill Donohue (Brick, N.J.), were tied on points with Canada's Paralympic team, helmed by Ken Kelly with crew Don Terlson and Mark Shaw (all Victoria, B.C.). The Canadians came into the final day leading the overall standings and then opened with a win in the first race. However, they could not hold off the American's who won the final two races of the regatta to keep the two teams tied on points at 15 apiece. The tie-breaker favored the American team who had won six of the 11 races sailed, to the five won by the Canadians. "We were in the mix every day," said Jim Donahue (Danvers, Mass.) who crewed for Sarah Everhart Skeels (Tiverton, R.I.) and Will Maney (Bristol, R.I.) to finish third overall. "There is no shame getting beat by the top two teams in North America."

In the SKUD-18s Scott Whitman (Brick, N.J.) and Julia Dorsett (West Chester, Penn.) closed out the regatta as they began it, by winning the last two races of the series. They led the fleet for the first two days of racing and finished first overall with 15 points, five points ahead of the team that will represent Canada at the Paralympic Games. John McRoberts and Stacie Louttit (both Victoria, B.C.) were just two points behind Whitman and Dorsett, the defending champions, as the final day of racing got underway. They finished 3-2-2 today for 20 points overall. Maureen McKinnon-Tucker (Marblehead, Mass.) – the USA's Paralympic crew in the class – racing with her husband Dan Tucker who is substituting for skipper Nick Scandone (Fountain Valley, Calif.), won the first race and remained third overall, four points behind the Canadians. The Tuckers, along with their daughter, Dana, will head to China in about a week. When asked what she was most looking forward to seeing in China, eight-year-old Dana replied without hesitation "my mom win."

Scandone, who had remained in California to conserve his strength for China, participated in the awards via mobile phone as the first Nick Scandone Spirit Award -- recognizing the dedication and perseverance of a competitor -- was presented. "I'm honored to be a person that you'd name a trophy after," said Scandone before his own crew, McKinnon-Tucker, was named the first recipient. McKinnon-Tucker quoted a Scandone mantra "just because you become disabled doesn't mean you can't reach your goals" as she accepted the trophy.

Two races were sailed in the 2.4 Metre class to wrap up that competition with Paul Tingley (Halifax, Nova Scotia), Canada's Paralympic representative, finishing 2-1 to win the class with 14 points. The USA's

Paralympic representative, John Ruf (Pewaukee, Wisc.), posted finishes of 1-3 today to finish second overall, five points back. "This is a great chance to come to a premier event because there aren't that many for disabled sailors," said Ruf about competing in The Clagett. Charles Rosenfield (Woodstock, Conn.), was third with 24 points, followed by Tammy Vermette (Milford, Conn.) and Nick Bryan Brown (Mattapoisett, Mass.) with, respectively, 43 and 44 points.

About the C. Thomas Clagett Jr. Memorial Regatta – With a stated mission of providing sailors with disabilities the opportunity to hone their competitive skills, "The Clagett" incorporates a one-day clinic and follows with on-the-water coaching with a goal of preparing sailors for future success. Hosted by Sail Newport, Rhode Island's Public Sailing Center, since its inception in 2003, the event has grown from offering racing in Sonars (2003-2004), to include 2.4 Metres (2005), and Skud-18s (2006) – all classes selected for the 2008 Paralympic Games. In 2008 the addition of J/22s broadened the field of participants to include sailors who are sight-impaired. Serving as the Blind Sailing National Championship, the event attracted six teams of four – two visually impaired sailors who race with two sighted guides.

The C. Thomas Clagett Jr. Memorial Regatta honors the late Tom Clagett (1916-2001), a U.S. Navy World War II veteran who learned to sail on the Chesapeake Bay. As a youngster he suffered temporary paralysis as the result of a bout of meningitis; it was an experience that left him with a deep respect for the accomplishments of people with disabilities, especially athletes.

Complete results and background on the event is available online at www.ussailing.net/Clagett/

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