



LONG BEACH YACHT CLUB

## Talented Young Skippers Lead Butler Cup

*From a diverse field of competitors, two young men had a great day on the water.*

LONG BEACH, Calif., March 23, 2019 – An eclectic and international mix of skippers met off the Belmont Pier today for the first afternoon of Long Beach Yacht Club's double round-robin Butler Cup.

Of the eight skippers sailing Catalina 37 clones in this Matching Racing Championship two are women, two are not old enough to have a beer with their crew after sailing, one is a Congressional and Ficker Cup veteran whose participation made it an international event, and another helmed a boatload of top-notch juniors. Two previously faced off against each other in November 2017 when three-time Butler Cup winner Chris Nesbitt edged ahead of LBYC's Staff Commodore Dave Hood after the two day battle and one came in from the cold.

And today's results were as diverse as the competitors; not as predictable as some might assume.

Although the less experienced competitors found themselves facing more seasoned sailors in the first matches of the day, the newcomers were not giving up without a fight and the top-rated sailors, three already registered for next weekend's Ficker Cup, did not consider today's seven races just a warm up. They sailed to win. Some were more successful than others.

At the end of the day it was 17-year-old Jeffrey Petersen of Balboa Yacht Club who topped the leader board with seven points. Harry Price of Down Under Racing of Australia also ended the day with 7 points, but since his singular loss was to Peterson, the local team took top honors.

Petersen gave all the credit for today's seven wins to his crew because of whom he said, "Made the boat go around the track at blistering speeds." That crew included his Dad, Forest Petersen and three sailors who will be crew for Congressional Cup teams in a couple of weeks.

His first race, against Hood, was his only loss. "We slipped up with Hood, so we put the hammer down and improved all day, sailing really clean races," Petersen said.

The young skipper started match racing four years ago and crewed for fellow BYC member David Wood. He's been the youngest skipper at multiple events all over the world, and was enjoying the camaraderie with fellow sailors who have watched him grow into the sport.

Price, 23, sailed with a six-man crew, two from Perth and three from Auckland, New Zealand, is a former Congressional Cup racer and hopes to be again this trip.

"We're always trying to build our skill level," Price said. And in match racing, sometimes that skill is in strategy. In the fast race against Peterson, he tried to luff the younger skipper, and it

didn't work. Price fell off on the wrong tack, got behind, infringing upon the other boat which resulted in a penalty.

The race that started like a high-speed synchronized sailing exhibition came to the near a stop, and despite an expertly maneuvered penalty turn, Peterson took the lead and never looked back.

"This is first-rate match racing," said Commodore Camille Daniels.

"The Butler Cup has a remarkable field of skippers this year," she said. There may be a couple of upstart young men in addition to event veterans, but don't count out the women. "The two women skippers, Summer Green and Marilyn Cassedy, are experienced in the Catalina 37s having competed many times in the Linda Elias Women's Memorial One Design regatta."

Thanks to this diverse field, race officials are petitioning match racing authorities to upgrade the event from a Grade 4 to a Grade 3 level in consideration of the high degree of competition, and those who traveled significant distances. The upgrade will increase points each skipper earns toward their international rankings.

Green, of SDYC, started the day looking to qualify for the California Dream' in series and to have a happy crew at the end of the day. She has run the club's match racing program for the last 10 years, but is "newish" to the driving part. This event is the very first race for four of her crew members.

"If we've learned; are better at the end of the day than we were this morning, and even better tomorrow, we're successful, Green said.

This is the second Butler Cup for eighteen-year-old David Wood, who sails for Balboa Yacht Club. The young man, who has been match racing for 3 years now, said the level of competition is much higher this year. The oldest member of Wood's crew is 19, the youngest is 14, but all he said are excellent sailors in their own right. Together, their greatest strength is their ability to make the boat go fast. "We've got great boat speed," he said. To meet his goal of making the final four, the plan is to take it one race at a time.

Hood, who finished in fourth place today was excited after his Friday afternoon practice and looking forward to meeting the great line-up of competitors on the water, anticipated a lot of exciting match racing.

He was right.

The series and the trophy is a tribute to Catalina Yachts founder Frank Butler who designed, built and donated the 11 Catalina 37s to a Long Beach Sailing Foundation for the purpose of developing outstanding ISAF match racing in Southern California. The event is now a sanctioned World Sailing Match Race and helps grow the sport while enabling skippers to win points and move on to higher grade regattas, like the 2020 California Dreamin' Series, the Ficker Cup and the prestigious Congressional Cup.

## Day one Standings

Competitor	Points
Jeffrey Petersen	7
Harry Price	7
Chris Poole	6
Dave Hood	5
Chris Nesbitt	3
David Wood	2
Marilyn Cassedy	2
Summer Greene	0

Racing Continues tomorrow at noon, and can be viewed for free at the end of the Belmont Pier.