Newport Harbor Yacht Club defend title in Global Team Racing Regatta 2023

Saturday 23rd September saw the final 12 races of the second round robin completed to establish the final places in the Semi-finals, Queen Mary Reservoir delivered just perfect team racing conditions as the sun glistened on the tiny waves driven by the six to ten knot westerly wind.

Everyone was out to fight for every win but with slightly increased breeze over the first two days, boat handling became more of a key to success. Team Japan and Bayerischer YC both took early wins but were then both beaten by Newport Harbor YC and hosts Royal Thames YC. The final races continued with no one team able to assert absolute dominance. As lunchtime rolled around and the final round robin races concluded, the semi-finalists were decided. Topping the group were the Royal Thames YC, with just two losses from their sixteen races. Three American teams rounded out the knockout stage with Eastern YC finishing in fourth, and friendly rivals New York YC and Newport Harbor YC tied for second place.

In the first Semi-final, Eastern YC appeared to find an extra gear as they took a 2-0 win over the Royal Thames YC, it looked like it might go all square in the last race with the RTYC having EYC locked out on the first beat but some smart sailing flipped it around and EYC took a lead they would never relinquish.

The second second semi-final was equally hard but great crew work by NHYC saw them claim their place in the finals 2-0.

On the charge from their win over the RTYC, Eastern YC took the first win of the first to two wins final against Newport Harbor YC. Unfazed, the NHYC fought back hard in the second race to level the series and set up a winner takes all final race.

As the finalists were preparing for their last race, the petit-final to decide third place was concluding with the Royal Thames YC taking third place ahead of New York Yacht Club.

With pressure on both teams for the final race, Newport Harbor YC kept their cool to control the race throughout taking the race with a 1,2 win and with it, claim the title of Global Team Racing Regatta champions for the second time running, and the only club to have won the event twice.

Speaking after their win, Kayla LaDow from NHYC said “The Global Team Racing Regatta is such a fun event! The event highlights the comradery and energy of club team racing around the world. Our team had 3 repeat sailors from last summer including Andrew Person, Colin Voigt, and me. I was so stoked to sail with our other 5 team members (Bill Menninger (legend), Sean Segerblom, Sally Mace, Wills Cook, and Randall Hause).  Our club loves team racing, enjoys practicing together as an entire club, and looks forward to supporting the development of two boat keelboat team racing.”

Having been involved with the event from it’s inception, GTTR Trustee and umpire at the event, Bruce Hebbert said “This year’s GTTR has seen some of the closest, most evenly matched team racing we have ever seen. This is testament to the popularity of the format, seeing teams race 2v2 has simplified the mystery behind team racing and given a more event playing field for more teams to compete on this international stage. Standouts for me this year was actually the team from Japan. Not a traditional team racing country like the US or the UK, they have clearly put some thought and effort in to how they were going to approach this year’s event with great boat handling and tactics and this was reflected in their fifth place finish over more established team racers.

With a more regular calendar planned for the future, we hope to see more new countries at future events as team racing continues it’s rise in popularity worldwide.”

An announcement on the 2024 Global Team Racing Regatta is expected in a few weeks so dust off those call books, start your preparations now and keep your eyes peeled for what we are sure will be a great event.