

2010 Vanguard-15 Team Race Midwinters

The 2010 Vanguard-15 team race circuit started off with a bang this year. An impressive number of 23 teams, from up and down the east coast, assembled in Sarasota, Florida over the weekend of January 2-4 for the first event on the schedule. In previous years, the regatta had been held in Stuart, Florida at the U.S. Sailing Center of Martin County. It appears the people of Stuart may have been a bit overwhelmed by the post-race activities of the mostly college-aged sailors in recent years. Consequently, this year the class went in search of a new venue, and what it got was an amazing location at the Sarasota Sailing Squadron. Brendan Healy was in Sarasota to report on the event for CompleteSailor.com as well as sailing with team Big Whoop!

An event which usually entices sailors with a week of racing in the warm temperatures and sun of southern Florida was anything but this year. With highs only in the upper 40s for much of the weekend, competitors found themselves dressed in full [spray gear](#) and even the occasional dry suit, as opposed to the normal attire of [shorts](#) and t-shirts. What Sarasota lacked in warmth, however, it made up for in ideal team racing conditions. Flat water and breeze ranging from 8-15 knots for the entire weekend made it easy for the race committee to crank out races. The fleet was initially divided up into two equal groups and one round robin was completed in each group before further separating the fleets into a gold and silver round. Following another round robin in the gold and silver groups, the fleet was split again into gold, silver, and bronze divisions ensuring equal competition for all involved. Team Bristol Pistols, sailing with team members Ben Spiller, Colin Merrick, Jon Enright, Sally Evans, Amanda Callahan, and Kelly Stannard walked away with the overall win with an impressive record of 27 total wins in 28 races. Rounding out the top group, the competition was extremely close with only 6 points separating second through sixth place overall.

The action off the water was just as enjoyable. The Sarasota Sailing Squadron, with a cozy club bar and lounge, complete with fire place, kindly opened its doors to competitors after hours to enjoy the event night life and to escape the frigid night time temperatures, which hovered in the mid to low 30s for much of the weekend. For those competitors sleeping in tent villages, known as Hoover-villes by those creative enough to rent RVs for the weekend, a group including myself and Big Whoop!, this was their only opportunity to shed some of their [gear](#) and regain some body heat before heading back out into the cold.

Overall the event was a huge success, and despite the rare cold snap in southern Florida, was a large improvement over the past years. The volunteer race committee, headed by event PRO Danny Pletsch, did an unbelievable job of getting as much racing as they could possibly fit into the three ideal days on Sarasota Bay. With a near record number of teams, tight competition, and gracious host, Sarasota appears to be a perfect new home for this premier winter team race event. Myself, Big Whoop!, and CompleteSailor.com look forward to the event next year, hopefully with a few more UV rays!

Complete results with a list of teams and competitors are available on the Vanguard-15 homepage.