

Bruce Goldsmith Regatta – Sept 16/17 2023

Written by Skip Dieball

Devils Lake is a unique and special place. It is the epitome of Lake Life featuring beautiful homes, water toys and a beautiful yacht club that rolls out the red carpet. I can't recall how many DLYC regattas I've sailed, but I do recall when Bruin labeled the September annual event "This one is for fun". And fun was definitely the theme once again!

Craig Gabel and I were on-watch together on the Chicago-Mackinac race when the topic of sailing the Bruin Regatta came up and an incredible invitation of a family weekend at his beautiful cottage and access to their club Lightning made it one of the easiest decisions. Laurie (my wife) and Max (my son) were all charged up to do the event and the opportunity to sail with my family wasn't lost on me. I've had some great memories sailing all over the world, but the chance to sail with them is always really special.

The regatta conditions were right up our alley. With a total crew weight of 385lbs, the biggest puff of the weekend was about 5knts. All we had to do was not goof up a start or take a flyer and we'd have speed....because the DLYC fleet boat is no random boat, it belonged to our late friend Dr. David Laidlaw. I'm sure Dr. Dave was looking down on us and provided a nice shift or two!

The small fleet was quite fierce and competitive. The starts were really a tough balance of keeping your speed, but maintaining nice separation to allow for any random shift. We did have some great starts, which I would say was the difference. But sometimes a good start plays into that antsy feeling of "should I tack or stay with the fleet". I found that tacking away from George Sipel and Craig Gabel is the ultimate gamble. They know that lake like no other....and our first race proved that we weren't smarter than we thought. Both Craig and Geo stayed patient and played the "Shady Beach Lefty", which I learned about at the bar that night! We managed to pass Tom Vicker's team on the last beat to humbly take a 4th.

The second race was equally a guessing game, but this time we managed to put the shifts and pressure together to finish in front of Matt Morin's team. Geo matched our scoreline with a 4 just edging out Craig at the end once again. With dying breeze, we were sent to the beautiful DLYC for dinner, drinks and dancing. Bruce would be happy to know that the Saturday night festivities lived up to the DLYC tradition. My Sunday headache can vouch for that!

Sunday had promise of a nice 4-6knot northerly, but it never developed. We were sent in with the last puff of the morning and after a pack-up, we all gathered for prize-giving and smiles. In the end, my team prevailed. Geo's team lost the tie-break and just in front of Craig's team. Sure it was special to win the Bruce Goldsmith Regatta. He meant so much to all of us, but I'll tell you the real prize of the weekend was the camaraderie and renewed friendships...as Bruce intended all along.

Special thanks to Craig Gabel and the many volunteers...not only to Craig for making the trip so easy on the Dieball family, but for organizing and ensuring that everyone had a great time. On our drive home we made the commitment to finish the re-hab project on our Lightning and make it to next year's event. For those that don't know, our lightning is Bruce's last new boat 14649.



