



CONTACT! – Stu Robertson taps Jeff McLaren's transom but won the protest – and thus the championship.



2006 Lido 14 Class Championship Regatta

Huntington Lake, Calif.

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Sponsored by Lido Fleet 6/Alamitos Bay

Hosted by Fresno Yacht Club

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Same old Stu wins protest and Lido 14 title

HUNTINGTON LAKE, Calif.---Stuart Robertson has long been known around sailing venues on two counts: year in and year out he's the best Lido 14 sailor there is---and also the orneriest.

So wouldn't you know that he couldn't walk away from his fourth Lido 14 Class Championship over 31 years---the last three in a row---without leaving a bit of turmoil in his wake?

The Huntington Beach veteran, sailing with rookie crew Steve Mendenhall, had the class's 49th title in the bag while running with the leaders with a seven-point lead when he insisted on poking his bow between Jeff McLaren of Dana Point, Calif. and the first leeward mark of the next-to-last fourth race of the three-day event at this Western Sierra alpine resort.

Robertson's bow tapped the port corner of McLaren's transom. McLaren thought Robertson did it on purpose, and both parties protested. Robertson went on to win the race and finish second in the short finale. But for the next hour and a half the title hung in the balance with father-and-son runners-up Freddie and Fred Stevens of Long Beach positioned to inherit the title. With no throwouts in the scoring, a disqualification would have dropped Robertson down to fifth place.

"It wouldn't be the best way to win it," Fred Stevens said at



PRO Mike Baumann (l.) spies a start.



Robertson passes Stevens downwind.

the time.

Protest hearings are sometimes down and dirty, but this one really was, conducted as it was in the shade of a group of pines, with both parties drawing their cases in the ground.

Ultimately, McLaren was ruled guilty and drew a DSQ, winding up 11th overall.

"It looked like there was contact, and Jeff didn't give enough room," fellow competitor and volunteer chief judge Steve Schupak said.

But the question remained, why would Robertson take such a chance on blowing it all?

The answer: he's Stu Robertson.

"I don't want to change," he said afterward with a wicked smile. "I'm more comfortable this way. We sailed this championship the way we sail every regatta. We are aggressive."

Otherwise, the race was as entertaining a Lido 14 contest as one might ever see. The 46 competitors---22 in Gold and 21 in Silver still remaining from original rosters of 23 each---were met under a cloudless sky by whitecaps and 12-knot breeze building to 15 when they came out for the final day of action, and principal race officer Mike Baumann of Alamos Bay Yacht Club sent them on their longest course yet: 7.4 miles with three upwind and two downwind legs.

Kurt Wiese of Newport Beach led at the first windward mark, with McLaren a close second and the Stevens and Robertson right behind. Then Robertson, working his downwind magic, passed the Stevens halfway down the leg and Wiese three-quarters of the way, then fought for an angle to get inside of McLaren coming in from the right.

Amid a lot of yelling, Robertson got around inside of McLaren, with Wiese lifting up to windward and protesting both boats after witnessing the contact, but not assigning blame. That would be sorted out ashore, with Robertson the winner.

Meantime, the Stevens played the north shore away from the leaders and came back to beat Robertson around the second windward mark, but Robertson turned on his downwind afterburners again to lead by 45 seconds at the last mark and win going away.

Tom Jenkins of Morro Bay wound up third overall by winning the short fifth and final race, with Robertson second to complete a string of 2-1-1-1-2 finishes.

Freddie Stevens, the skipper, said, "Stu deserves it all the



Robertson (c.) makes his case in the dirt at a protest hearing in the woods.



Tom Jenkins and Christina Campolmi's intensity won them 3rd overall.



Wiese leads McLaren off the rocks.

**Enlargements of these photos at
www.abyc.org**

**A photo gallery will be posted at
www.UnderTheSunPhotos.com**

***High-resolution photos
available free to media.***

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way. I tip my hat to him. When I started sailing he was my idol. He showed me how to roll-tack."

As for Robertson, "It was great fun, as much fun as the first one."

Stephen Mueller and crew George Shelton of Newport Beach scored 1-2 in the last two races to win the Silver fleet by one point over Ronald and Nicole Runyan of Willamette, Wash.

This was the seventh Lido 14 Class Championship at Huntington Lake. Others have been sailed as far north as Sequim Bay, Wash., as far south as Club de la Pena, Mexico, and as far east as Buckeye Lake, Ohio.

Gold fleet leaders (5 races):

1. Stu Robertson/Steve Mendenhall, Huntington Beach, 2-1-1-1-2, 7 points.
2. Freddie and Fred Stevens, Long Beach, 3-2-6-2-3, 16.
3. Tom Jenkins/Christina Campolmi, Morro Bay, Calif., 5-4-3-8-1, 21.
4. John Papadopoulos/Greg Rodgers, Newport Beach, 9-6-2-3-4, 24.
5. Eric Heim/Nate Campbell, Dana Point, Calif., 7-9-5-5-10, 36.

Complete results and photos: www.abyc.org

MORE INFORMATION:

www.fresnoyachtclub.org/hsrdetails.htm

www.lido14.org/

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