

Annual sailing regatta the 'best ever'

By **MATT BALDWIN Whitefish Pilot** | **Posted: Friday, July 29, 2011 10:00 am**

John Underwood edged out a pack of elite sailors to win the annual Whitefish Lake Regatta held July 16-17 on Whitefish Lake near City Beach.

Nine Laser class sailboats were entered in this year's event that was expanded to two days. The Laser is the Olympic single-handed dinghy and a pure "one design" class — all of the boats must be exactly the same. Since Laser boats are all built identically, the winner is determined solely by sailing skills, not equipment. Racers have to know where the wind is, and more importantly, where the wind is going to be later in the course.

Event organizer Peter Aronsson started up the sailing races two years ago.

The racing started at 7 a.m. both Saturday and Sunday mornings. A total of 22 back-to-back around-the-buoys races were held. A strong wind came in early each morning until about noon.

Event organizer Peter Aronsson noted that 22 races far exceeds the three total races they got in during last year's event.

"The competitive level this year was very good with the first six boats finishing within 200 feet of each other," Aronsson said. "The Canadians gave us all a good whipping with only John Underwood finishing ahead of them."

Aronsson led the Whitefish contingent of boaters, followed by Shawna Moore and Doug Reed.

Peter and Cheri Aronsson have organized the re-birth of the famous sailing Regatta for the past three years. They described this year's event as a "Huge success — the best ever".

The Regatta is dedicated to recognizing the work of the Whitefish Lake Institute in promoting clean and quiet boating on Whitefish Lake.

The Race Committee, headed up again this year by Cheri Aronsson with assistants Fred Jones and Heather Mull, alternated the courses. The Committee Boat anchored at the starting line was loaned for the Regatta by Bill and Scott Kahle.

Following the racing an awards ceremony and luncheon capped off the two days of sailing on Whitefish Lake.

"It was a beautiful spectacle to see the white sails and colorful boats against the clear blue skies, sparkling water, and crisp weather of a beautiful Whitefish summer day," Aronsson commented.

Final results

1. John Underwood, Columbia Falls; 2. David Elliot, Calgary. 3; Richard Quinlan, Lethbridge; 4. Mike Gilbert, Missoula; 5. Peter Aronsson, Whitefish; 6. Shawna Moore, Whitefish; 7. Doug Reed, Whitefish; 8. Brook Blakeley, Stevensville; 9. Austin Gilbert, Missoula in his first Regatta as a junior sailor.