

## **The International 6 Metre Association World Cup**

What is the World Cup?

### **Prelude**

The international 6 metre has been in existence for over 100 years and in competition in the USA since the early 20's. There have been many international competitions in the boats, from the British American team races of the 20's through the early 50's to the Scandinavian Gold Cup, the One Ton Cup, and, of course, the Olympic Games. After the loss of Olympic status following the 1952 games in Helsinki (won by Herman Whiton of the USA and NYYC), the class was supplanted in all of these international events. Enthusiasm did not fade in all places, but moved to more regional competition through the later 50's and 60's.

### **The Modern era – ISMA & the World Cup**

The Modern era of the International 6 metre truly began in 1967 with the commission of Toogooloo IV by the Australian, John Taylor. The boat was designed by Sparkman & Stephens in very much the same mold as the 12 metre Intrepid in preparation for the inaugural version of the Australian – American Challenge Cup, a match race series which took place on San Francisco Bay in 1969. John Taylor and Sunny Vynne had conceived the match race series as a new way to further international interest in the class and as a way to promote and validate their interest in the boats. This initial series was won by the famous Goose, an S&S design from the previous era.

Negotiations to form an international governing body for the class started as early as 1968 as the IYRU threatened to remove the class from international status. Several committed enthusiasts worked hard to re-establish the lines of communication between the regional fleets in several countries, which resulted in the formal creation of the International 6 Metre Association on June 1, 1970. The newly formed organization recognized fleets throughout the world, voted on a set of bylaws and a President, and began to look with great interest for a site to hold a "World Cup."

The enthusiasts at the Puget Sound Six Metre Association organized the first ever World Cup for the Six-Metre Class, in Seattle, with the aim of building on the momentum from the running of the Aus-Am trophy and breathing new life into a class which was to all intents moribund around the World.

This World Cup was donated to the class by the Port of Seattle, with the Puget Sound 6 Meter Association installed as the Trustee for the 'Cup. The first racing for it was organized by the Seattle Fleet in September, 1973 under the ISMA Presidency of Walter G. Wirth. The Cup was won by Tom Blackaller in US 100, St. Francis V, a new boat designed by Gary Mull, with Pacemaker, an Australian

boat, designed in 1973 by Olin Stephens, second. Third was Sunny Vynne's May Be VII, a 1952 Olin Stephens design. Sunny Vynne was the person who originally challenged the Australians for the first Aus-Am Trophy in 1969 and so, in many ways, may be considered the Godfather of all the present Six-Metres. 20 boats entered the event, with crews from the USA, Canada, Australia, Sweden, Finland, and Great Britain.

You may be interested to note that, while the first and second boats were new and thus "Moderns", the third boat was an "old boat", what is now considered to be a "Classic" or post 1965 design, the first and last time that an "Old Boat or Classic" has been placed in the first three boats in the Worlds.

As a direct result of these first World Championships, Gary Mull and Doug Peterson in the US and Peter Norlin in Sweden, steadily produced a number of new Six-Metres each year either in wood, but more often in modern fibreglass, and this led to the first stage of the re-birth of the Class as a major, world wide, international class.

The 1975 event took place in Sandhamn, Sweden, and was won on the water by Toogie V of the USA but moved to 2<sup>nd</sup> place after a successful protest by a Swedish boat of a race committee decision. There were 35 boats entered in the event, ¾ of which were "Old Boats." By 1977, when the Worlds were again held in Sweden, this time in Marstrand, there were 19 competitors of which 13 were modern Sixes, with Razzle-Dazzle, designed in 1975 by Doug Peterson coming third as the best United States boat. This heavy air competition was the first of 3 consecutive World Cups won by Pelle Pettersen, all in boats of his own design named "Irene." The best "Old Boat" was Mats Berglund's 1936 boat, May Be IV.

By the time of the next World Cup which was held in Seattle in 1979 there were 25 entries with only 8 pre-1965 "Senior Sixes" taking part, with the top "Senior Six" being Pat Goodfellow's Ylliam VIII finishing in 15<sup>th</sup> place to win the inaugural "Djinn Trophy" for the highest placing "Senior Six." This Seattle series was quite a spectacle, with new boats built for such luminaries of the time as Ted Turner, Malin Burnham, Pelle Pettersen, and Tom Blackaller, all of whom were involved in America's Cup efforts immediately before, during or after that time.

From the 1979 event on, the old boats, subsequently re-named "Classics," steadily reduced in numbers as they were seriously outclassed by the Modern Sixes, especially after the introduction of Ian Howlett's winged keels in 1987 which proved to be very much faster in winds of Force 3 and above. The World Cup was held in the USA 2 more times; in 1983 at Newport Harbor, California and in 1987 on Oyster Bay, Long Island Sound, hosted by the Seawanhaka Corinthian Yacht Club. In each of these events, only 1 Classic was in attendance. At Newport Harbor, the IOD progenitor "Saga" held the pride of the old boats and in 1987 the 50 year old S&S design "Fun" came from Port Huron, Michigan for the event.

The term Classics was first introduced at the 1982 Newport Wooden Boat show, to differentiate the six beautiful racing yachts present from the other, more run of the mill, wooden boats. In England, in 1986, the term was initially adopted to encourage those owners of the many decrepit "Old" sixes, to restore them. From this initial beginning, the term "Classics" has since spread world-wide, and is now used to describe almost any old-ish boat.

However, it was not until the 1995 Worlds at Sandhamn in Sweden, that the two groups were granted different starts, at the request of the Modern Sixes, who had found that with as many as 40 or more boats on the start line, the older and slower "Classics" were all too often impeding their starts.