



## **2012 Club 420 North American Championships Regatta Report** **By Rachael Silverstein, BSS 420 Coach**

Eight excited sailors arrived at Falmouth Yacht Club early Friday morning to compete against the best junior sailors in North America. The place was already buzzing with anticipation as teams unloaded their boats, tuned their rigs to perfection, and headed to the tent for the competitors' meeting. The hospitable welcome from the host club and positive encouragement from race committee helped ease some nerves for the sailors before launching the enormous 150 boat fleet into the swells off the beach.

Once on the water, sailors tweaked their settings to accommodate the super light northerly breeze and heavy chop leftover from the morning's wind. Falmouth's notoriously strong current did not disappoint, and swept some sailors off the course. Our Buzzards team, however, played the current well and held their own to mid-fleet finishes. Allyson Plessner, with her crew from Florida, Kyle Tobias, showed their mastery of light air sailing and strong current as they sailed into a top 20 position for the first race, and an incredible fourth place in the second. They fell victim to the one minute rule, however, and had to take an OCS (On Course Side) penalty instead. After lunch, the changing current and dying breeze relieved the sailors of their waiting game, and they were sent in early.

Day two's forecast looked more promising, and race committee set the course to the west as a result of the supposedly building southwesterly breeze. The current proved to be stronger than the wind, and the sailors had to be towed out to the course for yet another on-the-water postponement. The morning was not wasted, and we spent the extra time making new friends and learning about the influences of geographical factors on wind and current. Once the wind filled, the race committee completed four races for the day in conditions varying from light air to trapeze wind, and back to light and choppy. Although the Buzzards sailors struggled in the beginning, they ended up making smart tactical decisions that boosted their scores by the end of the day.

The third day's conditions were similar to day two. The early morning breeze finally allowed for an on time starting signal, and a total of five races sailed. While the team showed tremendous improvements in their tactical decisions, boat speed, and mark roundings, we were still struggling with getting clean starts with clear air.

With that in mind, we decided that the last day would be our "finishing day," where the sailors would finally get themselves the finishes they've been aiming for. Before going out on the water, the team analyzed their starting strategies to figure out what has been working well and what has been getting the boats in trouble. As the sailors launched their boats, everyone was finally ready to put all of the puzzle pieces together. During races, the sailors were getting off the line, connecting the puffs, and playing the shifts to maintain consistent finishes for the final day. Erin Coyne and crew, Cicely Dahn, ended the regatta on a high note, rounding the first leeward mark in fourth place!

A huge congratulations goes out to sailors Allyson Plessner and Kyle Tobias (top Buzzards finishers), Erin Coyne and Cicely Dahn, Ian Coyne and Peter Newstein, and Sam Curran and Marla Seaver for their amazing performance in this prestigious event. I would also like to thank Sara Newstein who volunteered her time to help coach and support the team.

Everyone had a really wonderful experience, and we look forward to competing again next year!