



CHESTER IOD FLEET ANNUAL REPORT 2020

This year started with high hopes and great expectations for the Chester IOD fleet as we had signed on to host the IOD Worlds in September. Preparations were under way and the boats worked on to ensure they were at their best. New mains were ordered, and our other sails checked to make sure they were evenly matched for the regatta.

February came and the first cracks in our plans started to appear! The beginning of the worldwide pandemic dominated the news headlines. It soon became clear a major uncontrollable event was to dominate the world, the people, the economy and the politics! By mid-March countries were closing their borders, quarantine became the most used word in our vocabulary, and we learned two new words: Coronavirus and COVID-19! Those words would dominate our conversations for the next 9 months. In Bermuda, we had already made the decision to cancel the annual Bermuda International Race Week. With lockdowns and flight restrictions into the Island, it was clear that it would be impossible to hold this Spring regatta. This would be the first of many cancellations of IOD fleets' regattas worldwide! In Chester, we agonized over what would be the correct path for us regarding hosting the IOD Worlds. We gathered as much information as was available at the time, all of which pointed to Chester having to cancel the Worlds. Reluctantly, we informed the WCA of this decision and in hindsight it proved to be the correct one.

Months went by as the Nova Scotia Government and the Nova Scotia Sailing Authority wrestled over social distancing, numbers of people in a boat etc. Finally, they put together some guidelines and sailing in Mahone Bay began. Our fleet is made up of two types of owners: the first is local ownership and the other is what Maritimers call "Come from away!" In the Chester IOD fleet the split is 50/50 as half the fleet is local and the other not. The coronavirus had an immediate effect on fleet participation as us "Come from away" owners were prohibited from entering the Maritime bubble. The local IOD owners quickly grabbed the opportunity to go sailing and immediately turned out for the PHRF racing in Chester on Thursday evenings and weekends. This continued throughout the summer and Peter Wickwire found success in winning 2 of the Thursday evening series. The normal turnout for these races was a complement of 6 IO's which shows how hungry they were for some competition.



Photo: Ivan Fitch, International One Design

Our Fleet was able to get in two One Design regattas during the summer. The first was hosted by the Chester Yacht Club in early August. Under clear skies and fair winds, Peter Wickwire in Squall prevailed beating out Evan Petley-Jones, with new boy on the block Ivan Fitch in Hustler finishing third. Hustler is the renamed boat that Ivan and Casey bought from Timmy Dittrich. They are loving it!

The second One Design regatta was hosted by the Lunenburg Yacht Club and appropriately called the "Welcome Back Regatta"! Six IODs turned out for this event and the race was hotly contested as usual. This time Evan Petley-Jones beat out Peter Wickwire by a single point with Ivan and Casey coming in third place.



Photo: Lunenburg Yacht Club

The Summer wound down as Fall approached but the enthusiasm for racing continued in the PHRF races until early October. All this to say this year was certainly the most challenging we have faced but our owners and members adapted to the new norm and made the most of it by participating in as many races as that they could. I expect more of the same for 2021 but we now know what we are dealing with and the unknown has now become known. Hopeful the borders with the Maritimes will be open and all of us “Come from away” folks will be able to get back on our IODs and enjoy the sailing and comradery that is Chester and Mahone Bay.

Respectfully submitted

Richard Thompson
Chester Fleet Captain