

NORTH AMERICANS 1981

THE 1981 Laser North Americans were hosted by Richmond Yacht Club, Richmond, California and sailed on San Francisco Bay. Craig Healey a member of the host club won the regatta in convincing style, his finishes of 2-4-1-1-7-1 in the first six races made it unnecessary for him to compete in the seventh race. He did race, however, and added another second place to his tally.

The eighty seven boat fleet sailed in a variety of conditions. The first two races held on the Thursday were sailed close to the Berkeley Circle where the wind was averaging about 25mph. John Bertrand of the St Francis Yacht Club and who has twice been Laser world champion, won both races comfortably.

The first race on Friday was held further to the north where the wind was moderated by Angel Island. The windspeed was about 20mph and Healey won with Christoff Bergman of Brazil in a close second, Bertrand was in fifth. The fourth race held, on Friday afternoon was sailed in Kellers Cove, where winds were lighter and shiftier. Windspeeds varied from 5 to 12mph and the wave action was considerably less than it had been on the Bay. Again Healey won, this time holding off a strong challenge from Canadian Terry Neilson, the current Pan American Games champion.

Saturday's first race was held in Kellers Cove, in conditions similar to the previous afternoon, with perhaps a little more wind. Lighter winds on one side of the course left much of the fleet with a lot of making up to do. Healey and Bertrand were both in this group. They managed a 7th and 21st respectively. Andy Roy from Ottawa, Canada did everything right in this race and won by a comfortable margin over second place Jose Dias from Brazil.

Race six was held back by the Berkeley Circle in the strong Bay winds and waves. Craig Healey won again and back on shore it was obvious that he would be the new champion. In second place overall was Steve Fleckenstein of Rothesay, New Brunswick with a solid performance of 3-2-4-3-6-3.

Sunday's last race of the series was again sailed on the Bay with winds of 25mph plus, and again John Bertrand showed himself unbeatable in these conditions. Healey was second with Christoff Bergman of Brazil in third. Fleckenstein was eighth which was good enough to clinch second place overall.

Apart from the superb racing and weather, the other outstanding thing about this regatta was the superb job that the Richmond Yacht Club did in hosting the event. Fred Wood who organised the event and also sailed in it, finishing 22nd, did a great job. Race committee chairman Kersey Clausen ran superb races in a variety of conditions, setting an excellent standard of race management.

Results

1. Healy C.	17.25	10.25
2. Fleckenstein S.	29	21
3. Grael T.	40	30
4. Bertrand J.	54.25	33.35
5. Roy A.	125.75	38.75
6. Bergmann C.	54	40

E. F. HUTTON

US OPEN 1981



Steve Fleckenstein

Photo Robert D. Hagan

SIX out of the seven scheduled races were completed in the E.F. Hutton 1981 U.S. Open Laser Championship. Steve Fleckenstein from Rothesay, New Brunswick, Canada won the series counting finishes of 1-1-3-2-4 and discarding a seventh to finish with 10.5 points.

187 sailors from all over North America, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Ireland, Holland, Norway and France registered for the regatta and were split into four fleets, who would each sail against the others in the first four races. After this the fleet would be split with the top 40% going into gold fleet, and the remainder into silver. Gold would count their first five of six races in the final standings, while silver would start over in a new three race series.

Two races per day were scheduled on Thursday, Friday and Saturday and one race on Sunday. Thursday's races were sailed in the East Passage just north of Newport Bridge. Both races were started in shifty winds of about 10mph from the north and in both races the wind dropped as the races progressed. This condition seemed to suit local Newport sailor Dick Sadler, however, as he won both of his heats. Other winners were Pedro Bulhoes from Brazil and Scott Ferguson from Jamestown, R.I. Unfortunately for Ferguson and Sadler they were both to find themselves penalized 18 points for being over early on a recall.

Friday started off very light and the fleet didn't leave the Newport Yachting Centre until after lunch, when it sailed down the passage to the ocean where racing was held off of Beavertail point. The one race was held in Southerly 12mph winds and ocean waves of three feet. Again Dick Sadler won his heat, while Andy Roy from Ottawa, Canada won the other one.

On Saturday the racing was again held in the ocean. Conditions were perfect with clear skies, the wind speed was again from the south at 18mph and the waves made for

good planing. In gold fleet Steve Fleckenstein dominated winning both races with Stew Neff from Newport being runner-up both times. At the end of the day's racing this left Fleckenstein in front overall with Neff second.

With the announcement Sunday morning that only one race would be run, Fleckenstein didn't have to race. He did, however, and finished third. Sunday's race was probably the most exciting with winds over 20mph from the south, with big waves and again glorious sunshine.

In the three race silver fleet series Paul Thompson from Halifax, Nova Scotia won with finishes of 1-3-2.

Results.

Gold Fleet

1. Thompson P.	5.75	5.75
2. Willard M.	7.75	7.75
3. Hill M.	14	14
4. Gow P.	21.75	21.75
5. Reynolds P.	24	24
6. Conde M.	25	25

Silver Fleet

1. Fleckenstein S.	17.5	10.5
2. Bulhoes p.	37.75	25.75
3. Neff S.	64.75	28.75
4. Roy A.	74.75	28.75
5. Clements M.	54	36
6. Keane B.	58	36

