

International Competition Awaits Sailors

By Cailin Brophy

Strong winds and blustery conditions made for rough going for most of the sailors competing in the New York Downstate Sunfish Regional Championship at the Mattituck Yacht Club this weekend, but for second-place finisher John Condon, it provided the perfect opportunity.

Thanks, in part, to the inclement weather on Saturday that wreaked havoc on several boats and prevented the majority of sailors from finishing—or even starting—their races, the 31-year-old Mattituck Yacht Club member was able to finish second in the two-day regatta, making him one of two sailors from the event that qualified for the 2007 Sunfish World Championships, which will take place in October of that year, most likely in the Bahamas.

“I was hoping it would be windy because I’m heavier and I usually do better in heavy wind,” Condon explained on Monday. “It was a little more wind than I was looking for, but it was a lot of fun and it definitely was an advantage for me.”

With the wind blowing between 20 and 30 knots throughout Saturday, Condon collected a first, second and third place finish in the first three races before he was forced to bow out of the fourth and final race due to a broken boom. Condon did not place as high in four races on the following day, where the weather conditions were much more favorable across the board, but his performance from a day earlier was enough to give him the only other qualifying spot.

“I sailed well but made a few dumb mistakes on the course,” he said of his Sunday finishes.

Brian McGinnis of Remsenburg dominated the event to take first place, winning five races and taking second in two others across the two days to qualify for what will be his third Sunfish World Championship. McGinnis will be competing in this year’s world event, which will take place in Charleston, South Carolina, from September 30 to October 6.

While the exact date and location for the 2007 event have not yet been hammered down, Condon said that the regatta, which brings



Remsenburg's Brian McGinnis won the New York Downstate Regional Championship on Saturday and earned himself a ticket to the World Championships in 2007. He had already qualified for the 2006 event.

CAILIN BROPHY

competitors of all ages from around the world, draws about 100 sailors. Many of these competitors qualify, as Condon and McGinnis did, at regional regattas throughout the country. Condon in particular was the beneficiary of a ruling in qualifying standards where one out of the 16 regional events offers two qualifying spots with the rest offering just one. Luckily for Condon, this was the year that the extra spot was being offered in the New York regional. The fact that the regional was held at Condon's home club, where he has sailed and been an instructor for 21 years, made it even sweeter, he said.

“It was extra special to do it here,” he said. “This is the best I’ve ever done in a regional. I didn’t expect to do this well, so I was very excited.”

Condon had nothing but praise for the one man who bested him on the course.

“He was fantastic,” Condon said of McGinnis. “He sailed outstanding this weekend on both days. I knew

he was going to be one of the guys up there in the end.

“Brian has been doing a lot of sailing and going all over the country,” Condon continued. “He’s been working hard and it showed this weekend.”

The experience of competing in tough events throughout the country certainly helped McGinnis in his quest for first place this weekend while the absence of some other top sailors at this regional qualifier helped as well, he said.

Several other sailors in the Open Masters division had impressive outings as well, including third-place finisher Ted Cremer of Wet Pants Sailing Association in Sayville, who placed in the top four in four races. Bobby Boger of Southold finished fourth overall and had the top finish for a junior taking third in two races and placing in the top 10 in six of eight races. Meghan Pillai of the Mattituck Yacht Club was the top female finisher in the Open Masters division.