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race report



Not sure if the PG&E stacks are actually scenic, but they are a landmark in Moss Landing. ©2010 norcalsailing.com

Running of the Bulls

November 14, 2010

Northern California is a big, beautiful place, and not all the sailboat racing is on San Francisco Bay. Especially if you've got a boat that'll fit in the back of a pickup truck, you can hit the road and within a couple of hours find whole new scenery to race in.

The El Toro fleet is among those who like to travel, to Lake Tahoe, Clear Lake, and Pinecrest, for example. But the Bay Area El Toro seniors missed a good one on Saturday, leaving all the glory to a cadre of Santa Cruz Yacht Club juniors.

The Santa Cruzers only had to cruise down Highway 1 for half an hour to reach their neighbor on Monterey Bay, Moss Landing. Hosted by Elkhorn Yacht Club, the Running of the Bulls was held on Elkhorn Slough.

The sailboats (13 El Toros and one DeWitt Dinghy) had to be towed with their masts down under the Highway 1 bridge to get to the race area. They rigged on a handy beach, and the race committee set up marks for windward-leeward racing.



Rigging up on the beach. ©2010 norcalsailing.com

Three races were run on a stretch of water populated by pelicans, otters and kayakers. The weather couldn't have been nicer, the water on the Slough is flat, and wetsuits were not worn.



Elkhorn Slough is popular with kayakers too. ©2010 norcalsailing.com

The second race was the windiest, with puffs coming through from Monterey Bay, just a few hundred yards directly to the west, and the wind started to die for the third. During the third race, some stragglers got caught in a wind hole and had to be towed back to the start line to restart.



Mara Eckert and Michael Levy battled each other, with Michael executing textbook roll-tacks. ©2010 norcalsailing.com

The well-trained, well-equipped intermediate to advanced level SCYC teenagers were joined by younger Elkhorn YC beginning juniors and local adult sailors. The first place finisher among the senior fleet, James Savittore of Aptos is the only one who races regularly with the Bay Area El Toro fleet, and has sailed in the Bullship. Second place finisher Rainer Stegeman, who lives aboard a Cal 30 in Santa Cruz Harbor, said that he is not regularly a racer.



Rainer can usually be found competing on a surfboard. ©2010 norcalsailing.com

A liveaboard from Moss Landing, 10-year old Logan Gregg was the top Elkhorn YC junior. He's not interested in sailing with his parents, but he's been bitten by the racing bug and loves competing.



Logan's family cheered him on from shore. ©2010 norcalsailing.com

The SCYC juniors were topped by Nicholas Lenz, second place was Mara Eckert, third was Michael Levy, and fourth was intermediate sailor Charlotte Lenz. The four teenagers enjoyed tight competition. None of them had sailed in the Running of the Bulls before.



Nicholas Lenz leads James Savittore, Charlotte Lenz, and Logan Gregg off the start of the second race. ©2010 norcalsailing.com

As soon as the race committee had the boats squared away, Commodore Mark Pastick dashed over to fire up the barbecue before he'd even taken off his PFD, and the sailors and their families enjoyed a fabulous sunset and excellent barbecued burgers.



The sunset from Elkhorn YC. ©2010 norcalsailing.com

This was only the third annual Running of the Bulls; maybe the Bay Area El Toro fleet will discover it next year. We couldn't help taking a lot of pretty pictures, so we'll post a [photo gallery](#) tomorrow.



Mara Eckert from SCYC. ©2010 norcalsailing.com