



The World Duckboat Championship, conceived by the junior sailors of the Mantoloking Yacht Club in 1969 and continually hosted for 50 years since, is one of the iconic annual events on Barnegat Bay. It is a happening, a celebration of the heritage of Barnegat Bay wooden boat building and the frivolity of our youth. It is one of the few Championship regattas where junior sailors can race and compete directly with some of the best senior sailors on the Bay. Many who have moved on from our waters return each year just for this event.

But it wasn't always this way. While the active World Ducks fleet peaked in the mid-80's at about 50+ boats, the advent of the ubiquitous Opti and other low maintenance youth training boats gradually started to push the fleets out of the Bay clubs' junior sailing programs. By the mid-90's, the World Duckboat Championship regatta fleet had dwindled to less than 15 boats that were capable of making it to MYC and around the race course at the end of August each year.

Then along came Peter Kellogg with his enthusiasm, his love for wooden boats and old Bay traditions, and of course, most definitely his generosity. His challenge offer to make a donation by the Peter and Cynthia Kellogg Foundation to the charity of the sailor's choice in return for restoring a duckboat to Bristol condition and sailing it in the championship has totally restored the fleet.

Last year we had over 73 boats register and race. Now all the Bay clubs are represented via their junior sailors. We have competitors ranging in age from 10 to 89. And the girls are some of the best. We have even had a junior sailor take on the seniors and win it all - twice.

Peter's restoration challenge has managed to flush all of the boats out of their sheds and on to the Bay at the end of each August. Amazingly, after a 30+ year hiatus, new boats have been built, one even by high school students to the original plans.

At its core, the World Duckboat Championship is a sailboat race. The regatta has, for the most part, historically been a test competed in total; five races, in light air and heavy air; calm and chop; north and south running currents. Winning has often been as much about surviving as it has been about sailing fast or smart. Sometimes in-the-hunt competitors have been "taken out" by contact with inexperienced youth or less than competent adults. It has been won in old boats and new, owned and borrowed. Few who have won have not also at one time or another experienced being ignominiously towed to the beach full of water.

The World Duck Boat Championship is mano y mano or mano y chiquita or maybe popi y pepe, given the results of the past few years. Thus it was in the beginning and particularly in the middle when the fleet dwindled to less than 15 boats.....Let's see who can survive getting beaten up in these old wooden boats so he or she can have the chance to hold up the Big Duck before we all have to put our socks back on and go back to school or work.

On the night before the regatta, the boats arrive at MYC to be set up for the Bristol Condition judging and this party is one of the celebratory happenings of the Barnegat Bay summer. An addition, this year we will be celebrating the 50th anniversary with a single race among all the prior overall World Duckboat Regatta champions – a Champion of Champions race - on Thurs Aug 23 at 4:00p before the set-up party gets started. All 26 of the former champions are invited

