

IFDS World Blind Sailing Championships



Perseverance pays off. Silver for Canada at the 2015 IFDS World Blind Sailing Championships held in Chicago, Illinois.

The Chicago yacht club in association with Sail Sheboygan provided the fleet of Sonars and Tom 28's for the regatta.

Canada, Great Britain, New Zealand and the United States were represented with a total of fourteen crews racing in 3 different sight classifications.

The reigning Great Britain champion team from 2013 was present to defend their crown.

Canada's team, helmed by David Brown, competed in the B1 division. The B1 division requires the helm and main sail trimmer to have either no vision or only the ability to distinguish night and day.

His blind main sail trimmer, Brian Arthur, received sad news of a death in the family just prior to the start of the regatta and had to return home to Canada.

The organizers allowed the jib trimmer, Karen Kinsey, to wear a blindfold and switch to trim the main sail because there were no spare blind sailors after other team injuries.

Chuck Nevel and Mike Whitford from CYCC volunteered to be tactician and jib trimmers for the Canadian team because fund raising was insufficient to bring their Canadian sighted crew.

The windy city lived up to its reputation. A storm blew in and the first day of racing was cancelled before any races could be started.

The Chicago yacht club race committee delivered five races on second day. Strong 19 knot winds, 6 foot waves and some driving rain challenged the racers.

Canada took one bullet and multiple seconds to take a solid hold on second place after the first day.

Day three was wisely cancelled from the start due to high winds and 9 foot waves.

On the final day, the race committee was only able to run three races. Due to diminishing and shifting wind conditions, the racing was close with plenty of boat traffic at both the windward and leeward marks.

Constant attention to direction and sail trim allowed the team to narrowly fend off the advances of the Great Britain team.

Many thanks to the Chicago yacht club for hosting the regatta on short notice.

This best ever result for the Canadian team is promising for both the upcoming 2016 match racing world championships in Sheboygan Wisconsin and the 2017 world fleet championship in Galveston Texas.



Silver medal winners from right to left Mike Whitford (jib trimmer), David Brown (helm), Karen Kinsey (main trimmer), Chuck Nevel (tactician).

Please contact Sail Canada at www.sailing.ca if you would like to contribute to the Canadian blind sailing team's future campaigns.