

1996 BACARDI Cup

Vince Brun and Magnus Liljedahl won the 69th running of the Star Bacardi Cup. For Brun this was his 6th Bacardi Cup win. 81 boats competed for this prestigious regatta March 3rd through the 8th. The Bacardi Cup, as was the rum, originated in Cuba but the regatta was later moved to Miami's Biscayne Bay. The excellent attendance is partly due to the long time sponsors Bacardi Rum who not only host the great racing but provide plenty of parties on shore and with no entry fee. Paul Cayard and George Iverson were 2nd and Mats Johansson and Mattias Frode were 3rd.

Most of the class' top sailors and Olympic aspirants were in attendance. The British used the Bacardi Cup for the 2nd and final regatta in their Olympic selection. Laurie Smith and Chris Mason held a slight lead over Glyn Charles and George Koudas going into the Bacardi. The top two Swedish teams were in attendance who have not yet finished their selections. In addition, quite a few other top teams already selected by their countries for the Olympics were also there. Some teams were in chartered boats because of the recent World Championships as well as the upcoming European Trials. With so many regattas around the world many are now two boat owners to get around the shipping delays. As was also the case in the previous Miami OCR the Bacardi would provide another good check to see the how everyone was stacking up for the approaching Olympics as well as the American Olympic Trials to be held April 20 through the 28th.

Strong wind greeted the fleet for the opening race. There were a lot of breakdowns some before the race even started including last year's 2nd place finisher Colin Beashel and Mark Reynolds. After one general recall the wind decreased a bit to 15 to 18 knots for the start but puffs and big shifts from north kept the positions changing. Three former World Champions battled for the lead with Paul Cayard / George Iverson crossing the line just ahead of Joe Londrigan / Phil Trinter and then Ross MacDonald / Eric Jespersen. (SP)

The 2nd race was postponed until the following day due to strong winds. Despite enough wind to surf on the reaches a windward leeward course was posted for the 2nd race. With a bit more wind at the starboard end of the line the boats on the right quickly got a big jump on the fleet. Vince Brun / Liljedahl took the lead on the first run and continued to lead until the finish. John Kosteki / Tom Olsen finished 2nd after missing the first race of the series due to the SORC.

A predicted 15 knots failed to materialize and the third race was started in a light south east wind of about 4-6 knots. The fleet was very close at the first mark with the leaders coming in from both sides. Michael Hicks / ? Hicks lead at the first mark but were over taken by George Szabo / Rick Peters on the first run, who stayed ahead all the way to the finish. On the last leg the wind increased to 8 and Mark Reynolds / Hal Haenel moved to 2nd with Brun / Liljedahl finishing directly behind in 3rd.

The fourth race was held in a southerly 8 -10 knots and on the first beat the right side paid big. Going down the first run the left side was so much better that the boats that had held starboard

for any amount of time got hammered. MacDonald / Jespersen and Kostecki / Olsen were two who lost big on this run. Cayard made a great comeback to finish 6th but was scored PMS, later to be reinstated when it was found that it was an obvious case of mistaken identity. This race was won by Howie Shiebler / Anson Stookey. Shiebler, the 3rd place finisher in the 1988 Olympic trials, had broken down in the first race while leading then fouled out at the finish of the 2nd race again in 4th, and must be considered another potential threat at the US trials. Bill Buchan / Bill Bennet were 2nd and Brun / Liljedahl again 3rd.

The fifth race immediately followed on this double header day. The wind had built to 14-15 knots and once again a windward leeward course was sailed. The right was favored and Kostecki / Olsen lead with Cayard / Iverson 2nd. Except for a small swing to the left on the 2nd beat positions didn't change too much and Doreste / Hermida followed Kostecki / Olsen and Cayard / Iverson across the finish line. Brun / Liljedahl finished 6th which was enough to hold a 2 point lead over Cayard / Iverson. The racing was canceled on the final day when a beautiful 25 knot breeze was deemed too much by the RC.

For Vince Brun he had proven himself already in 5 races with consistently good finishes and for Paul Cayard it was a disappointment not to get in the final race and a chance at the Cup. For Glyn Charles it made no difference. Glyn had already clinched the British Olympic selection over Lawrie Smith without having to sail the last race.