Clear sailing over summer

By Randy Young

Although the MIT sailing teams’ regular season schedule ended in May, Tech sailors remained active throughout the summer, competing on both the intercollegiate and the club levels. They garnered several impressive victories, including three National and North American championships. Two especially noteworthy achievements were Terry Cronburg’s capturing of the North American Inter-club Match Racing Championship, and the women’s team’s victory in the National Women’s Intercollegiate Championships.

The women’s finals were sailed on June 11 and 12 at the United States Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut, and the women’s team’s victory was a particularly noteworthy achievement.

At the end of the first day’s action the Tech women stood in third place in the ten-school fleet, behind Boston University and Radcliffe, who had won the title the previous year. Two first places, five seconds, and one third on the second day, however, moved the girls into the lead and the title, followed by BU and Radcliffe. Both Kathy and Marla won their divisions.

For Terry Cronburg, two years of eliminations ended two weeks ago with his winning of the Prince of Wales Trophy, symbolic of the North American Inter-club Match Racing crown. Terry represented the MIT Nautical Association (MTNA) in the F-O-W series, which is a club rather than an intercollegiate event.

The elimination heats began last summer with races sailed in Cape Cod Tech sloops on the Charles River, pitting the MTNA against Community Boat Club. Cronburg, with Ed Shaw and Tom (“Hutch”) Hutchins as crew, won this first encounter, and earned the right to compete in the Massachusetts Bay finals.

Sailing 210’s at Cohasset, Massachusetts, Terry, with Shaw and Kathy Jones, captured the Marblehead title, and advanced to the New England finals, sailed this past August 16-18 at Yalegung at Fowler’s Neck, Maine.

Sandy Warrick ’72 and Steve Cucchiara ’74 crewed for Terry at Fowler’s Neck, and by winning there, the trio moved on to the Northern American finals at the Southern Yacht Club in New Orleans, Louisiana. The final series was sailed in Solings from August 30 to September 2, with eight participants from all over North America.

Match Racing is competition between only two boats at a time, with the object being to obtain the lead and then cover your opponent. In the championship series, the preliminary heats were on a best three-out-of-five basis, while the finals were four-out-of-seven.

In the first round, the MTNA entry was matched against Mac Goodwin of Michigan, and took the series in three straight races.

Cronburg and company then met Bob Burns of California, seventeen years old and a regular sailing sailor. Burns provided the best starting competition of the regatta, but Terry won by a 3-1 margin, with Burns’ only victory subject to a protest that was not heard when Terry had already won three races.

This victory advanced the New England entries to the finish line against Ed Sherman of St. Petersburg, Florida. At the end of one-day’s racing the tally stood at 3-2, with the championship to be decided by one race on the next day. A banquet and festivities that night served to ease the tension somewhat, and the next morning Cronburg went out and defeated Sherman by a sizable margin to take the first place on the North American title.

Also this summer, Cronburg, with Cucchiara and Sally Lindsay in crew, won the Massachusetts Bay Senior Men’s Championship, and placed third in the New England finals.

Larry Bacon ’73, of Pontiac, Michigan, added another National title to the list of accomplishments by MIT sailors, as he captured the Wayfarer crown at the Prince of Wales Trophy, and the sectionalizing caused by a strong wind coming directly into one end of the structure, so that there was a large amount of stress there. In addition, this was a new design, with square ends, and the sectionalizing caused some areas to be much more strongly stressed than normal.”

The end result of all this, according to Mr. Kinnius, is that “one end will have to be completely rebuilt.”

Birdair, which has been in business for 15 years, built the structure for $51,000.

John Goddard