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2019 CanAm Championship Series Draws 20 2.4mR Competitors

Smith Takes National and North American Titles in Back-to-Back Regattas

Port Charlotte, Fla. (December 13, 2018) – While most of the U.S.A. was getting smacked by an early taste of wintry weather and unseasonably cold temperatures, the conditions were more than ideal for sailors in the 2.4 Meter class as they kicked off the 2019 CanAm Championship Series at Charlotte Harbor Yacht Club (CHYC) in Port Charlotte, Florida. With at least nine competitors from Canada, two from the Virgin Islands, one from Norway, and Americans coming from as far as Seattle and San Diego, a fleet of 20 started the championship series with back-to-back regattas on the Peace River.

First up on the series schedule was the 2.4mR North American Championship, December 3-5, 2018, which got underway in light, shifty breeze from the north. On the first day of racing, the fleet of 20 saw three winners in as many races: Canada's Bruce Millar, from Victoria, British Columbia, won the first race; Norway's Bjornar Erikstad took the win of race two; and Dee Smith of Annapolis, Maryland, won the last race of the day. On day two, with breeze of 12-15 knots from the north-northeast, the sailors faced a challenging chop in the starting area that, fortunately, diminished near the top of the course which was set closer to shore. Day two saw Smith resume his winning style with bullets in the first two races of the day before finishing third in the final race of the event.

Canada's Allan Leibel, of Toronto, won that final race to end the regatta tied on 15 points with Bruce Millar, and Erikstad, with 12 points, finished second to Smith who won the North American title on seven points. Canada's Peter Eagar, of Toronto, finished fifth overall with 30 points.

The 2.4mR U.S. National Championship, held December 6-9, started under sunny skies with a seven-knot breeze from the east-northeast. Despite the shifty, diminishing breeze, the Race Committee was able to run four races and, once again, it was Bruce Millar across the finish line first in the opening race. Dee Smith powered up for back-to-back wins of races two and three, with the final race of the day won by Charlie Rosenfield of Woodstock, Conn. Day two saw similar conditions, with a diminishing breeze from the east-southeast shifting to the southeast as the day progressed. It was another day of close racing as evidenced, again, by three winners in as many races: Millar won race five, and Janice Graham-Foscarini, of Toronto, Canada, won race six before Smith won the last race of the day. The fourth race planned for the day was abandoned when the wind died. With a cold front pushing its way into the Port Charlotte area, bringing lightning and gusts up to 35 knots, it forced the cancellation of the final day of racing and the championship was decided on seven races, including a discard for each sailor of their worst finish. Smith claimed the 2019 U.S. National Championship title with nine points; Bruce Millar was second with 21 points, followed by Tony Pocklington, of Ft. Myers, Fla., and Bjornar Erikstad, tied with 24 points each. Allan Leibel, with 36 points, rounded out the top-five.

"Racing was tight all week," said Smith after earning the two championship titles. "Conditions varied from drifting to 22 knots. Many different boats won races and you had to stay on top of the big shifts and wind lines to get good scores. I was lucky enough to put a good string of strong finishes together for the week, but it was not easy."

Racing for the third edition of the 2.4 Meter Can Am Championship series will resume January 25-27 when the 2019 Edge Sailing Midwinters will be contested, followed by CanAm #4 from February 22-24. The series concludes with the nine-race 2019 CanAm Championship Finale from March 29-31, with the series champion determined from the results of all five regattas after his or her worst score is discarded. For competitors who do not race in all five events, the scoring will count all events sailed (i.e. they will not drop their worst result). Leading the current standings for the 2019 CanAm Championship Series is Dee Smith with two points. He is followed by Bruce Millar and Bjornar Erikstad, who are tied with six points each; Allan Leibel in fourth overall on eight points; and Peter Eagar rounds out the top-five with 11 points.

Details of the regatta schedules, social events, hotels and more may be found in the Notice of Race, available [here](#). Full results for the 2018 2.4mR North American Championship may be found at http://www.regattanetwork.com/event/17779#_newsroom ; and for the 2018 2.4mR U.S. Nationals, results may be found at http://www.regattanetwork.com/event/17797#_newsroom

About the 2.4mR: The 2.4mR originated in 1983 in Sweden and attained confirmation as an international class less than 10 years later. Class racing puts the emphasis on the tactical – not physical – skills of the sailor as the single-handed boats are equal under the strict rules that govern the class. With a length of 13' 8" and the advantage of being easily transported and stored, this sleek keelboat has gained favor with a wide range of able-bodied sailors and sailors with disabilities (there are 1200 boats worldwide and roughly 200 in the USA alone). For more information on the class, please visit <http://www.canada24mr.com/> or www.us24meter.org/