

WSC ROAD REPORT: PRAIRIE WIND REGATTA, FIREBALL NATIONALS, LAKE NEWELL, JULY 7-9 - Rick Stoppel

Over sixty boats participated in the Prairie Wind Regatta at Newell, and this included 20 sailors from WSC. The Fireball Nationals started on Friday, all the other classes on Saturday. Your Humble Correspondent was lucky enough to crew for John Henderson in his beautiful new Australian Fireball. The "instant fleet", also known as the Tichkowsky family, was out in full force, including the usual suspects (Ken, Roy, Laura, Bill Russell) as well as two unsuspecting strangers who were somehow drawn into their nefarious plans (James Brown and Dan Hider). The Fireballs all arrived on Thursday evening and after all the usual hassles with the "tent nazis", we settled in for the usual hi-jinks. Frank Crawford and Sean Holmes-Smith had a keg of beer which seemed to be the center of activity. This keg lasted for two nights, which did not impress Roy. "we used to polish those off in two hours" he said. Ensnared in my goretex "Bibler Tent", I avoided these frivolities, knowing that I would need all my energy for the racing to come.

We had great winds Friday and Saturday morning. John and I found that we were going like the

proverbial

"bat out of hell"

upwind. We led the fleet to the first mark three times, wound up second in two of those races. Of course we also found ourselves in last place a couple of times, but that's all my fault.

The Van Muyden's provided their usual excellent race management. I

noticed that the wind was always blowing like crazy in the morning and it was fading by early afternoon. I suggested to Peter that we get up at 3 A.M., on the water by 4, plenty of light to race by 5 A.M. The "keg" crowd would not have to go to bed at all! Alas this brilliant suggestion was voted down by people who do not take their racing as seriously as some of us do. In the end Hamish and Frances Ferguson were top WSC boat (6th), followed closely by yours truly and Dr. Henderson (7th), Ken and Bill (8th), Roy and James (9th), Laura and Dan (14th).

