

After 19 Years Trying

He's the World's Champ

By TOM DRUML



YOU can take the America's Cup, and the Mallory Cup, and any other class championship; winning them is a pushover compared to the World Championship of the Star class—anyway, this is a conceit that Star boat sailors share.

No one can argue that the World Championship of the Stars lacks depth of talent. There are many red-hot sailors around, but most of them glow so brightly one must believe their class doesn't offer a great challenge. Put Ogilvy, Etchells, North, Bello, Quina, the Lippincotts, Pinigin, Fiuza, Nye, Bernet, Cosentino, Edler, Van Hutschler, Buchen—and you could go on and on—put them all on one starting line and it's a tough race to win. An even tougher series of five races to win, Dick Stearns will tell you.

In case you haven't heard, Chicagoan Dick Stearns won the 1962 World Championship of the Stars, a gathering of 73 of the top Star boaters from 19 nations. (Can anyone top that?) The Championship was held at Cascais, Portugal late in August.

Dick's Gold Star, which he now has the right to sew onto his mainsail, joins four Silver Stars (North American and Spring Championships), four Blue Stars (Great Lakes Championships) and a liberal sprinkling of Gold and Silver bars and chevrons for placing in major championships—all told, enough awards to decorate the Marshall Field Christmas tree.

Maybe you wonder where he started his career. Was he born on a Star boat? No. And you're going to be disappointed—he began his career on the water in a speedboat. As it probably happens with a number of people though, he was disenchanted within a season. At the tender age of 16, a sophomore in high school, he turned his attention to Star boats.

Dick's first boat was the now ancient Shrew, number 1308. He plumbered around the course with his jib half aluff, yet managed to finish midway in the fleet most of the time—a feat in itself for a beginner. This mild success was enough to get him hooked firmly. The year was 1943, and Bert Williams had a corner on the used Star market, bartering and exchanging boats with the imagination of Jim Moran. Dick purchased Glider, a pre-war South Coast model through Bert, and set out on his way to the Star Class

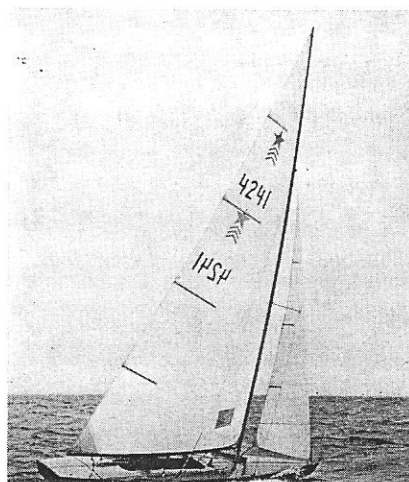
Hall of Fame.

Along the way, he met Art Deacon, a swabby stationed at Navy Pier—who also happened to be the reigning World Champion of the class. Having Art a year as crew, Dick will surely admit, saved him long hours of suffering. The "Deacon" was a master of the light and fitful, and Stearns learned it "Long Island Sound style" with no trouble.

Having a few regattas under his belt by 1945, he floated Glider over a rickety four-wheel trailer, pulled boat and trailer up on the Jackson Park Harbor beach by block and tackle, and headed for Vermilion, O., site of the Great Lakes Championship. No one had ever heard of him before, and even after the first race, in which he placed second, no one seemed to mind his being there. But at the end of the second race, a howling wester on shallow Lake Erie, so violent it disabled about 85 per cent of the fleet, they did notice that Stearns was winning the series by a dozen or so points. He went on to win by a comfortable 16 points. Then, next year, to show it wasn't an accident, he won it again.

This made Dick something of a sage among the fellows who had been trying to win races around Chicago. One of them asked how he managed to avoid being entangled in protests. "Get ahead and stay ahead," was his laconic advice. And this is just about what he did himself.

In 1947, 15 years ago, Dick made his first bid for the World's Championship and astonished everyone—



(Turn to page 27)

New world's Star Class Champion, Dick Stearns of Chicago, center, and crew Lynn Williams are surrounded by well-wishers at Cascais, Portugal, after last race of series there. Left, Stearns' Glider on Lake Michigan. One-Design photo.

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Running at night in a driving rain, B. J. Robinson's 35 ft. Richardson cruiser of St. Joe hit the rocks at Chicago Light wall. The cruiser was raised and hull repairs were made by John Hinrich's Boat Yard, while the 150 hp. Grays were repaired by Zender's. Another sinking occurred when Bob Moltke's 27 ft. Chris-Craft cruiser Wild Goose hit an unlighted construction buoy off the new filtration plant. . . . L. Arthur Cushman, Jr. of Diversey YC. had his 27 ft. Connie cruiser, The Boat, shipped to Lake Mead, Nev. for fall and winter cruising. The cruiser was shipped by Zender's Boat Yard for Cushman, who was on a safari out of Nairobi, Kenya.

Gordon Brummel of Chicago YC. took delivery on a new 1963 model 36 ft. Pacemaker cruiser from Larsen Marine Service at Waukegan. Brummel named his new cruiser Gunkholer. . . . Martin Roefer of Columbia YC. bought a 35 ft. Safticraft steel cruiser powered with twin 225 hp. Grays from Masters Marine and christened it Roger Dodger IV.

A true Florida sportfisherman is the new 42 ft. Enterprise cruiser Phryne III, owned by Frank D. Reiland of Chicago YC. The cruiser, which was brought from Florida last month via the Mississippi River by Capt. Eddie Paquette and Reiland's son Jack, makes a striking appearance with its full deepsea fishing rig including lee outriggers. The construction is quite unusual. The bottom is double planked with $\frac{3}{8}$ in. makore plywood inner and $\frac{1}{2}$ in. mahogany outer planking glued and screwed together and covered with a layer of fiberglass cloth and epoxy resin. The topsides are $\frac{5}{8}$ in. mahogany lapstrake. Due to the 15 ft. beam, the cruiser has accommodations, including a shower, that one would not expect to find in a "fish-

ing" boat. The cabin is air conditioned with a York unit that is reversible to provide heat. The engines are 300 hp. Chryslers with 4-barrel carburetors that drive the 18-ton cruiser to a top of 35 mph., according to Reiland, who says he cruises at 20 mph. The equipment—there's everything but radar, which Reiland had on his former 46 ft. Richardson—includes a Pearce-Simpson 132B radiotelephone, with remote controls to both bridge and cockpit. John F. Reiland will serve as Great Lakes area representative for the Enterprise boats, which are built in 37 ft. and 42 ft. models by Breuil Boat Co., North Miami Beach. . . . Reiland sold Phryne II, the 46 ft. Richardson, to M. Binder of Abbott Screw Co.

World's Champ

(From page 13)

himself probably included—by finishing third. He was beaten by Durwood Knowles and young Hilary Smart, but he trimmed Barney Lehman, George Fleitz, Bert Williams and other top caliber skippers.

One remarkable trait of Dick's that appeared early in his career, was an intense desire to win, balanced by a good natured resignation to losing. He never brooded, and never appeared to be upset when he really went into the tubes. Well, maybe once.

In 1949, Chicagoan Woody Pirie was the defending World Champion, and Dick lost the Wilmette Harbor eliminations to him. This was a time when he got ahead, but not quite far enough. He lost on a protest. No visible sign of remorse appeared until the first day of the World Championship at Belmont Harbor, Chicago. The series was sailed in what had come to be known as "Stearns' Weather." In the first race, Woody, and a fledgling named Lowell North

fouled out. The rest of the week you could see Stearns balefully staring over the windward side of the committee boat, watching Gold Stars fade over the horizon. That fatal moment a month before had cost him the chance to compete.

A few years later Dick married. He packed his bags for the honeymoon—and his sails for the World Championship at Gibson Island, Md. This was his closest knock on the Gold Star door till this year. In the fourth race he drew a 14th. That was enough, even with a 3rd in the final race, to leave Skip Etchells one point ahead.

By this time he was in business, having exhumed the firm of Murphy & Nye, dusted off the antique Singers and taken a few lessons from Harry Nye in sail cutting.

After an unspectacular first year, he discovered that sails could be made of orlon. Others were fiddling with nylon but the material had too much stretch for Star sails or other racing class sails. To Dick's credit, this was the business he was after.

His early experience in orlon gave Murphy & Nye the lead in synthetics when dacron materialized. The strange thing is, as Dick began to make spectacular sails, his racing record took a turn for the un-spectacular. He was always up there, and everyone who sailed against him knew they had been in a race. But for several years, he wasn't "up" for the World's. He has the theory that when you're "up" for it, you'll get it, and you never know when that's going to be.

In 1962, 19 years of sailing Star boats behind him, Stearns was "up" for the World's. This was probably the biggest thrill of his life. And maybe the next biggest thrill took place at O'Hare International Airport when his fellow Sheridan Shore YC. members greeted him with a full blown brass band.

Maybe it was worth 19 years of trying for.

ST. LOUIS & ALTON LAKE

Of all the river travellers making pilgrimages to St. Louis and Alton Lake this summer, the most glamorous were three nurses from Davenport, Ia. who made the three-day trip from Davenport in a 16 ft. runabout powered by a 35 hp. Evinrude. The three were making the trip at a leisurely pace, explained



Posing before Clifton Terrace Marina, Alton, Ill., are river travelers Mary Skalla, Katherine Bakeris, and Nancy Skalla, Davenport.

Miss Katherine Bakeris, owner of the boat, who is a member of Lindsay Park BC. at Davenport. She was accompanied by Mary and Nancy Skalla, sisters, who are fellow nurses at St. Luke's Hospital at Davenport. The three were surprised by the attention they got wherever they docked. They would go into towns to spend the evenings in motels and hotels. Underway they often stopped to sit in the sun or swim. They found folks most hospitable everywhere and told of the accommodating service by a boat dealer at Hannibal, who replaced the lower unit of their motor after it was cracked when they hit a submerged wing dam above Hannibal.

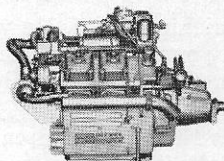
According to Bill Koch, operator of Mound City Boat Yard, near downtown St. Louis, there were considerably more boats passing by this season either going to New Orleans or to the Great Lakes. Capt. Bill, from his vantage on the waterfront, has a view of the never-ending river parade. The traffic included many smaller size boats and a number in the 50 to 60 ft. size, an 83 footer and even a 123 ft. yacht. New boat owners at Mound City's marina are Herman Grim and Roger Sims, who bought 28 ft. Chris-Crafts.

Winners in the annual Harbor Point YC. predicted log race were John Hauk with his cruiser Willy 9, with a percentage of error of 0.6481. Bertie Daw placed second with Roamer, 1.0813; Doug Blondell with Windward Star took third, 1.1761 and Joe Abt with his runabout was fourth, 1.460. Spencer Merrell won the Tail-End Charlie award with the greatest percentage of error. Two swimming pools were under construction at Harbor Point harbor.

In a mysterious night fire at Valley Sailing Assn., two 19 ft. Lightning class sailboats were destroyed in the blaze. A Lightning between the two burning boats was undamaged. The fire was discovered at 2 am. by the harbor caretaker. The burned boats were total losses and were owned by Joe French and Ralph Schmitt. . . . August Paoli of the VSA took second in the Lightning class at the Decatur Invitational Regatta.

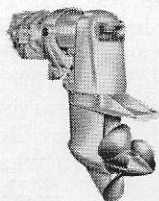
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