

fair and although its skin rippled and bulged in an interesting way when under strain, it proved much stronger than anyone supposed. In light airs the whole rig could be jacked up into the air. The boat had only one centreboard, in the port hull.

The defender was the old faithful, if not old reliable, *Lady Helmsman*, back in the hands of Reg White and John Osborne. She had had a new wing mast built for her according to the latest Farrar design. This was built like a glider wing with fabric and dope but proved to be no better than the older mast so this was in fact used. Thus, *Lady Helmsman* was in almost all respects a three-year-old boat.

It only needed two races to set the pattern for the series: *Lady Helmsman* has a clear superiority in a fresh breeze while *Yankee Flyer* has a clear superiority in a light breeze. Accordingly, after two fairly fresh days and one rather light day, the defender led by two races to one.

But it was in the third race, in a good Force 4, that the boats started throwing tantrums. Almost immediately after the start *Lady Helmsman* carried away one of her rudders, something that is not unknown on this boat. Reg White headed into the beach and, leaping ashore, asked John Fisk, one of the judges, if he could replace it. Fisk said "yes," which was wrong, because it is specifically banned by Rule 59. He later explained that if he had replied "no" he would have told them a piece of useful information which would have amounted to Outside Assistance. This sounds a bit like the riddle of the identical twins, one of whom always tells the truth, and the other of whom always lies. However, they *did* pick up a new rudder blade, thinking they had been given permission to do so, and then sailed off twelve minutes behind *Yankee Flyer*. Meanwhile, back on the Estuary, the aforesaid *Flyer* was seen to be lying stopped in the water with crew peering anxiously at the main beam. The rigging seemed strangely slack. Presently she was seen to be heading back to the beach, but hardly had she got under way than the whole boat folded slowly and gracefully in half, the mast falling down between the two hulls. Getting the crumpled remains ashore without further damage was no easy task, and it proved to be quite beyond the capabilities of the Thorpe Bay Y.C. official rescue boat which rounded off a display of poor seamanship by towing the wretched Americans into a moored boat, putting two large gashes in the precious wing mast. This would not have hurt quite so much had the rescue boat not insisted in taking over the tow from the Press launch which was first on the scene.

With *Yankee Flyer* grounded, White had only to sail over the course, or so he thought. In fact, he was disqualified for picking up equipment during the race. Eventually the committee became so confused that they declared the race null and void.

It turned out that *Yankee Flyer* had fractured her main beam, possibly as a result of the dolphin striker collapsing. Looking at the shattered pile of debris that was all that was left of the boat, I innocently thought that she would never sail again. But to Terry Pearce and his men at International Yacht Equipment it was just an interesting little repair job, and within thirty hours they delivered back to Thorpe Bay an identical-looking copy of *Yankee Flyer*.

The next two races can be quickly related. The third was in a strong wind and *Lady Helmsman* walloped *Yankee Flyer* by 15 minutes. The fourth was in a light wind and *Yankee Flyer* walloped *Lady Helmsman* by 11 minutes. Wait for next week's thrilling instalment.

The final race was on Saturday, September 21. The wind was fresh.

And so for another year the International "C" Class disappears back into the sheds and attics that are its normal home: no doubt to remain there till next September, when it will be rapidly dusted off just in time for another thrilling defence of the International Catamaran Challenge Trophy.



THE EUROPEAN FINN Championship held at Medemblik, Holland, at the beginning of September was a dress rehearsal for the Olympic Games in Mexico. Only two representatives from each country can take part and with three notable absentees, all the top Finn helmsmen of the world were present.

Medemblik is situated in Northern Holland on the IJsselmeer, a vast freshwater lake only some ten feet deep, and although the winds were generally light to moderate, a very steep chop was built up.

Arne Akerson of Sweden snatched the title from the virtual certain leaders, Uwe Mares of West Germany and Henning Wind of Denmark. At the start of the last race Mares had thirty points, Wind thirty-eight and Akerson forty-one. After the first round of this race Mares and Wind were in the leading bunch with Akerson lying eighth. At the gybe mark Akerson flung round onto starboard and sailed through the oncoming reaching fleet. Mares and Wind, more interested in each other and hesitant to sail in dirty wind and choppy water, let him go. Akerson soon picked up a twenty-five degree port lift which took him to second position which he maintained to the finish. Astern, Wind fought gallantly to finish fifth and Mares, completely demoralised, finished thirteenth. Thus in one brilliant tack former World Champion Akerson took the European Championship.

Racing was always of the highest standard, luffing matches did not exist and room was never unjustly claimed at marks. Every competitor demanded the best starting position and forty boats short tacked in the triangle between the stern of the mine sweeper committee boat

and the line. Surprisingly collisions were rare and immediately seen and registered by the hawk like eyes on the committee boat.

If the starts were incredible, the finishes were nothing short of miraculous. Often the entire fleet finished within two minutes and on one occasion a port tack boat, bearing away under the leader on approaching the line, found he had no option but to go under four others to finish sixth.

The two British representatives, John Maynard and Patrick Pym, finished thirteenth and fourteenth. Maynard's placings being fifth, seventh, tenth, twelfth and twelfth, and Pym's fifth, sixth, ninth, twelfth and fifteenth. Therefore, Maynard never had as bad a result as his overall position and Pym one better than his worst result. This clearly demonstrates the consistency and brilliance of the opposition on the Continent and if Maynard or Pym could have climbed into the first three places in any one race, they would have been in the first six overall. Their results, however, are encouraging for it is a few years since British Finns had such high results.

M.P.

Results:

1. A. Akerson (Sweden), 44 pts.
2. H. Wind (Denmark), 48 pts.
3. U. Mares (W. Germany), 48 pts.
4. V. Mankin (U.S.S.R.), 58.7 pts.
5. G. Andersson (Sweden), 61 pts.
6. A. Zaweiga (Poland), 64.7 pts.

British placings:—

13. J. Maynard, 75 pts.
14. P. Pym, 75.7 pts.

IRISHMEN FILLED THE first and second overall places, a Welsh entrant the third and a Scotsman the fourth in the National YW G.P.14 Championship meeting at Thorpe Bay on 25-30 August. The winner was Flt.-Lt. John McWilliam crewed by John Patterson in *Cymyran* who had two firsts and two seconds, discarding a disqualification when he won the race but his centreboard was declared under-size.

Runner-up was Paul Rowan crewed by Graham Gingles in *Trostan* from East Antrim.

Rowan won the first two races, was second in the third but broke his kicking strap when highly placed in the fourth points race and his inability to get into an overall-winning second position in the last race was due to the tenacity of J. Barnes of Lowton who finished 2nd in *Sea Flash*, and Josephine Scott of Bassenthwaite in *Miss Demeanour* who finished third covering Rowan. Had Rowan finished second he would have won with a better discard, a retirement against McWilliam's disqualification.

McWilliam and Rowan were head and shoulders in front of the next leading bunch in all the other races apart from when Rowan had to retire, when last year's champion W. Morris of Chase in *Frantic* gained second gun and was declared winner after McWilliam's dis-