

Patience can pay off in the sport of sailboat racing. Three local women persevered during a lull in the wind to win trophies in the November 20 Fall Regatta of the Venice Women's Sailing Squadron. Racing individually in three types of single-handed dinghies, the winners were Brenda Bell of Englewood in Sunfish, Judy Karr of Venice in International Optimist Dinghies, and Carol Miller of Venice in Clearwater Optimist Prams.

A gentle morning breeze out of the east greeted the women as they launched from Higel Park and Venice Yacht Club onto Roberts Bay. Six Sunfish racers sailed easily to their course set near where Hwy 41 crosses the bay. At the same time, four racers in IODs and 15 in prams enjoyed an easy beat to their course set near Bayshore Drive, just past the cluster of sailboats moored year-round in the bay.

Plans called for three races but the wind did not cooperate. Minutes after the start of the first race on both courses, the breeze dropped to almost a dead calm. Racing became a matter of maneuvering slowly through the water and finding enough wind to counter the current opposing the racers on some legs of the race. All fleets finished one race. Race committee officials waited in vain for a sea breeze to develop for a second race. When that didn't happen, they canceled further racing. Per regatta rules, one race was sufficient to declare winners.

Results

Sunfish (14-foot fiberglass boats with triangular sails): 1st Brenda Bell, 2nd Shirley Geoffrion, 3rd Pam Miller.

International Optimist Dinghies (9-foot fiberglass boats with sprit-rigged sails with battens): 1st Judy Karr, 2nd Penny Washburn, 3rd Gloria Casey.

Clearwater Optimist Prams (9-foot wooden or fiberglass boats with sprit-rigged sails without battens, most boats more than 40 years old): 1st Carol Miller, 2nd Karen Williams, 3rd Sylvia Turner.

VWSS, nicknamed the Bitter Ends, sails out of Higel Park and the facilities of Venice Youth Boating Assn. Membership is open to the public for women who complete their annual Learn to Sail Program in early fall. Go to www.bitterendsvenice.com for more info.

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