

SAILING

Co-champs share Triple Crown trophy

Richters of J/22 Committed and Heintz of Harbor 20 recognized as winners

BY BILL WAGNER

Competition to capture the Triple Crown of Charity Sailing Trophy gets closer and closer each year, and that is great news for the causes that benefit.

Established in 2018, the Triple Crown trophy recognizes the top fundraisers and on-water performers for the three charity regattas held annually in the Annapolis area.

Warren and Tracey Richter, owners of the J/22 Committed, were declared co-winners of the Triple Crown of Charity Sailing Trophy along with Harbor 20 skipper John Heintz during a ceremony held recently at the sparkling new Chesapeake Region Accessible Boating headquarters.

Heintz, who won the inaugural trophy in 2018 and again in 2022, blew the competition away in terms of total fundraising, bringing in a whopping \$23,000. However, the majority of that money was raised on behalf of the Maryland Cures Cancer Regatta that is near and dear to Heintz's heart.

The Richters are volunteer skippers with Chesapeake Region Accessible Boating, so the primary focus of their fundraising efforts is on that organization. The husband-wife duo posted the top total for the 17th annual CRAB Cup with \$3,400 in donations.

Warren and Tracey also did very well in terms of results for the three charity regattas, capturing class honors in both the CRAB Cup and Hospice Cup, while placing second for the Maryland Cures Cancer Regatta.

Organizers use the point totals for finishes in the three regattas along with fundraising rankings to determine the Triple Crown of Charity Sailing Trophy winner. This season, the calculations produced a tie between Heintz and the Richters.

“We were so surprised. We are honored to be co-champions and appreciate sharing the podium with a long-standing Triple Crown winner in John Heintz,” Tracey Richter said. “We are in this for the long haul and thought it would be years before this was a possibility. It is fun to compete, but ultimately we just enjoy racing and fundraising for these charities.” Warren and Tracey Richter feel passionate about the mission of CRAB, which provides recreational boating opportunities to people with disabilities and youngsters from underserved communities. For more than three decades, CRAB has introduced thousands of individuals to the therapeutic benefits of sailing through its fleet of Beneteau First 22A sloops.

However, the Richters also believe strongly in supporting the other two charity regattas and enjoy combining sailboat racing with fundraising to support them.

“These are local charities benefiting people in our communities and it is an easy and fun way for us to give back,” Tracey said.

The Richters primarily fundraised through word of mouth and social media with Warren’s parents being their biggest individual supporter.

This past summer, Heintz celebrated his eighth year as a leukemia survivor. He was declared cancer-free in June 2015 after undergoing chemotherapy and a bone marrow transplant.

Two of his brothers are also leukemia survivors as family members possess a mutant gene that predisposes them to the disease. Heintz competed in what was previously known as the Leukemia Cup the year he was diagnosed and has received tremendous support from family and friends ever since.

He is particularly appreciative of the considerable donations made annually by The Children in the Shoe and SailTime Annapolis. Latter is a Montgomery County child care business that is his oldest brother’s family business, while the latter is a shared sailboat club.

“I am also very grateful that the entire Harbor 20 fleet continues to support me and all three charity regattas,” said Heintz, whose boat is appropriately named Endurance.

Heintz captured class honors in the Hospice Cup with his nephew Sam as crew then took third in the Maryland Cures Cancer Regatta with National Sailing Hall of Famer Gary Jobson calling tactics. He finished third among single-handed entries in the CRAB Cup.

Dodge and his crew aboard the J/105 Kobayashi Maru placed third in the Triple Crown of Charity Sailing standings. Dodge’s team raised \$14,733 for the three charity regattas with most of that amount coming from their Hospice Cup efforts.

Weems and Plath is the sponsor of the Triple Crown of Charity Sailing Trophy and was represented at the presentation by vice president Drew Fleming. Formerly the Power Squadron of Baltimore’s Navigation Trophy, the repurposed piece of hardware is on permanent display at the CRAB Adaptive Boating Center on Back Creek.

A total of 250 boats and 1,000 sailors competed in the three charity regattas this season. Eastport Yacht Club, led by race committee chairman Bill Levatino, hosted the Maryland Cures Cancer Regatta and the CRAB Cup. Sailing Club of the Chesapeake provided on-water race management for the Hospice Cup.

Triple Crown of Charity Sailing Trophy winners

2018 — John Heintz; 2019 — Dan Flagler; 2020 — Dan Flagler; 2021 — John Dodge; 2022 — John Heintz; 2023 — John Heintz, Warren and Tracey Richter