

The VHYC and the Southern Massachusetts Sailing Association (SMSA) partnered this winter to bring adult team racing to the area. Vineyard Ventus (Latin for Wind) was born. The VHYC hosted the first of two Ventus regattas on July 11th. The second Ventus took place on August 8th.

All clubs in SMSA are invited to send sailors of all skill types. Sailors are grouped according to their experience level to build evenly matched teams. The teams then spar in a team race format, 3 boats per side. Each team uses the rules of sailing to advance their teammates past the opposing team. The team that finishes with the lowest combined team score wins the race. Team racing is unique with its short courses (15 minutes) and the concentration of the action.

July Ventus

30 sailors representing 4 clubs attended the inaugural Ventus. Clubs from Nantucket, Beverly, Vineyard Haven, and guests from Boston Community Boating were represented. After a very educational classroom style overview of the key aspects of team racing by Karl Ziegler the sailors headed out to the club owned Sonars. Our boats received a lot of attention this winter. Donations funded the refit of many systems and new sails. Thank you to Will Stevens and his team for getting the boats in top condition. It was exciting to see the boats head out to the course with VHYC burgees on the main sails!

Sailing began in a light southerly breeze. The racing was remarkably close with a lot of lead changes in each flight. This being a teaching event, no scores were kept, but that did not detract from fun competitiveness and outstanding seamanship by all. The participating clubs combined to form 3 compete teams who rotated after every two races. As the rust wore off and skills developed the race committee upped the ante with the call for spinnakers to be used in the final 4 races. Game on! Close racing with 6 boats with spinnakers makes for great spectating and is action packed for the sailors. As the 5-9 knot southerly died out the sailors headed to the barn having completed 14 races.

A social and debrief was held on the upper deck for sailors from remote shores to get to know each other and to discuss the various situations encountered on the water. Fun was had by all, thanks to a busy race committee lead by Ryan Stevens and Logan Ziegler, and thanks to wonderful lunches provided by the Club and the tremendous support from Lorne Lewis and his team.

August Ventus

Ventus #2 took place on August 8th. Beverly Yacht Club joined us for a great day, which began with a chalk-talk about team-racing strategy, led by Paul Wilson. The breeze was a super-light northerly for the entire day, which threatened to ruin all racing for the event. However, the Race Committee, led by Will Stevens, was somehow able to get off three solid races with square legs. A spirit of camaraderie underlined the event, with great racing, each club having moments of glory, and both clubs voluntarily sending their leaders back to the back of the fleet to keep the racing competitive when they got too far ahead. Goal: learn a lot while having solid, competitive racing. Goal achieved.

As with July, the racers and Race Committee gathered for a collegial social hour on the upper deck after it was all done. A terrific time was had by all!