

2024 Orlando Webb Memorial Regatta

I've been touring the MC Scow racing circuit for 15 years or so, and have heard great things about the Orlando Webb regatta at Lake Lotawana. Years ago, I looked at the lake in Google maps and wondered how this lake could possibly be good for racing MC Scows. Afterall, most scow lakes are big and round, so you can sail in any wind direction. But the adaptability of wind direction is the secret of Lake Lotawana. It looks like airport runway that is in the shape of a "T" which enables boats to sail long windward/leeward courses with virtually any wind direction. And because it is a smaller lake, there are no oversized motor boats creating endless chop. The lake has coves that dot the shoreline and make for interesting wind shifts and giving the locals a slight advantage. But that is part of the fun of racing on an unfamiliar lake...trying to beat the locals.

The 2024 Orlando Webb regatta had all wind conditions from all angles, which fully tested the flexibility theory of this unique "T" shaped lake. The race committee set some great courses and got racing off on time. 27 competitors came from 10 different states, including MC Scow former national champions.

Due to the narrowness of the lake, competitors found themselves tacking/gybing a lot, so good boat handling skills were essential. Saturday's races started out with fair winds, but later became light and (even more) shifty. Bill Draheim finds wind like a dog finds treats. In race three, he snuck off to the left which did not look good to me...but somehow he managed to sneak away, inches from docks, to find a small breeze that came out of no where and he won the race with ease. I generally "swing for the fences" when racing, so I took some risk and went left at the start on race 4 when most of the fleet went right. Two of us were out there and we finished 1 and 2. I took some risks in race 2, but ended up second to last, which goes to show how competitive this fleet was. Bill Draheim and Spencer Brackman (a local) finished the regatta 1 and 2, respectively, because they were consistently near the top in all 6 races. James Byrne (a former local) and Gary Schroeder (a local) finished 3 and 4. I eeked out a 5th place finish by 1 point. It was a fun regatta, and was "funner" because I did better than I expected.

The Missouri Yacht Club at Lake Lotawana is a first-class operation. They use cloth napkins...for dinner and BRUNCH...with waiters and all! The Orlando Webb regatta is a must-stop on your MC Scow regatta tour.

Devon O. Howe