



*Start of Soling North Americans at RYC in 1975.*

## THE SOLING

During the middle 1960's designers from around the world were invited to enter a new three-man keel boat in a competition to select an International design intended to replace the Dragon and 5.5 Meter in Olympic Competition. The maximum L.O.A. was to be 30 feet with a six foot beam. Forty boats competed in the series of races held in Europe and an International Yacht Racing Union Committee selected the Soling.

Designed by Jan Linge of Norway, it was neither the fastest nor the least expensive but an "in-between" boat that was simple in concept yet exciting to sail.

Designated as a three-man keel boat for the 1972 Olympics held in Kiel, Germany, the class has grown rapidly since. The prestige of being an Olympic Class gives the Soling worldwide acceptance, and the fleet at Rochester Yacht Club is now large and well established.

The Soling Fleet at RYC was triggered by Shumway Marine which put half dozen boats in inventory in 1969. During that season Frank Shumway and Jon Heinrich sailed the first Solings in this area. Late in 1969 several interested RYC members met to try to form a fleet for 1970. Bill Stolze was vocal in his praise of the Soling at this meeting, having sailed the boat at Steve Colgate's Offshore Sailing School. He, along with Jim Robfogel, Denis Doyle, Jerry Castle, Elliot Woodhull, Helen Ingerson with Neal Leach, Bernie Wahl with Gordon Murphy, Jon Heinrich, and Gene Faust, hit the starting line in 1970. Add to these Shirley Shumway or Tim Booth, whoever was sailing the Shumway Marine demonstrator, and the fleet was off to an impressive beginning. Bill Stolze was the fleet's first casualty selling his boat to Gordon Britton, a new member, who became one of the fleets strongest sup-

porters. John Odenbach, Jr., Doug Buchholz, and John Ozols joined the fleet shortly thereafter.

Gordon Murphy was the first Fleet Captain and organized the annual Firecracker Regatta over the Fourth of July which has since become one of the prime regional and International Soling events.

The keen interest and great enthusiasm of the fleet were prime factors in attracting to Rochester Yacht Club a number of National Regattas. In 1974 RYC hosted the Great Lake Soling Championships with Buddy Melges, 1972 Olympic Gold Medalist, as one of the competitors. In 1975 the Club hosted the North American Soling Championships with David Forbes, an Australian Olympic Gold Medalist, winning the event.

In 1976 the RYC Soling Fleet took advantage of the Olympics being sailed at Kingston, Ontario and sent invitations to all Olympic competitors to attend the Firecracker Regatta as a tune-up. The response was above expectations as crews from United Kingdom, Denmark, Spain, Brazil, Canada, Argentina, Puerto Rico, Australia, and Sweden all came, making it the best Firecracker Regatta in its short history, particularly since the Danes ultimately went on to win the Gold Medal.

The Olympics presented a challenge to members of the RYC Soling Fleet and Doyle, Odenbach, Palm, and Castle made it to the final trial held at Association Island. Although none finished in the top money, all felt that the experience of sailing against our country's top skippers was well worth the effort.

It should be noted that Gordon Britton was official Soling Measurer for the finals assisted by Tarry Polidor, John McGrath, Pat Polidor, Paul Petrinello, and Elliot

Woodhull; and that all press reports of the Trials were pointed in their praise of the measurers.

The fleet has grown and presently includes Denis Doyle, Jerry Castle, (these two have split the fleet championship over the last six years, each winning three times), John Odenbach, Jr. (the 1976 fleet champion and present Fleet Captain), Gordon Britton, Gene Faust, Skip Conover, Helen Ingerson, Glenn Litchfield, Bruce Cameron, Ron Palm, Herb LePage, John W. Clarke, and Elliot Woodhull.

The reason for this continued enthusiasm is simply that the Soling is an exciting boat to sail, one that has a keel but performs like a centerboarder. In addition, it has a self-tending jib which allows the boat to be day sailed by one person. Some of the finest competition in the world is available to the fleet members through many area regattas, especially the Canadian Olympic Regatta at Kingston (CORK). This fierce international level competition makes it easy for the fleet members to maintain their humility.



*Elliot Woodhull in one of the early Solings in 1970.*



*Ensign LA BATEAU, owner Jerry Battist, in 1970.*

## ENSIGNS

The Ensigns, designed by Carl Alberg and built by Pearson, was the first successful mass produced, "glassed" hull boat in the twenty foot LOA range. Many others have followed the Ensign's lead but none have approached its popularity or class interest. Well over a thousand have been built.

The Ensign's large cockpit, small but ample cabin area, and easily driven hull are among its best features. With a genoa jib and good sized spinnaker, the boat is a challenge to those who wish to race around the buoys and to those who enjoy a leisurely day sail, it is an ideal boat.

The boat's introduction to Rochester was through the efforts of Chuck Angle, Sr. who recognized a good thing, not only from a business point of view but the need of such a boat at the Club. Early owners were his brother, George Angle, for several years the club champion, and others.

In recent years its racing activity has declined. Some boats have drifted away to the Finger Lakes, noticeably Canandaigua. However, those who are the current owners still appreciate the Ensign which is destined to become a "classic" in the history of yacht design.