

On Jun 15, 2026, at 5:50 PM, Michael Stratton

Mohican Sailing Club's

HSA's Laura Peters was back on the road again this past weekend. It was the Mohican Sailing Club's first Sunfish regatta and her only real obstacle to the title was the wily Wisconsin wind wizard Mark Kastel.

While the club at home was having fun squeezing in some big wind action before the storm Sunday, some of HSA was up north on Charles Mills Lake trying to do the same thing in similar conditions.

The contest got underway on Sunday after a Saturday clinic for new and intermediate racers and after much discussion about whether we would even venture out with a forecast calling for gusts in the twenties. The call was made: we were to go out and stay as long as we could.

Peters got off to a good start. She won the first race with Kastel a close second. Kastel got a good lead in race two and won it comfortably with Peters second on the long modified Olympic course. It seemed as if it would be a fight between the two of them in this regatta and it was. But there were some interesting twists coming in races three and four.

The committee was keeping an eye on the sky and trying to get in at least three races with the wind auto tacking boats and caterwauling around the compass in the general direction of the windward mark at 10-15 mph. Despite the wind strengthening, race three was on. Kastel and Peters were tied with three points apiece.

At the windward mark, Yours Truly took the early lead and Kastel was in third with Peters right beside him. Another boat, Bill Sanderson from the home club, was in second and the two of us a good distance in front. Was this her moment? With the fourth race in doubt, she needed to close him down.

The bullet went to me, by a few seconds or so, but Peters didn't need to win. She just needed to beat Kastel, who, on the last leg, had caught up to Sanderson on the left side of the course and the two of them fought to cross first at the pin end.

Sanderson won that duel, keeping Kastel from a two point lead over Peters, but I crossed first, coming from the right side and surprised even the committee, who were focused on the Sanderson/Kastel finish. Peters crossed fourth and Kastel now had a one point lead.

Despite the approaching dark clouds to the west, the committee decided to get in a fourth race. Peters didn't need a bullet, but she had to beat Kastel in this race by one point to tie. The tiebreaker was in her favor and the title would be hers.

In this fourth and final race, Peters and Kastel left Sanderson and me behind enough to make it a two horse race for the bullet and the first place trophy. On the leg to the finish, each were making their final approach to the line, tacking close to one another near the pin end.

Then a sudden, violent gust struck in the middle of her tack and Peters found herself in the water and her boat over on its side. Kastel crossed first and it was over.

Peters luck continued to run bad. She quickly righted her boat but not before both Yours Truly and Sanderson had crossed, leaving her with another fourth place finish and now in tie with me for second. The tiebreaker for second place went to the third protocol and she ended up third.

HSA's Dom Everaet capsized in race three just as he too had tacked to the finish. He also righted his boat quickly and only lost one spot, picking up the fifth place trophy in the process.

Results:

1. Mark Kastel LaCrosse Sailing 2 1 3 1 7
2. Mike Stratton HSA 5 3 1 2 11
3. Laura Peters HSA 1 2 4 4 11
4. Bill Sanderson Mohican Sailing 4 4 2 3 13
5. Dom Everaet HSA 3 6 5 7 21
6. John Stevens Pymatuning Sailing Club 7 5 6 5 23
7. Paul Denzinger Mohican Sailing 6 7 7 8 28
8. Kellar Braun Mohican Sailing 9 9 9 6 33
9. Chris Jacomo Dayton unaffiliated 8 8 8 9 33

It was the first annual *Big Fish in a Small Pond Sunfish Regatta* for the Mohican club near Mansfield as the new Sunfish fleet there held a Saturday clinic for new and intermediate racing sailors and the Sunday regatta described above.

The clinic, similar to the one HSA held last year, was led by Kastel and lasted all day Saturday. Practice racing began about 3:30 that day in a tough breeze even for veterans with gusts in the low 20's.

Still we managed to get in several practice starts and several races before calling it a day with twelve boats, half of which were manned by new or intermediate racing sailors. Yes, there were capsizes.

Four boats went over during those practices as the gusty wind averaged 10-15 mph with shifts that were often sudden and strong. Auto tacks were a constant threat. Once on shore the discussion centered on the next day's regatta where the wind was predicted to be quite strong.