

BY ROSEMARIE COLOMBRARO ~ PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD SHEINWALD

Sail Races



THE WORLD'S BEST SEA SCOUT SAILORS COME TOGETHER EVERY TWO YEARS TO COMPETE IN THE KOCH CUP.

Sea Scouts compete neck-and-neck during the early portion of the Koch Cup race.

Center: Wisconsin Sea Scout Amberose Kramer stays focused during the Kiwi Cup race. Right: Tyler Wolk and Drew Brenneman raise the flag on shore.



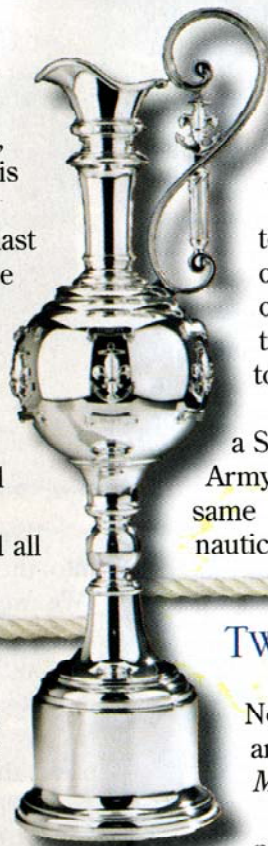
THE RACES OF THE SEA SCOUT CUP TAKE ONLY THREE DAYS, BUT COREY KEMP AND JONATHAN HARADA HAVE BEEN WORKING TOWARD THIS MOMENT FOR FOUR YEARS.

Ever since Corey's participation as the crew of the 2002 winning team, he has been looking forward to the 2006 race, when he would compete as skipper of his own ship.

And now, on the final day of racing last July, Corey, with Jonathan as his crew, are flying across the water on their Vanguard 420 sailboat, their backs almost dipping into the sea, as they guide their boat toward the finish line.

They've had to overcome consistent 17-knot winds and foot-high waves, as well as 28 other racing teams.

But in just a few more minutes, it will all be worth it.



The Sea Scout program is part of the Boy Scout Venturing program. It is open to boys or girls from the ages of 14 to 20 years.

Sea Scout units, called "ships," learn to safely operate and care for sailboats or other vessels, and learn the meanings of lights, buoys, how to use winds and tides to sail, and many other techniques to manage a boat.

"Comparing a Boy Scout troop with a Sea Scout ship is kind of like comparing Army with Navy," says Jonathan, 18. "The same ideals are there, but the latter is all nautical."

90 YEARS AT SAIL

Businessman and 1992 America's Cup winner William Koch created the William I. Koch International Sea Scout Cup regatta in 2002 to honor the 90th anniversary of the Sea Scout program. Sea Scouts compete in a series of races every two years at different locations, sailing a fleet of identical Vanguard boats.

The Koch Cup is an international regatta with ships from across the world. The 2006 event, held at Coral Reef Yacht Club in Biscayne Bay off Miami, Fla., featured 12 races in a two-day period, plus one day of qualifying.

The winner's cup looks similar to the America's Cup and is engraved with the Scout Law and the Scout Oath. The trophy resides at the National Scouting Museum in Irving, Tex.

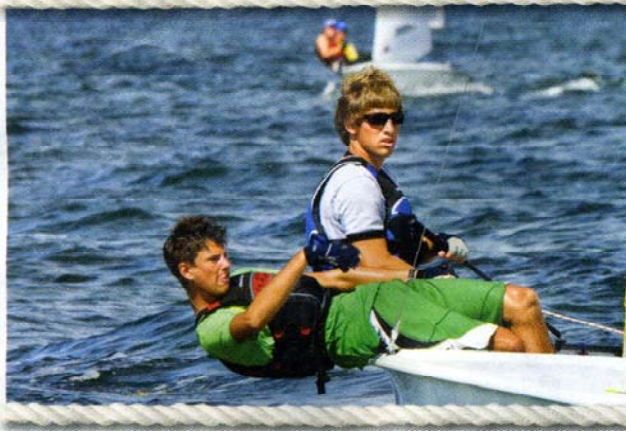
TWO SCOUTS BY SEA

Ship 711 uses Newport Sea Base in Newport Beach, Calif., as its home base and operates a 43-foot sloop named *Del Mar* for training.

The members of Ship 711 aren't newcomers to sailing. Earlier the same year, their ship was honored with the National Sea Scout Flagship Award trophy as the top performing Sea Scout unit in the country. The award recognizes excellence in program quality, youth achievement and adult commitment.

And members of the ship had competed in both previous Koch Cup races—in 2002 and 2004—and won both of them.

Each team of Sea Scouts consists of two people—a skipper and a crew. Corey was crew under skipper Tom Hartman in 2002, but this year he's skipper. ➤



Left: California Sea Scouts Tyler Wolk and Evan Wannamaker try to keep their boat on course. Right: Sailors get a feel for the water during a practice session.

➤ The 2006 team put in as many practice hours as possible, working with coaches on tactical sailing. They also worked with other Sea Scout ships that came to the harbor on Fridays, practicing line starts and racing strategies.

"Teamwork is probably one of the most important things for sailing," Jonathan says. "In racing it is even more important because timing is key. You have to think with your partner that you are sailing with, be able to make split-second decisions, be able to adjust properly and still maintain as much speed as possible so you don't lose any ground."

Time passed quickly, and the two years of training were behind them. The team traveled to Biscayne Bay for a day of practice, then a qualifying day. The top qualifying boats compete for the Koch Cup, and the remaining sailors compete for the Kiwi Cup, a Maori carving donated by New Zealand Sea Scouting.

HIKING TO THE WIN

The Koch Cup uses a format called a windward-leeward course. The races start with an upwind run to a windward mark, run downwind to a leeward mark, then sail back upwind to the starting line, which becomes the finish line.

The first race day was fairly calm, with winds at around 7 to 9 knots. But just as on a hiking trip, conditions can change.

"The last day it was really windy—20 to 22 knots with gusts up to 25 knots," Jonathan says. "We had to switch gears. We had a bunch of squalls coming in from the coast that day so it was really choppy."

This is when sailing becomes adventure.

"You are doing a one-third-mile course up into the wind so you are trying to keep the boat flat for that whole time," Jonathan says. "You are completely hiked out."

Coming back, the team has the wind behind them.

SEA SCOUTING RANKS, FROM BEGINNER TO EXPERT:



APPRENTICE



ORDINARY



ABLE

QUARTERMASTER



"We kept it flat and kept the bow from bearing into the water and pitchpoling," Jonathan says. "We were hauling pretty fast. During the first two days it would take 15 to 25 minutes to do the course, but on the last day it was taking 12 minutes. We were flying!"

As Ship 711 crosses the finish line in first place, the boys feel as if a weight has been lifted.

"Crossing the finish line was the most powerful thing I have experienced in racing," Corey says. "It was the best rush ever."

But the Sea Scouts took away more from this than just a trophy.

"Racing is not only about winning or losing," he says. "Sportsmanship and acting sportsmanlike on the water is printed in the racing rules of sailing."

"I got to meet tons of new people and great sailors from around the globe." ♦

The 2008 William I. Koch International Sea Scout Cup is scheduled for July 13 to 19 at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md.

