

THE CAL 25 ON THE CHESAPEAKE BAY A BRIEF HISTORY

The CAL 25 was introduced by Jensen Marine in the early 1960s. At that time it was considered a lightweight champ and would frequently finish 1-2-3 in handicap events for boats under 30 feet. The designer was Bill Lapworth who was still the skipper of hull No. 1 until a few years ago.

By the late 1960s, the CAL 25 was gaining popularity nationwide with Fleets forming from Florida to Hawaii. In 1967 Jensen established a plant in New Jersey to supply the East Coast. (Starting with the 600 hull numbers, the boats with the even numbered first or first two digits were fabricated in New Jersey.) In 1968, the Chesapeake Bay CAL 25 Fleet was formally organized and informal one design racing began. Plans were also made to apply for full Chesapeake Bay Yacht Racing Association (CBYRA) accreditation as a Cruising One Design (COD) class. (CBYRA is the official governing body of Chesapeake Bay racing and has been in existence since 1934.) Based on an average participation of 9 boats per race in 1969 probationary races, full accreditation was achieved due in large part to the efforts of Fleet Captain John Sutton.

As membership grew, expanded schedules of both racing and cruising events were established. In 1971, the Fleet sponsored the first Eastern Regional CAL 25 Championship Regatta. The Extended Cruise Week was also inaugurated. The Fleet increased to over 60 members in 1974 and surpassed 100 members by 1977. In that year, Steve Bandy (611 - which he still owns) was the Chesapeake Bay participant in the CAL 25 National Championships in California where he finished sixth.

The Chesapeake Bay Fleet hosted its first National Championships in Annapolis in 1978. Out of a fleet of 33 boats (the largest number of CAL 25s to ever cross a starting line), Steve Bandy this time won the Nationals as he did again in 1979, 1980, 1981, and in Annapolis in 1982 with 25 boats participating.

In 1985, the New Orleans Fleet conducted its first National Championships with three Chesapeake Bay skippers participating. Al Gooch of New Orleans was the victor with Sam Patterson of Annapolis finishing second and Bob Kirstine, the defending (1989) National Champion from Long Beach, finishing third. At the national meeting conducted in conjunction with the racing event, a constitution modification was drafted to hold the Nationals on a rotating basis with the Fleets from New Orleans, the Chesapeake Bay, Detroit, and Long Beach hosting the event in turn. (Provision was made for new Fleets to enter the rotation.)

In 1986, Chesapeake Bay CAL 25 Association hosted the Nationals. The hotly contested series of 5 races, with three out-of-town entries, was won by John Jenkins, a local entrant who will be attempting to regain the title in this year's event.