

Twelfth edition of Quebec Cup a major success



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Twenty-four competitors converged in Pointe Claire over the weekend

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The Quebec Cup, a sailing competition for people bearing a physical handicap for which 24 competitors from North America converged in Pointe Claire for two days of intense competition took place over the weekend.

This was the twelfth edition of the Quebec Cup, an event organized by the Association Québécoise de Voile Adaptée (AQVA). Handicapped people from Montreal, Ottawa, New York State and as far as Connecticut had come to compete in the two different categories (silver and gold) on Martin 16 boats.

The gold part is the most competitive portion of the two with sailors going solo in their boats except of course for the quadriplegic competitors who require the aid of a helper to manoeuvre their boats.

In the silver portion of the competition, sailors are accompanied by a helper at all time. The weather was sunny with mild winds for this weekend's competition. It was a challenge for the 13 gold cup sailors and 11 silver class competitors to get the maximum out of their sailing boats but for something of executive director of AQVA René Dallaire who sailed in the gold class, the weekend was a lot of fun.

"There were light winds on Saturday but it was still very, very nice to sail. Today (Sunday) was even milder winds, and that kind of wind it can just, with a few errors, it can make you go down a few places in the rankings. Yesterday was the same. A lot of good sailors got cut with errors," he said.

Finishing first in the gold class was Laval's Marc Villeneuve who has participated three times in the Quebec Cup before. He bore a smile on his face after he was awarded the cup Sunday afternoon.

"It was a close race. It's certainly pleasant to win because there are very good competitors participating in the race. To be able to beat them to the finish is fun," he said.

Basil Katsilavis won in the silver class at his second year of sailing. Sarah Shima of Ottawa was competing for the first time in the Quebec Cup as 2012 is her first year of sailing. For Shima who has Guillain-Barre syndrome, an autoimmune syndrome that forces her to use a walker after having used a wheelchair for several months, the sport of sailing is simply liberating.

"Coming out of the hospital after ten months and being in a wheelchair, just the freedom of being in a boat makes you feel like you have no handicap at all. It's so freeing, so amazing" she said.