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With the building of "Lanai" in 1925, from designs by Clinton H. Crane, the second phase of American Six-Metre racing began

Fifteen Years of the Six-Metres

By

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THE year 1936 will be the fifteenth anniversary of the birth of the International Six-Metre Class in the United States. It is, then, a fitting time to look back into the past, refresh our memories as to the different phases of development of the class and pay some small measure of tribute to these fine

little boats, the men who designed them, built their hulls and rigs, and raced them with such enthusiasm that there is no International Rule class in the country that can match the "Sixes" for keenness and continuity of international competition.

From four boats, built in 1921 to fly the burgee of the Seawanbaka Corinthian Yacht Club at Cowes, in a team match with a quartet of English boats, the class has grown until no less than 65 racing numbers have been allotted in the United States. The most significant factor in the spread of the "Sixes" to nearly every racing center of importance is that only seven units of the Six-Metre fleet are foreign built. Fifty-eight were designed and constructed by Americans.

Many naval architects in the United States and nearly every racing sail boat builder has contributed to the development and success of this class which has come to be regarded as the aristocrat of small boat racing. There is hardly an "internationalist" of note on the Atlantic Coast who has not sailed a Six-Metre for some major trophy.

Take the builders, for instance. The name plates of

Nevens, Wood and Jacob of City Island, Luders, Herreshoff, and Lawley, appear on all except six of the American-built hulls. The remainder were molded and fastened in scattering, lesser known yards.

The list of Six-Metre designers reads like a "Who's Who in Naval Architecture" — Crane, Burgess, Gielow, Paine, Gardner, Herreshoff, Mower, Fred and Sherman Hoyt, Luders, and Stephens.

A by no means complete roster of expert helmsmen who have commanded "Sixes" in foreign competition includes Henry L. Maxwell, R. deB. Boardman, E. Townsend Irvin, Clinton H. Crane, C. D. Mallory, Cornelius Shields, Paul Hammond, J. Seward Johnson, Van S. Merle Smith, Briggs Cunningham, Sherman Hoyt, Robert B. Meyer, P. J. Roosevelt, Butler Whiting, Herman Whiton, W. A. W. Stewart, and "Bubbles" Havemeyer. That will give some idea of the sort of handling these high geared, sensitive racing machines have had.

With the country's ranking designers drawing the plans, the nation's best boat builders practicing their craft in the all-important matter of construction, the best sailmakers exerting their skill and imagination, and the most eminent small boat skippers handling the finished product, it is small wonder that the class has flourished in a country once thought to be irrevocably wedded to the Universal Rule of measurement. In this case, at least, it has been proved that more even racing from year to year has been possible under

"Lea," left, one of the early American "Sixes," built in 1922 from Gielow designs, was successful for many years. Below, "Cherokee," from a design by Sparkman & Stephens, Inc., is one of the modern successful "Sixes" which marked the beginning of the third phase of the class in the United States

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the International Rule than in Universal Rule open classes. There are ten-year-old boats still winning prizes on the Pacific Coast, and the latest Six-Metre team to represent the United States in an international test was made up of a 1930 hull, one built a year later, and a boat turned out in 1934.

Hardly a year has passed since the first "Sixes" were built here that the United States has not been represented in at least one international race or series of races in the class. Our Six-Metre owners have raced their craft in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, England, Scotland, France, Canada and Bermuda. Europeans and British Colonials have repaid these visits. The intrinsic and traditional value of trophies for which the Six-Metres have fought is well nigh incalculable. To name a few of the better known, we might mention the Scandinavian Gold Cup, the One-Ton Cup, Prince of Wales Trophy, Seawanhaka Challenge Cup, the George Cup, on the Lakes, the British-American Cup, and Santa Barbara's new Nahlin Trophy.

How did all this start? Who was responsible for giving the class its impetus in this country? What kept it



The Six-Metre team which invaded England in 1932 and won decisively. Left to right, "Lucie," "Bobkat II," "Nancy," "Jill"

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going? These are all pertinent questions that might be answered before we delve further into the activities of the class.

At the beginning of the last decade, American and British yachtsmen were able to turn their attention from the war to their favorite sport. The Seawanhaka Corinthian Yacht Club, that stronghold of international yachting in Oyster Bay, L. I., entered into negotiations with four English clubs, the Royal Yacht Squadron, the Royal Thames, Royal London, and Royal Victoria, for a team match. At first it was planned to race in the 20-rater Universal Rule Class R boats here and in Six-Metres abroad, but the idea had obvious drawbacks.

Paul Hammond, W. A. W. Stewart and Percy Chubb represented Seawanhaka in these negotiations and eventually it was agreed that the racing should be between four-

auspicious beginning in some respects, but from another point of view not at all disappointing considering our unfamiliarity with the rule.

A return match was scheduled for Oyster Bay in 1922 and the interest aroused by the inauguration of the British-American Cup series was reflected in the rush to build boats to try for places on the American team. No less than thirteen "Sixes" were built in this country in 1922, the greatest number in any single season in the history of the class.

In this boom year ten different designers went to work. Sidney Herreshoff, Charles D. Mower, Clinton H. Crane, Addison G. Hanan, Frederick M. Hoyt, W. Starling Burgess, Frank C. Paine, C. Sherman Hoyt, and John Alden toiled over their boards. Nevins, Wood, Lawley, Herreshoff, and Jacob put their best boat builders to work.

Grebe, a short-ended boat with good beam, experienced consistent success under the handling of Richard deB. Boardman and E. Townsend Irvin, and was for years the heavy weather "ace" of American teams. She made the team in 1922 when the fleet was enlarged by the addition of *Cygnets*, *Priscilla*, *Peggy*, *Ballyhoo*, *L'Esprit*, *Clytie*, *Ace*, *Mosca*, *Lea*, *Nanwa*, *Sycc*, *Viva* and *Undertaker*.

Of this fleet, *L'Esprit*, the design of the well-known amateur sailor, Addison Hanan, *Clytie*, which as *Clio* is still carrying No. 9 in Pacific Coast racing, from Fred Hoyt's board, and *Lea*, designed by Henry J. Gielow, proved to be outstanding boats. *Lea* had years of racing success before she was outbuilt and is still in use on Long Island Sound for day sailing.

Mosca, a scow, and gaff-rigged instead of carrying her canvas in a jib-headed main, the rig which had become accepted as the most efficient for racing, never did well. *Nanwa*, a clipper-bow creation of an amateur designer, was slow. *Viva*, built for a Larchmont Yacht Club Syndicate, was an extremely narrow hull and a lovely looking little vessel, but unfortunately was not as fast as she was attractive. *Undertaker*, whose name was later changed to *Question*, took a while to get going. She eventually proved her worth by winning the Childs Cup on the Sound in 1925, her competitors including the successful British-built *Betty*, which

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One of the latest "Sixes," "Challenge," from the board of A. E. Luders, Jr., shows the recent development in the class. She successfully defended the Seawanhaka Cup last summer.

Right, "Maybe," the Swedish "Six" which introduced the so-called Genoa jib to America in 1927. She is now owned on the West Coast.

boat teams made up of Six-Metre yachts from each country. The British-American Cup came into being. It was decided that the first country to win two matches in succession would take permanent possession of the cup.

Six-Metres were by no means new abroad. The class was well established over there but the only American boat fitting the rule was *Lady Betty*, built in 1915 by F. W. Stone, from designs of J. W. Dickie. Obviously, this would not do, so American designers, total strangers to the International Rule, were called upon to produce four boats to send to Cowes in 1921 to meet the pride of England's fleet.

The firm of Burgess & Paine turned out *Jean* and *Sakie*. The late William Gardner designed *Montauk* and *Grebe*. To England went these forerunners of our largest and most active International Rule class and absorbed a 117 to 88 defeat on points from the British quartet. Not a particularly



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had been purchased by Henry L. Maxwell.

The improvement in the American boats was reflected in the results of the 1922 team race, which the Americans won, 111 to 104. Not an overwhelming margin, but enough.

After the feast of 1922, there was a famine in 1923, only two boats being built. Henry Plant's *Ingomar* eventually was sold to an English yachtsman, and *Hawk*, her contemporary, remained here to make a name for herself on the Sound.

At Cowes again, in 1923, the British had all the best of things. They defeated our team 129 to 86 and thus inspired American yachtsmen to do something about the situation before the 1924 match. Eight boats were built. Of these, Clinton Crane's *Heron* proved outstanding in heavy going and generally good under most conditions. She was a team member for several years. William Gardner's *Dauphin* worked out well and was a consistent performer. Other boats that came out in 1924 were *Madcap* and *Firefly*, both now on the Lakes, *Paumonok*, *Iris*, *Natka* and *Romany*.

Despite this effort in 1924 we could not save the first British-American Cup. Conditions of the competition were altered so that instead of adding up points for six races to decide the winner, the match went to the team winning four out of seven races. The Britishers did just that in the series off Oyster Bay and retired the trophy.

Thus ended the first phase of the Six-Metre Class in the United States. Twenty-seven boats had been built in the period from 1921 through 1924; four matches were sailed for the British-American Cup, and the new "Sixes" invaded the realm of Seawanhaka Challenge Cup competition. The Scottish entry *Coila III* had beaten *Sakie* for this trophy at Marblehead in 1922 and successfully defended it at Rothesay against the 1923 challenge of *Lea* and the 1924 invasion of *Unni*, a Norwegian boat.

The credit for introducing the Six-Metres in this country and their early development obviously belongs to the Seawanhaka Corinthian Yacht Club. Its energetic sponsoring of international small boat racing started things, and kept them going. The more recent history of the class reveals how diligently Seawanhaka has kept the light burning, even during the darkest depression years.

With the building of *Lanai*, from Crane designs, by a Seawanhaka syndicate in 1925, a new era began in American Six-Metre racing. *Lanai* was an unqualified success. She went to Scotland and beat *Coila III* in a four-race series for the Seawanhaka Cup in 1925. In 1926 she made a trip to Scandina-

vian waters and under command of Herman F. Whiton won the Gold Cup, something no other American boat has done since.

Lanai's triumph proved a bonfire in stimulating interest in the class. No "Sixes" were constructed in 1926 but with the Swedes, Danes, Finns and Norwegians coming over in 1927 to try for the Seawanhaka and Gold Cups, American yachtsmen built five new boats — *Frieda*, *Clytie II* and another *Priscilla* (later *Alerion*) from Mr. Crane's board; *Picaro*, designed by Fred Hoyt, and *Atrocia*, somewhat of a freak in rig, developed by Sherman Hoyt and Henry L. Maxwell.

Clytie was selected to defend the Seawanhaka Cup and was beaten in a five-race series by *Noreg*, owned by Crown Prince Olaf of Norway and sailed by Magnus Konow. The Swedish entry, *Maybe*, sailed by Sven Salen, won the Gold Cup. West Coast yachtsmen, beginning to take interest in the class, were so impressed that they bought *Maybe* and *Ay-Ay-Ay*. Obviously, the Scandinavians had learned something about Six-Metres which had escaped us. They made good use of overlapping jibs, which we now know as Genoas, but which are often called Swedish jibs.

In 1928 Clinton H. Crane took *Akaba* to Norway and with her won the Seawanhaka Cup, sailing against *Figaro V*. That same year the British-American Cup matches were revived, the Royal Northern and Royal Clyde Yacht Clubs of Scotland joining the original signatories. A new agreement provided for biennial races alternating between this country and Great Britain. In the first race for the new trophy, held off Hunters Quay, Scotland, the American team, *Akaba*, *Heron*, *Lanai* and *Redhead*, the latter a 1925 boat, was beaten three races to one by the British.

Wasp, the only double-ended "Six" built in this country, came out in 1928 from L. Francis Herreshoff's designs, and Sherman Hoyt produced *Salema*, a good boat now racing on the West Coast as *Zoa*. Mark this down as the end of the second phase of the class. The picture changed again in 1930 and from that time on American "Sixes" proved superior to the output of British designers and virtually the equal of the best work of the Scandinavian naval architects.

With the beginning of the new decade, new influences came into the class and helped to shape its course through the next five years. J. Seward Johnson, of Seawanhaka, became an enthusiastic and generous convert to Six-Metre racing, and built one boat after another in his quest for perfection and the honor of places on our international teams. The Royal Bermuda Yacht

Club took up the class, instituted the Prince of Wales Trophy series, and invited American yachtsmen to come down and race against their Norwegian-built "Sixes." Year after year Long Island boats have squared off against the Bermudians and the resulting competition for H.R.H.'s prize has been hot enough to melt the lead from the keels of the contestants. And a young designer, Olin J. Stephens II, took a headlong plunge into what every knowing yachtsman considered the severest test of a naval architect's ability at that time—the International Six-Metre Class.

Late in 1929 young Stephens designed his first Six, *Thalia*, for Lewis G. Young, of Rye. She was raced in Bermuda the following spring against the Norwegian importations sailed by Hamilton's experts and did not distinguish herself. Neither did she discourage her designer. He turned out *Mist* in 1930, another boat that might have done better under more skilful handling. Even so, *Mist* had the distinction of being the first of our "Sixes" to use a loose-footed mainsail.

Stephens produced three other boats in 1930, *Comet*, *Meteor*, sister boats for Great Lakes yachtsmen, and *Cherokee*. The first two were tuned up on the Sound and did very well under varied conditions.

The team that year was made up of *Lucie* and *Mars*, two Crane boats; *Aphrodite*, designed and sailed by Sherman Hoyt, and *Cherokee*. This team defeated the British invaders in four straight races, and *Cherokee* won the Sound championship that season.

In this third five-year phase of Six-Metre building and racing in this country, twenty boats have been built. *Cherokee*, *Lucie*, *Bobkat II*, *Jill*, *Anis*, *Nancy*, *Challenge*, and *Meteor* have all been outstanding in this crop. *Cherokee* made the British-American Cup team in 1930, won the Y.R.A. title that year, was runner-up in the 1931 Gold Cup race, and made the United States team which faced the Scandinavians in 1935 on the Sound. *Bobkat*, *Jill* and *Nancy* teamed with the Crane-designed *Lucie* to make a clean sweep of the British-American Cup

races at Cowes in 1932. *Jill* won the Seawanhaka Cup from *Maida*, of the Royal Northern Yacht Club, on the Clyde later that season, and *Bobkat* defended the trophy against the Scottish challenger, *Kyla*, off Oyster Bay in 1934, after the American team, made up of *Bobkat*, *Lucie*, and two boats, *Challenge* and *Anis*, from the board of another young designer, A. E. Luders Jr., had beaten the invaders decisively in the British-American Cup series.

Jill has one leg on the Prince of Wales Trophy for Six-Metres in Bermuda, and *Meteor* won the George Cup for the Rochester Yacht Club on the Lakes last summer.

So, we find that since 1930, American "Sixes" have not lost so much as a race of any kind to British-built craft. With the Scandinavians it has been touch and go. Since 1930 our boats have repeatedly come close to winning their major trophies but have never quite succeeded. Last summer, *Challenge*, defending the Seawanhaka Cup against *Norna*, a Norwegian boat, won the series after losing the first two races. This match was followed by a team race between three American boats, *Cherokee*, *Jill* and *Challenge*, and three Scandinavians, *Norna*, and *Ian III* of Sweden, and *Dodo* of Denmark. On total points for five races, the visitors won by the slimmest of margins.

A study of the development of Six-Metre design would be too technical and too long for pursuit here, but the following table of comparative dimensions and sail areas of early boats and their outstanding successors will give the reader some idea of how the class has grown from a small, short water line boat with a big sail plan, to a long, narrow, deep hull with less measured sail area.

What will 1936 bring? We have a British-American Cup visit to pay to the Clyde, the Gold and One Ton quests to maintain in Scandinavia, and a part in the Olympic yachting program at Kiel. Then, too, Santa Barbara wants an Eastern team of "Sixes" to race their best for the Nahlin Trophy, and the Prince of Wales Cup will be in competition again in April when spring comes to Bermuda.

Year Built	Name of Yacht	Length		Beam	Draft	Sail Area in sq. ft.
		O.A.	W.L.			
1921	<i>Montauk</i>	33' 2"	21' 2"	7'	4' 11"	488
1921	<i>Grebe</i>	36'	21' 9"	7' 4"	5' 1"	479
1922	<i>Lea</i>	31'	22' 9"	6' 8"	5' 3"	518
1922	<i>Cygnnet</i>	30'	22' 6"	8'	5'	510
1923	<i>Hawk</i>	32' 9"	22' 6"	7' 3"	4' 10"	495
1924	<i>Heron</i>	32'	21'	6' 10"	4' 11"	483
1925	<i>Lanai</i>	34' 6"	21' 9"	6' 9"	5' 1"	475
1927	<i>Clytie</i>	34' 7"	21' 9"	6' 6"	5' 1"	495
1928	<i>Saleema</i>	36' 9"	23' 6"	6' 4"	5' 3"	450
1930	<i>Mars</i>	36' 0"	23'	6' 3"	5' 3"	470
1931	<i>Bobkat II</i>	36' 9"	23' 6"	6' 8"	5' 4"	440
1931	<i>Jill</i>	37'	23' 7"	6' 5"	5' 4"	450
1931	<i>Lucie</i>	37'	23'	6' 6"	5' 3"	456
1934	<i>Challenge</i>	37'	23' 5"	6' 4"	5' 4"	451
1934	<i>Erne</i>	40' 1"	23' 9"	6' 9"	5' 5"	450

The above dimensions are from Lloyd's Register.