John Kolius
Skipper - America II
The Odds-On Favorite

John Kolius collects trophies almost as casually as most people collect loose change. He sailed the Sears Cup when he was 17 — and won. Then came the Malory Cup and a pair of wins in the J-24 World Championships, a first in the Soling North America Championships, a silver medal in the '76 Olympics, and class wins in four of the past five years on the Southern Ocean Racing Circuit.

In the process, the 33-year-old sailmaker from Texas has established an almost unprecedented reputation as skipper and organizer. What’s left? The America’s Cup, obviously. “It’s the ultimate,” Kolius said.

Kolius was appointed skipper of the New York Yacht Club’s 12-meter challenger AMERICA II, after his impressive performance on Courageous in the ’83 America’s Cup trials. In that campaign, Kolius knew that breaking even with Dennis Conner, aboard Liberty, wouldn’t win the day. “We had to beat him really — more soundly,” he said, and that never happened. A case of too little, too late. The current effort is different, Kolius said, “This is the way a campaign should be run.”

Among Australian bookmakers viewing the field of foreign contenders for the 1987 America’s Cup, the front-runner — by a wide margin — is the New York Yacht Club’s AMERICA II Challenge.

John Kolius, an Olympic silver medalist and the helmsman most feared by the Australians at the 1983 America’s Cup, will be AMERICA II’s skipper. Tom Ehman, former executive director of the U.S. Yacht Racing Union and 1976 winner of the Championship of Champions and several other North American championships, is the effort’s administrator. Sparkman & Stephens, the marine architectural firm most experienced in 12-meter design, with six Cup defenders to its credit, is charged with the design and research programs, under the guidance of chief designer Bill Langan, who leads a tech team, including experts from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), McDonnell-Douglas, Atlantic Applied Research Corporation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T), Naval Ship Research and Development Center, and General Motors, through the effort’s official corporate sponsor Cadillac.
Crew Conditioning is Key

The stronger winds, larger seas and more intense maneuvering required on the new course have placed added emphasis on crew conditioning. Each time the boat is tacked, four grinders take in the genoa sheet to five-ton loads while two “tailers” cast off, clear and pull 50 feet of angry wire and rope. While the foredeck man fights flailing wire to prevent entanglement, another crew member tensions the mainsheet, also to five-ton loads. The sewer man lugs belowdeck sails weighing 400 pounds and brings new sails up. In a tacking duel, this kind of action may occur every 30 seconds, 40 or more times. One mistake can give away the lead, or even determine the outcome of the race.

As a result, the AMERICA II crew is undergoing a gruelling conditioning program under the direction of Jane Kent, a sport physiologist who helped train the 1984 U.S. Olympic sailing team. Kent’s program, which begins with a 20-minute run at 6:00 a.m. and is followed by weight lifting for another 20 minutes, culminates with a third 20-minute session, called “a torture test” by one crewmember, on machines specifically developed by Kent for the AMERICA II team. “By the end you feel like you’re dead,” admitted Adam Ostenfeld, AMERICA II’s foredeck boss and a veteran of the ’80 and ’83 Cup matches.

Full Day of Sea Trials

Breakfast at the crew’s Fremantle base, which includes housing, offices, rigging and machine shops and storage, begins at 7:30 a.m. By 8:15 a.m. the crew is assembled dockside, tending to boat maintenance chores, listed on the day’s job list. Departure for sea trials, which last up to eight hours and are scheduled according to a plan worked out the night before by phone between Kolius in Australia and the design firm in New York, occurs at 10 a.m. sharp. The daily trials last season provided unexpected surprises, not all associated with testing different boat configurations and new sails. The sun in Western Australia is blinding and the salt content of the water is high. Because the humidity is low and evaporation takes place almost immediately, Ostenfeld explained, “whenever you blink your eyes after being hit by spray the salt water vanishes and you’re left with salt crystals that feel like rocks.”

By midday, the boat is headed downwind, which in the early afternoon winds, hums along at nine knots. The afternoon’s trials involve sail tests, tactics and maneuvers. The sailing session ends with a long upwind slog back to Fremantle, and by 6 p.m. the boat is berthed. The crew’s duties are not over, however. After taking a dockside shower, the crew brings sails ashore to hang overnight, the hull is hosed down and every inch of the rig is inspected for damage and fatigue.

Dinner is served promptly at 8 p.m. Night life is shunned for the most part,
3 Texans Accept America II Challenge

The America II Challenge boasts three Texans in the crew, Curt Alpha Oetking, Robbie Young, and David Calverley. Curt and Robbie are veterans of the Courageous crew, while Dave is the rookie aboard the 12 meter.

Robbie Young, 22, Bowman for America II, is a familiar face around the Bay area. A native of New Orleans, Robbie moved to Houston in June, 1981, with his parents, O.J. and Judy Young. His reputation as a tough, competitive racer preceded his arrival to our area. He was easily accepted into our sailing community along with his well-known sailing father, O.J. Young.

Robbie has been sailing since he was 8 years old and has known and raced with John Kolius since his early teens. While Robbie was a sophomore in high school, John asked Robbie to join him aboard “Warhoop”, a J-30 owned by Bert and Barbara Meadows, for the 1979 S.O.R.C.

Ostenfeld explained, “because when you work hard, you’ve got to sleep hard. Besides, by ten o’clock at night you’re already beginning to dread the next morning’s workout.”

During its sail training program in Australia the AMERICA II managed 51 out of a possible 55 days on the water. It was learned, among other things, that US-42 was overbuilt. “We did that on purpose,” Kolius said. “Doing circles in 30-knot winds, there’s stuff flying everywhere — water, wire, sails. It’s like being in combat. But you’ve got to be able to do it if you’re going to have faith in your boat. Otherwise you spend precious time at the dock with broken gear, knowing you can’t push the boat to its potential.”

Despite AMERICA II’s lead in hull and sail development, crew training and hands-on experience, Kolius believes the campaign’s biggest advantage lies in what he calls organizational spirit. “We’re like the L.A. Raiders,” he said, citing his favorite football team.

“We’re a big group of crazy individuals with team spirit. As for me, I’m just a cheerleader who happens to drive the boat. I’m 100 percent confident we’re going to win and I think everyone else is too,” Kolius said.
international racing experience has enabled him and his company, Custom Roller Furling and Rigging, to become exclusive riggers for the America II campaign.

At 12 meter camp, Robbie is officially known as "Bowman" - offshore and onshore, "head rigger." Here at home, Robbie Young is known as a tough sailor and a good friend.

Curt Oetking, of Corpus Christi, is a true veteran of world class racing. He holds a North American 1/4 Ton Championship, One Ton and Mini Ton World Championships. In 1978, Curt won the U.S. Men's Sailing Championship Mallory Cup. Curt's job is starboard tailer. Curt explains, "That means I trim the headsail or spinnaker every time the boat makes a port tack." Sounds easy, but very often one race can have up to 90 tacks.

Doug Cooke is an aerospace engineer with NASA who, 18 months ago, was offered a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to help defend the United States in the America's Cup Challenge. John Kolius has known Cooke for several years, and, after Australia won the last race, he asked Cooke to join his great understanding of aero-dynamics combined with his vast sailing experience. On Galveston Bay he races a J-24 called Dead Duck.

Cooke likens the flow of water over boats to the flow of air over airplanes. There are, of course, modifications, and this is where his sailing experience proves valuable.

Cooke is presently working on the Space Station program at NASA. It is a very time consuming project and fortunately he has understanding superiors, but, more importantly, he has an understanding wife and children.

Renee Cooke, his wife, is very proud of him. "It's been a wonderful experience for him along with myself and the children. We've met such interesting people, and the kids have had a learning experience with a broadening of their horizons. Of course we miss him, but we're so proud at the same time."

David Calverley is a young man of 18 whose dream has come true. For as long as he can remember he has wanted to sail the America's Cup, and, thanks to John Kolius' faith in him, he will be sailing to Australia on the U.S. 42 in October.

Two years ago when David was still attending O'Connell High School in Galveston, Kolius asked him to come try out for the team. David was surprised when he discovered he had been accepted. "It all happened so fast," he said.

David will be the grinder, the man in charge of spinning the winches. Robbie Young, another crew member, feels that David's size of 6'5" at 240 pounds is his biggest advantage on the handles.

David has been active in the Junior Skippers and has won several races already. He was the winner of the Sears Cup and the Buck Hayworth Memorial Trophy in 1984. For the 1984-85 year he has been Commodore of the Ragnots.

David is looking forward to seeing the world. "I've never been to Australia, and I'm excited about experiencing a new culture. My parents think it's a neat idea as far as being an educational experience even though I'm going to have to put my college education on hold for a while. Of course I'll miss Galveston and my friends, but I still can't wait!"
Col. Wm. Barrett Travis Rescued — Again

by Tynes Sparks

June 29, 1835, a group of Texans sailed from Morgan's Point to the Mexican garrison at Anahauca — landed in row boats — stormed the garrison and won the release of Travis in time to get him to the Alamo to die a hero's death.

June 29, 1985, a group of Texans from the Houston Yacht Club transported members of the "Texas Army" to reenact the opening battle of the fight for independence. The Texas Army soldiers fired their muzzle loading muskets from the deck of the "Maria Isabella" (40' Bayfield Ketch) for the television cameras, then rowed ashore in "Lone Star's" "Bluebonnet" — an authentically constructed beamy lapstrake wood dinghy. The battle, complete with "Mexican" Soldiers and much firing of cannons and muskets, was shown on Channel 26 and 13. The Birthplace of the Texas Revolution — The Battle of Anahauca — will be included in a mini-series being developed for the upcoming Sesquicentennial Year by Channel 13. Watch for it.

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$4.75

BEAN AND CHEESE NACHOS - Nachos covered with refried beans, aged cheddar, Monterey Jack, and jalapenos.

$2.35

Bring this ad in for FREE appetizer with purchase of any entree. (Limit one per table)

Offer expires October 31, 1985

SOUTHWIND 46   Sept/Oct 1985 Vol 11  Issue IX
HYC Annual Regatta
July 27 & 28, 1985

Cruising Line

PHRF 1 Class A
1. Forza/Roth
2. Synapse/Fleming
3. Bodacious/Bremer

PHRF Class B
1. Penegrine/Wilson
2. Leading Edge/Schneidau
3. Rojo/Brindley

PHRF Class C
1. Flip, Flop & Fly/Progelhof
2. Dynamite/J. Tichenor
3. Breakaway/Demarest

PHRF Class D
1. Hoser/Baldridge
2. Jack-Be-Quick/Phillipson
3. Fireball/Shapray

PHRF Class E
1. Magic Dragon/Prelle
2. Prime Time/Celauro
3. Thriller/Newberry Jr.

PHRF Class F
1. Verify/Bordelon
2. Sundown/Strong
3. H-MM/Prater

Non-Spinnaker Class G
1. Allesandra/Amadeo
2. Verify/Bordelon
3. Outrageous/Phillips

Non-Spinnaker Class
1. Awesome/Ward
2. Rogue/Maddrey
3. Hound/Concidine

Fleet I
1. Apache Dawn/Williams
2. Butterfly/Ring
3. Sundown/Strong

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1. Apache Dawn/Williams
2. Butterfly/Ring
3. Sundown/Strong

Olympic Line

Ensign
1. Co-Motion
2. Little Oil
3. Adjourn

Soling
1. Shen
2. Banner
3. Hardtack

J-22
1. Fickle/Fick
2. Siren
3. Fast Lane

J-29
1. Phantom/Best
2. Viking/Gay
3. Tusk

Coronado 15
1. Craven
2. Hagn-Me
3. Why Not

Geary 18
1. Excoriator
2. Anomaly
3.

Tornado
1. Blalock
2. Jamail
3. Ketchup Theory

J-30
1. Hotsy Totsy/Aldridge
2. Map II/Brownback
3. White Lightning

A light breeze & .4 oz. Norcom/Mylar spinnaker proved to be a decisive advantage for Hoser, Laser 28’ during the HYC Annual Regatta. Photo: T. Bode

Gary Ebdon finds a puff and away he goes...Photo: P. Noch

HYC Annual Regatta winners. Photo: P. Noch

SOUTHWIND 62
As long as the sea breeze fills in and the Margarita machine keeps working, Houston Yacht Club's Annual Regatta is a guaranteed winner. This year, about a thousand sailors converged on HYC in boats ranging from singlehanders to offshore racers for the two day regatta. The growing trend of small cruisers deserting the PHRF fleet for the close competition of one-design racing transferred a large number of boats from the Cruising Line to the Olympic Circle. Joining the J-24's and Tartan 10's were the J-30's, J-22's, and J-29's.

Saturday, the Olympic Line had two races: the morning race was sailed in 10-15 knots of westerly wind. The wind died for lunch and when the afternoon races started at 2:00 for the Olympic and Cruising Lines the afternoon sea breeze was just filling in from the southeast. With the smaller yachts starting first, the larger boats on the Cruising Line were favored by the building breeze. This condition also prevailed on Sunday and consequently the fleet leaders came out of the top three classes. Jack Progelhof sailed a nearly flawless series on his Olson 30, Flip, Flop, and Fly to beat out Peregrine, Wilson & Bornman's Soverel 33' and By Baldridge's Laser 28 for fleet honors and the prestigious Houston Chronicle Trophy.

Solid performances were turned in on the Olympic Line by Johnny Maudlin on the J-29 Hotsy Totsy and Laurence Maher in the J-24 class. As usual, Houston Yacht Club's Race Committees and bartenders did an excellent job of running a great Regatta.

(Complete results are listed in The Finish Line.)

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