

Club History

Circa 1992 Lorin Lardie came to the Big Bay Fun Club with the idea of purchasing the Huron Mountain Club's fleet of vintage International Flying Juniors. Individuals around the Lake Independence/Big Bay area ultimately purchased 12 boats from HMC for \$300-\$500 which included good sails, rudders/tillers and rigging. Club family members names are etched on some of the masts and booms. A "Made in Netherlands" metal plate can be found on most transoms.

The **International Flying Junior** or FJ is a sailing dinghy which was originally designed in 1955 in the Netherlands by renowned boat designer Van Essen and Olympic sailor Conrad Gülcher. The FJ was built to serve as a training boat for the then Olympic-class Flying Dutchman. The FJ has a beam of 4'11" and an overall sail area of 100 square feet (9.3 m²). These dimensions make the FJ an ideal class to teach young sailors the skills of boat handling and racing.

In 1960 the Flying Junior formed its own class organization and by the early 1970s the Flying Junior was accorded the status of an International Class by the International Yacht Racing Union, the precursor to the International Sailing Federation. This status indicates that the class applies to strongly restricted class rules and holds regularly scheduled international regattas.

All documents about the history of the International FJ (Flying Junior) are accessed in the Nederlands Scheepvaartmuseum in Amsterdam.

Today the FJ is sailed in Japan, Canada, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Slovenia, and the United States. In the US, many high school sailing and Intercollegiate Sailing Association programs own fleets of FJs. The college and high school programs in the US use a version of the FJ known as the **Club FJ, or CFJ**. This boat is slightly different from the International FJ in that it does not use and it has a smaller, non-spherical Spinnaker, may have different hull dimensions, and shroud and forestay locations, with respect to the International FJ....Wikipedia

The first regatta was held in the summer of 1993. Boats were stored at homes located around Lake Independence and many were stored on Jerry and Susan Sherman's beach. Racing during those years started and ended at the Sherman's and a social gathering followed. Race rehashing lasted until dusk or dark.

The fleet moved to Perkins Park around 2001 when the Sherman's moved over to Lake Superior. In early races, the chase boat was a 14' aluminum fishing boat with a 6hp engine. This was risky, so in 2002, the larger "Sparty Girl" was often used as the chase boat. Buoys were unique inflatables, alligators, flamingoes, kids swim toys, Pete Hutter's swim raft and one time Susan Sherman swam out into the lake to be the buoy.

Kathy and Bob Cowell hosted the 'deck start' race for many years on or near the 4th of July. All skippers and crew had to have their boat beached and sails off, in a bag, beverage in hand, waiting on the deck for the brown bagged alarm clock to ring. When the alarm went off, sailors ran down the grassy hill with gear, rigged their boats, and took off to race around the course. The first boat back to the beach and derigged was the winner.

For more excitement the fleet trailered the boats over to Lake Superior twice, where the Big Bay Pointe Lighthouse hosted the "Lighthouse Cup". Lighthouse owner at the time, Jeff Gamble sailed his Sloop-d-Loop in the races. Some boats had difficulty just getting out of the windless harbor of refuge. Once out in the big lake, challenging winds and waves made for an exhausting experience. The green can, a coast guard navigational buoy located

north of Big Bay near the lighthouse, was the one race buoy. The Lighthouse sponsored a trophy that once sat on the mantle over the lighthouse fireplace.

One year the fleet held a night race on Lake Independence. This was great fun using glow sticks and flashlights until the fog rolled in so dense that visibility was zero. Bob and Teddy Halvorsen came to the rescue and towed the boats back to Perkins Park.

Over the years, fleet members have volunteered their time to teach basic sailing to the 7th and 8th graders at the Powell Township School. The kids get a half day lesson on water safety, boat rigging, and sailing with an adult and their classmates. This has been a safe and successful introduction to sailing for the local school kids.

Other interesting events:

- the great tornado race when 5 boats started and 4 were toppled by high winds
- for many years Jim's dog Mel, a large yellow lab, was his crew member
- poker run race when boat skippers landed at 5 locations around the lake to pick up a playing card for the best poker hand
- Nick played the accordion while riding in a trailer and mastered FJ in one of the 4th of July Bay Cliff parades in Big Bay
- the tipping over and immediate sinking of Judy Baldwin's boat which has never been found even with high tech equipment
- there is a turtle club for those who have turtled their boat during a race and there are many members
- former Presbyterian Church Pastor Carolyn Raffensberger, once an avid sailor herself, used to bless the fleet every season
- the race when Kristi and Buck were so far ahead that she had time to jump off the boat to swim and then get back in the boat to win the race
- no formal protests have ever been filed or court of injury held regarding a foul. The rule has always been that a protest must be filed in person, in Algeria, on a Tuesday
- the Gold Medal Race- Anna Tunnicliffe, daughter-in-law at the time to Dick and Joyce Funk, was visiting Big Bay with her husband Bradley after having won a Gold Medal for Laser Radial racing in the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics. Anna passed around her medal for all to see and had pictures taken with her.

<https://olympics.com/en/video/anna-tunnicliffe-wins-1st-laser-radial-gold-medal>