

America3 Team Sails to Victory

CHIROPRACTIC PART OF WINNING TEAM

Steve Kelly, managing editor

Speed, bonnie boat, like a bird on the wing...

Harold Edwin Boulton 1859-1935

The 1851 London Exposition featured an international yatching competition over a 60-mile course around the Isle of Wight. A cup, donated by the Royal Yacht Squadron of England, was christened the America's Cup in honor of the victorious yatch America.

Now 141 years later, the 1992 America's Cup races in the waters off San Diego marked the 28th competition of this international yatching extravaganza.

Going into the event, the U.S. had won every America's Cup with the exception of a 1983 victory by Australia. This year's competition had a twist. Skipper Dennis Conner of Stars and Stripes, which recaptured the cup for America in 1987, was defeated by America3 to defend the cup. America3 took on the Italian team Il Moro (Moor) di Venezia, which had defeated yachts from Spain, Sweden, Australia, France, Japan, and New Zealand to gain the final.

The 51-year-old skipper/president of the America3 Syndicate, Bill Koch (pronounced "Coke") is not your typical sailor: He holds a Ph.D. from MIT and heads the Oxbow Group, an alternative energy company. He poured some \$45 million of his own money into the \$65 million venture.

While Mr. Koch confessed the financial undertaking of competing for the America's Cup called for more resources than anticipated, he didn't skimp when it came to providing his crew of 15 with a health care team. Bill Koch put Dr. Mark Herschberger of San Diego, a 1988 alumnus of Cleveland Chiropractic College L.A., on retainer as the America3 official team chiropractor.

Dr. Herschberger came to Bill Koch's attention through Dick Dent, the America3 trainer who was previously the trainer for the San Diego Padres baseball team.

Dr. Herschberger experience included head athletic trainer for the U.S. Men's National Volleyball team, 1982-1985; during the same period he was an assistant athletic trainer for the San Diego Chargers. In 1989, he was the team physician/trainer for the U.S. Men's National Volleyball team at the World's Cup in Japan, and accompanied the team to Japan and Russia that same year. In 1990 he was the physician for the U.S. Men's National Volleyball team at the Goodwill Games in Seattle.

In September 1991, Mr. Koch commissioned Dr. Herschberger to do an evaluation of each member of the crew and to ascertain which sailors had the highest potential for neck and back injuries.

The crew, as Dr. Herschberger can attest, had a Spartan schedule: workouts began at 6:30 a.m. in the gym with a stretching session; circuit weight training at 7:15, followed by therapy sessions and a team meeting; more therapy after the meeting and sailing from 10:30-5:00. After the long day of sailing, the health care team again provided therapy.

A Yatching We Will Go

On Saturday May 9, the Italian and American boats squared off for the first race in the best-of-seven. The three-hour slalom course consisted of eight legs totalling 20 nautical miles.

For Il Moro, financed by 58 year-old Italian billionaire Raul Gardini, and skippered by 32 year-old American Paul Cayard, the race began inauspiciously. The Italian boat crossed the starting line too soon and had to turn about, losing 30 seconds, which turned out to be the margin of victory for the Americans.

Bill Koch found race one hard going. With co-helmsman Buddy Melges at the wheel during a jibe, Koch was hit in the head by a block attached to the boom rigging, and fell to the deck. The skipper was able to get to his feet and continue his duties but skipped the postrace interviews to attend to his headache. At a time like this, it's nice to have a chiropractor on your staff.

Although the Italians won the second race, America3 stormed back to win the next three races and the America's Cup with boat speeds the Italians couldn't match.

Bill Koch called the victory a triumph of American technology and teamwork.

Indeed "teamwork" most appropriately describes the America3 victory, and chiropractic was part of that team and triumph.

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