



## Marblehead's Smith named U.S. Sailing's Yachtsman of the Year

By Jean DePlacido , Correspondent

Salem News

MARBLEHEAD - When the call came informing Jud Smith that he had been named the U.S. Sailing's 2006 Rolex Yachtsman of the Year, he was doing what he loves best - preparing to race.

The Marblehead resident was in Miami in the midst of intense preparations for the Jaguar Series, which concludes the end of January. So when Smith's cell phone rang early that morning, he figured it had something to do with the race.

Instead, it was a representative from U.S. Sailing - the national governing body of sailing and sail boat racing - informing Smith that he had been selected from a short list of nominees to receive the prestigious award.

"I was totally surprised," said Smith, who designs sails for racing and runs Olympic classes at Doyle Sail makers in Marblehead. "I didn't even expect the announcement to be made this early.

"I had a good year racing, but I guess they figured it was special because I won the Worlds (the Audi Etchells World Championships in Australia)."

Smith will be honored March 2 along with Yachtswoman of the Year, Paige Railey of Florida, at a luncheon at the New York Yacht Club in Manhattan, where each will receive specially engraved Rolex timepieces. The award has been given out each year since 1961.

This was the first time Smith was nominated, and he was selected by a panel of sailing journalists. The five-time North American champion of the Etchells Class had previously been a four-time runner-up at Worlds.

Instead of a trophy to put on his mantle, Smith - whose entire family will accompany him to New York - will be wearing a very sharp watch.

"I've never owned a Rolex," said Smith, who turns 50 this month. "It's a great prize; I thought the only way to win one was through racing."

### Sailing in his blood

Raised on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, Smith has raced since he was in grammar school, starting with the Frostbite Series in Marblehead Harbor.

Racing is also in his genes. His father, David, was a 1960 Olympic gold medalist in the 5.5-meter sailing event. Smith learned to sail with his dad and began spending free time at Hood Sails near his home.

He went to the Pingree School in Hamilton, where he played soccer, hockey and lacrosse before attending

Babson College for a year. He then settled into a full-time career as a sail maker, first with fellow sailor Dave Curtis in 1977, and, for the past 10 years, at Doyle (which is in the process of moving its operation to Salem).

"When I was growing up, I took for granted what my dad had accomplished. But I've grown to appreciate it more," said Smith. "I love racing for the excitement and competition. It's an activity you can do all your life in a nice outdoors environment. It's perfect for me."

As a sail designer, Smith often races against competitors trying to get an extra edge by using one of his sails. "It is a Catch-22," he laughed. "If I get beaten by one of my competitors using my sail, it's actually a good thing."

### A whirlwind year

A month before last year's World Championship, Smith captured his third consecutive Etchells North American title, braving rain and wind on the final day at Buzzards Bay to finish first. The weather conditions caused a dozen boats to experience equipment failures in the fleet of 46.

Smith dominated the Class in 2006, with wins at the Lands End Annapolis NOOD Regatta, Florida State Championship and Miami Race Week. He was at the helm of a Rhodes 19, winning that Class at both National and East Coast championships. He also crewed on Class winners at the Rolex Big Boat Series, Lands End Chicago NOOD Regatta and Verve Cup.

One of the thrills for Smith was having his daughters Darby (a student at Marblehead High) and Lindsay (who attends Roger Williams University) crew for him at the Miami Race Week.

"They love to sail on their own, and it was unusual to have both of them with me at that regatta in Miami," said Smith, who along with his wife, Cindy, is a member of the Eastern Yacht Club in Marblehead and the Oriental Dinghy Club of North Carolina.

At the World Championships in Australia, Smith and his three-man crew were out to prove 2005's disappointing fifth-place finish at the Worlds in San Francisco would not be repeated.

"Like any team, you have to work together during a race to get results," said Smith. "(The 2005 finish) was very disappointing. I think we were all the more determined to do well in Australia because of that poor finish."

Going into the final day of racing, Smith was second overall after leading the standings in the 69-boat fleet for the first six races of the series. He felt the winner would be whoever got the best start in the seventh and final race.

"I've been second too many times," said Smith. "I got out in front, which was the big advantage and allowed me to get my first win."

"Now I've got to go to England in June as defending champion. That is going to be even harder than winning last year was - because everybody will be out to get me."

Meet Jud Smith

**Age:** 50

**Where he's from:** Born and raised in Marblehead where he still makes his home

**Recognition:** U.S. Sailing's 2006 Rolex Yachtsman of Year

**Honored:** March 2 in New York

**Why:** For winning the Etchells World Championships in Australia last year

**Prize:** An engraved Rolex timepiece

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