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Knickerbocker Cup Scheduled for August 20-24, 2008 Attracts Top Match Racers

You just have to give credit to the ladies – one in particular who hails from San Rafael, CA. Her name is Liz Baylis and she has become the first undefeated and first two-time winner Saturday in the 2008 Mayor’s Cup presented by St. Mary Medical Center and part of the 2008 City of Long Beach Sea Festival presented by Charter Communications. Eight skippers representing the United States, New Zealand, Brazil and Sweden sailed the ISAF Grade 2 match race in identically prepared Catalina 37s owned and managed by the Long Beach Yacht Club Sailing Foundation, which performed perfectly under sunny skies and a consistent breeze of 10-12 knots. Baylis dominated the three days of double round-robins, semi-finals and finals... a total of 18 races in which rarely was there a chink in their armor. According to Baylis, “The crew work was incredible. They did everything perfectly. Even when I made a mistake on the leeward mark [rounding] in the Final, they pulled me out of it and we came back. Their performance gives me confidence.” Summing up the event as a whole, two-time winner Baylis said, “It’s a great regatta encouraging people to come. The Long Beach Yacht Club and the people are incredible. The way they make you feel, the great boats and great sailing... it’s like sailing a home game.”

This dynamite skipper will have another chance to “sail a home game,” right here in Port Washington. Baylis is one of the competitors in the 2008 Knickerbocker Cup, held this year from August 20 – 24. She will have her work cut out for her racing against a strong line-up of international entries. Top on the list is last year’s winner, Chris Van Tol, Van Tol Racing, USA, with an ISAF ranking of 36. This rather young team, who called themselves the “zero to hero” team, have made it big time on the international match racing circuit. These two skippers alone have everyone excited about this year’s match race, but it gets even better. It won’t be any walk in the park for either Van Tol or Baylis because the rest of the skippers are no slouches: Andrew Arbuzov, RUS; Keith Swinton, Black Swan Match Racing, AUS; Sergey Musikhin, RUS; Evan Walker, AUS; Phil Robertson, NZ; Juan Ignacio Grimaldi, ARG; Robbie Allam, GBR; Blythe Walker, BER; and Francesco Bruni, Joe Fly Match Racing Team, ITA.

This year the Knickerbocker Cup is part of the World Tour Qualification Series (TQS) which means that the winner of the 2008 Knickerbocker Cup will receive an invitation to the Bermuda Gold Cup. So in addition to racing on Manhasset Bay, which always gives the competitors trouble with shifty winds and strong currents - a challenge skippers seem to relish, they will have an added benefit of a chance to get an invite to one of the most prestigious match racing events on the World Tour. For more information about the Knickerbocker Cup, see www.kyc.net and for information about the World Match Racing Tour, go to www.worldmatchracingtour.com