

Launching Sharks at Sound Boat Works. The 24-foot, three-foot two-inch draft boats have recently been declared a Classic Yacht Class by the International Sailing Federation.



International Sailing Federation president welcomes racers

PARRY SOUND - "I think this would be a great place to have it."

Here last Sunday, Paul Henderson was talking about Olympic sailing races during his welcoming address to the international crews taking part in the Shark World Cup Championship. Certainly all of the sailors might have agreed, but the members of Sail Parry Sound must have had a difficult time not exploding out of their Top Siders. Mr. Henderson, soon headed with his family for the 2000 Summer Games in Sydney, is the president of the International Sailing Federation.

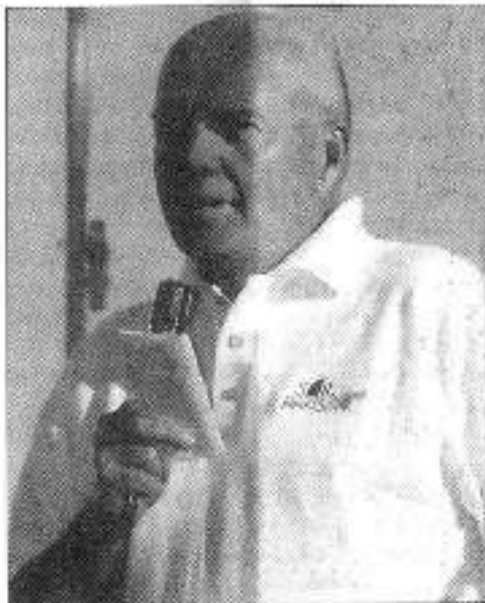
It was an endorsement from the world's most influential sailor, and could help the local organization in its effort to be a partner in Toronto's bid for the 2008 Olympics.

After a day of practice sailing on the Big Sound the 54 competing crews gathered outside the Big Sound Marina for the official opening of the world championship races that began on Monday and go until August 25. Joining Mr. Henderson on the podium was Sail Parry Sound President Marianne King-Wilson, MP Andy Mitchell, Parry Sound Mayor Will Sabourin, and

International Shark Class Association President Greg Cockburn. A translation of speeches was provided by Horst Mattern.

The community is sharing its culture that has always focused on the water, said Ms. King-Wilson, adding that the country's history unfolded along this area's waterways. Both Wasauksing and Parry Sound took their names from the water, and the wind once powered most of the travel and commerce.

"Your beautiful sails on the Big Sound for us are a return to our past," she told the visiting crews.



International Sailing Federation President Paul Henderson.

A welcome was also offered by Mr. Mitchell. He gave praise to the volunteers of Sail Parry Sound, and added his own support for a future Olympic event.

During his address to the racers Mr. Sabourin advised them to take advantage of the community's hospitality and to explore its interesting features. He congratulated Sail Parry Sound for their persistence and hard work, adding that he hoped the sailors would often return to the waters of the Big Sound.

Among the 54 crews taking part in the races are 11 European teams, a record number according to Mr. Cockburn. This is also

the first time that the championship has been held in a place without an established fleet of Sharks, necessitating the loan of Ontario boats for the international visitors. Mr. Cockburn said it was the generosity of those sailors who helped to make this event possible.

He credited the "can do attitude" of local organizers and added his best wishes for the future.

"I hope this will become a long established sailing tradition in Parry Sound," said Mr. Cockburn.

Public events this week at the Sail Parry Sound Big Top Clubhouse at the foot of Bay Street include: the Seguin Seniors Band at 4 p.m. on August 23, a Back to the 50s car hop and sock hop with the Parry Sound Cruisers Classic and Antique Car Club at 6 p.m. on August 24, and the awards dinner and closing ceremony on Friday starting at 6 p.m. with a later appearance by the local music group 19 James.

Tickets for the Thursday and Friday night events are available at the CAA office in the Parry Sound Mall.