



The America's Cup: An Insider's View



Bob Bazvier

*Revised edition of
AMERICA'S CUP FEVER*

Cup matches. Had *Endeavour* l
was in 1937, the Cup would su

A friend of mine talked to
spirits and remembering his t
great experiences of his life—r
lost and who was involved in
him (see Chapter VIII).

Briggs Cunningham—Skipper of Columbia 1958

Since the rebirth of America's Cup racing in Twelve Meters, the successful skippers have all had brilliant records in small boats and have made their marks not only in open classes but also in one-design competition. Briggs Cunningham is a quiet man, an unassuming man, but a fierce competitor. He raced sports cars on the European circuit and competed at Le Mans not with a Ferrari, a Porsche, or a Maserati, but with a Cunningham! She was a great car but not quite up to the European cars which had been engineered for road racing for generations. But this effort epitomizes Briggs's delight in a stern challenge.

In sailing he had great success in the 1930s in a series of Six Meters, and in 1947 I had the pleasure of crewing for him in *Goose* when we once again won the Scandinavian Gold Cup. By that time *Goose* was no longer the super boat she was in 1938. In fact, some of the newer designs were faster. But Briggs got good starts, sailed an error-free series, and got the most out of the old girl.

His was always the boat to beat in the Atlantic class, winning several national championships in an era when Atlantics were a highly competitive class.

Briggs is not a flamboyant sailor or a brilliant one. He can best be characterized as a solid sailor and a very good one who waits for other, flashier sailors to make mistakes. His boats are always in superb working order and a breakdown is almost unheard of. He keeps a notebook of things to be done to sails or gear, and this preventive maintenance pays off not only in avoiding breakdowns but in building boat speed.



Briggs Cunningham, the likable, modest skipper of Columbia in 1958. Great attention to detail develops the full potential from the boats he sails.

Briggs is also modest. When *Vim* was beating *Columbia* in a number of trial races it was Briggs's idea to let the famed sailor Corny Shields take a crack at her helm. But Corny, good as he is, got no more out of *Columbia* and when Briggs resumed the role of skipper he brought her home. When one realizes that he was up against the brilliant Bus Mosbacher in *Vim* and that great sailor Artie Knapp sailing *Weatherly*, Briggs's solid performance is even more noteworthy. *Columbia* competed in three more campaigns under other skippers but never again won, while *Weatherly* became the successful defender in 1962. Briggs may not rank with the best Cup skippers but he is very little behind them and, in my view, underrated except by those who have sailed with or against him.



The 1977 America's Cup Committee, which selected Courageous to defend. Left to right: Jim Michael, Bob Bavier, Harry Anderson, chairman George Hinman, Clayton Ewing, Briggs Cunningham, and Bus Mosbacher. Bob McCullough was absent when the photo was taken. The 1980 Committee was the same, except for George Hinman, who resigned to lead the Courageous syndicate. Vic Romagna replaced him and Bob McCullough became chairman.

and the criteria for selection, I can state most categorically that the only thing they are concerned with is finding the boat which in their view will make the strongest possible defense. She can come from Boston, Seattle, California, or Timbuktoo and her chances are precisely even with a boat hailing, say, from Long Island Sound.

The Committee might hate one skipper's guts but if he can win the trials, especially the final trials, and if his boat shows the all-around ability deemed so essential for a defender, he will be selected. The Cup Committee feels an awesome responsibility to pick the right boat, and logic, not emotion, is the only criterion they use.

I knew and liked all three skippers in 1977, 1980, and 1983. Still each year I had a particular skipper I was rooting for. Other members of the Committee, I am sure, had their favorite but none of us tipped our hand. All deliberations were based on race results and results in various wind

At the start *Endeavour II* crossed t
recalled. She recrossed one minute an

George A. Cormack, Esq.,
Secretary,
New York Yacht Club,
37 West 44th Street, New York.

Dear Sir:

We have to report that *Ranger* won "the best four out of seven races"
Endeavour II and thereby the Match for the America's Cup.

Edmund Lang, *Chairman*
Walter L. Coursen, *Secretary*
George M. Pynchon
Race Committee

The Seventeenth Match 1958 Sceptre vs. Columbia

FIRST RACE—SEPTEMBER 20TH

Course: Windward-Leeward Twice Around

Distance 24.0 miles

Wind: North ½ East 8 m.p.h.

Actual Time of Start	<i>Columbia</i>	12:30:10
Actual Time of Start	<i>Sceptre</i>	12:30:11
Time at First Mark	<i>Columbia</i>	13:54:41
Time at First Mark	<i>Sceptre</i>	14:02:17
Time at Second Mark	<i>Columbia</i>	15:47:16
Time at Second Mark	<i>Sceptre</i>	15:49:43
Time at Third Mark	<i>Columbia</i>	16:42:38
Time at Third Mark	<i>Sceptre</i>	16:50:10
Time at Finish	<i>Columbia</i>	17:43:56
Time at Finish	<i>Sceptre</i>	17:51:40

Winner—*Columbia*

(continued from front flap)

SECOND RACE—SEPTEMBER 22ND

Course: Triangular

Distance 24.0 miles

Wind: North $\frac{1}{2}$ East 7 m.p.h.

Actual Time of Start	<i>Columbia</i>	12:21:32
Actual Time of Start	<i>Sceptre</i>	12:21:34
Time at First Mark	<i>Sceptre</i>	15:46:16
Time at First Mark	<i>Columbia</i>	15:48:01
Time at Second Mark	<i>Columbia</i>	16:52:04
Time at Second Mark	<i>Sceptre</i>	16:52:54

No race. Time limit expired at 17:50:00.

Sceptre signaled her unwillingness to start the next day.

THIRD RACE—SEPTEMBER 25TH

Course: Windward-Leeward Twice Around

Distance 24.0 miles

Wind: South West by West $\frac{1}{4}$ West 15 to 20 m.p.h.

Actual Time of Start	<i>Sceptre</i>	12:10:04
Actual Time of Start	<i>Columbia</i>	12:10:05
Time at First Mark	<i>Columbia</i>	13:09:28
Time at First Mark	<i>Sceptre</i>	13:11:51
Time at Second Mark	<i>Columbia</i>	13:45:27
Time at Second Mark	<i>Sceptre</i>	13:47:56
Time at Third Mark	<i>Columbia</i>	14:43:22
Time at Third Mark	<i>Sceptre</i>	14:51:07
Time at Finish	<i>Columbia</i>	15:19:07
Time at Finish	<i>Sceptre</i>	15:27:27

Winner—*Columbia*

FOURTH RACE—SEPTEMBER 26TH

Course: Triangular

Distance 24.0 miles

Wind: South West by West 12 to 17 m.p.h.

Actual Time of Start	<i>Columbia</i>	12:10:10
Actual Time of Start	<i>Sceptre</i>	12:10:23
Time at First Mark	<i>Columbia</i>	13:28:44
Time at First Mark	<i>Sceptre</i>	13:34:14
Time at Second Mark	<i>Columbia</i>	14:20:31
Time at Second Mark	<i>Sceptre</i>	14:28:44
Time at Finish	<i>Columbia</i>	15:14:22
Time at Finish	<i>Sceptre</i>	15:21:27

Winner—*Columbia*

At the start *Sceptre* crossed the starting line two seconds early and was recalled. She recrossed twenty-three seconds after the starting signal.

Newport, R.I., September 26, 1958

W. Mahlon Dickerson, Esq.,
Secretary
 New York Yacht Club,
 37 West 44th Street, New York

Dear Sir:

The New York Yacht Club Race Committee reports that *Columbia* won "the best four out of seven races" from *Sceptre* and thereby the Match for the America's Cup.

John S. Dickerson, Jr., *Chairman*
 Race Committee