

Michael McNeir and Krista Vind – Hobie Division 15 – 2024 Carlton Tucker Sportsman of the Year

Every year since 1995, the Hobie Class Association has honored a Hobie sailor, whose unselfish attitude, and commitment to the sport, has set an example for all to enjoy the “Hobie Way of Life.” In 1998, posthumously honoring a great Hobie sailor, the award was changed to the Carlton Tucker Sportsman of the Year Award. As a past recipient of this award, I can tell you that in Hobie sailing - there is no higher honor than receiving this award. For 2024, we have a most stellar award winner. Not only did he actually know Carlton Tucker, he actually worked for Carlton and his dad at The Boat in Fort Walton Beach. He also remains close to Carlton’s Dad - Jim, Carlton’s widow - Mary Alice, and both of Carlton’s children.

Sailing Hobies from a young age, we can first track him on the racing scene around 2008, when he placed 2nd at the Hobie 20 Nationals - sailing as crew. From there, we see a constant stream of impressive finishes, sometimes as crew, and sometimes sailing with his son, in both local and national events. However, it is in the last 10 years that we see his most notable contributions. With a group of like-minded sailors, he has been instrumental in building a small southern yacht club and sailing organization into a premiere and highly regarded multihull sailing venue. Working often behind the scenes, he buys, refurbishes, and often donates boats into the local sailing program. You may know his 2 “world famous” Hobie Powerskiffs that have served as mark boats, assisting at national events in such far-flung locations as Florida, Texas, Oklahoma, Indiana, New York, Mississippi, and who knows where else. In the last 5 years, he has been part of a wonderful group of sailors who have resurrected the almost dead Hobie 20 Class. He buys boats, fixes them up, and finds them enthusiastic new owners. He was also

instrumental in changing Hobie Class Rules which allowed the continued availability of new Hobie 20 sails.

Always first to offer help, he can often be found fixing boats on the beach, or freely offering to share his knowledge of sailing, tuning, and tactics, or loaning boat parts or sails - to anyone who asks. When racing is done, you can be sure that he will go non-stop getting boats safely parked on the beach. I personally could not make it without him. He is a true gentleman and sportsman, embodying all the qualities that made Carlton Tucker such an inspiration, and taking those qualities a step further - gracious and giving, kind helper, fierce competitor, Corinthian sailor, mentor to young and old, and a wonderful friend.

BUT HE IS NOT ALONE!

His “partner in crime” adds another whole dimension to the meaning of the “Hobie Way of Life” and also sets a very high bar to receive the Carlton Tucker Award herself. A sailor in her own right, she actively sails in the Hobie Wave and Formula Wave Classes, as well as expertly crewing on both Hobie 16 and Hobie 20. This includes their winning the Hobie 20 Nationals at least twice. What sets her apart though, is that she is the Ultimate Organizer. She makes the running of regional and national Hobie sailing events go so smoothly and seemingly effortlessly. When you attend one of “her” events, you know that the venue will be great, racing will be organized and well-run, and you will be extremely well fed, and - what great raffles. She gets it done, and with such an artistic flair.

And together - - Wow!

For example, in 2020, these two organized and hosted every Hobie Nationals (except those pesky 16’s and 20’s) at their local club. That’s Waves, 14’s, 17’s, 18’s and even Women’s nationals. In the last 5 years, sailors from all over the country - as far away as Wyoming, California, up to Minnesota, and along the east coast - make the spring season Mid-Winters East regatta - a “must go” event. In 2023, they were instrumental in the running of at least 5 regional regattas, plus the inaugural Florida Keys Formula Wave extravaganza. For 2024, they are responsible for the organization of 3 separate Nationals - on Hobie 14’s, 20’s and Formula Waves. Plus Mid-Winters East (which had 90 boats registered). Plus five or so regional Hobie and open regattas. Plus the already wait-listed Florida Keys Formula Wave regatta in December. There are also (very loud) rumors of a Hobie 16 Worlds bid in the air. These guys make things happen. This allows us, the grateful sailors - to simply sign up, pay a reasonable entry fee, show up, and be treated to great locations and facilities, good food, and excellent racing. We get to race because they have done the work to make it happen.

These two together make a nearly unstoppable duo within the Hobie racing and sailing organizations. I can think of no others who so exemplify the character and humanity of Carlton Tucker’s spirit. I am honored to nominate for the 2024 Carlton Tucker Sportsman of the Year Award - the current North American Hobie Class Association Race Coordinator, and the current Formula Wave Class Event Coordinator - that’s the exceptional duo of Michael McNeir and Krista Vind.

Respectfully submitted, Jane Sherrod, Division 6

Our Nomination for the 2024 Carlton Tucker Award goes to the dynamic duo of Michael McNeir and Krista Vind.

Michael personifies the values exemplified by Carlton and is very deserving of this prestigious award. Michael McNeir has been involved in Hobie Cat sailing since he was a kid, and to this day works diligently to grow Hobie Sailing across the country.

Introduced to Hobie sailing at an early age, Michael helped his dad make Hobie regatta trophies (woodworking in his blood) and crewed with his dad on a Hobie 16. In his early teens Dad turned the tiller over to the young skipper and the rest is history. In his early youth Michael worked at The Boat in Fort Walton Beach building Hobie catamarans during the Hobie heyday and developed a relationship with Mr. Tucker, the Owner. Michael's friendship with and respect for Mr. Tucker is obvious to this day. During this time Michael watched Carlton Tucker grow into the competitive sailor and inclusive athlete for which this Sportsmanship award is named.

Michael's son Taylor remembers cruising FWB area islands from a very early age, the Hobie loving father sharing his passion. Later Michael and Taylor competed in the 2008 Hobie 20 Nationals in Yankton and earned 3rd place at the 2011 Hobie 20 Championship even making the cover of the **Hobie Hotline!** Many folks have been introduced to Hobie sailing and racing by Michael including dear friend Andy Humphries, who together earned 2nd at the 2008 Hobie 20 Nationals.

Exposing friends to Hobie sailing has been in Michael's blood, though nothing stirred his blood more than meeting Krista Vind. Krista immersed herself into the Hobie Way of

Life attending regattas and nationals over the years. Together Krista & Michael have won (2016 & 2021) or placed in the top 5 of Hobie 20 North Americans, as well as being quite competitive in the Hobie 16 and Wave fleets.

Krista Vind has supported the Hobie Youth sailing for years, organizing Youth regattas, Championships and Youth sailing camps at Ocean Springs Yacht Club. Krista's two granddaughters are Hobie Wave sailors, a tribute to her skills as a motivator.

Combined, Michael and Krista are a dynamic duo, and an integral to the growth of Hobie sailing in the Southeast, and across the country. Michael served as HCA Division 15 Class Rep for many years, before stepping into the Race Coordinator role in 2023. And Krista has supported the Wave and Formula Wave classes, organizing events and hosting regattas.

Together Michael & Krista have developed OSYC into the premier Hobie Cat regatta venue in the country. Krista's organizational skills and ability to woo sponsors are legendary. Michael & Krista have hosted many successful Championship events at OSYC over the last 20 years, including the 2023 April Fools Regatta of over 95 boats!

Further, Michael's skills at promoting specific classes, whether it be Hobie 20, 16 or Wave, is a testament to his love of the Hobie life. Finding and rebuilding boats, loaning boats to encourage sailors to join the Class, cajoling potential organizers to host events across the country and all with a smile – that's Michael. And when Krista is on the job, you know the regatta will be a hit – great goody bags, fabulous food and always great fun and entertainment.

For these, and other reasons, we believe Michael McNeir and Krista Vind deserve the 2024 Carlton Tucker Award.

Sheila Holmes & Mark Ralph, Division 14

I would like to nominate Michael McNeir and Krista Vind for the Carlton Tucker Award. Michael and Krista each represent sportsmanship deserving of the award. They have done so much for our sport and are responsible for the growth within the 20 class. They plan and promote multiple regattas each year, like Midwinters East and the numerous North American Championship events. Without their help, My wife Whitney and I would have never pulled off the 2023 Hobie 20 NAC, let alone even considered putting a bid in. They are always available for questions and quick to action. Any concern we had, they handled, from bringing scales to sponsoring a shrimp boil supper. Even when they are not “in charge”, they are behind the scenes making sure things run smoothly.

They are also fiercely competitive on any boat they push off the beach. They have done so much to grow the Hobie 20 class, from buying and refurbishing numerous 20's that were on their way to the dump, to leading the charge for numerous rule changes to keep us racing on a boat with limited parts availability. Each, on their own, are deserving of this award, but I believe we should recognize them as the power couple that they are.

Josh Benge, HCANA Vice President 2024
