

IC DINGHIES at start. Water was calm, breezes were light for Essex season opener on Easter Sunday. Event had been postponed from Sunday prior because of ice on the river and in the launch area.

### Big Year At Essex

Frostbiting on the Connecticut River, which had its beginnings back in 1933, is pushing toward the climax of a season that has seen the largest turnouts and hote the connection in recent

The Connecticut River Squadron of the Prostbite Yacht Club is

based at Essex Yacht Club, uses its launches and gear and draws on the club for a fair share of its competitors.

The club itself grew out of frostbite activity back in the competition on the Sound.

So frostbiting, the Connecticut
River and the Essex Yacht Club
sort of belong together.

Back in the old days, they
sailed X-dinghies The competi-

Back in the old days, they sailed X-dinghies. The competi-Knapp, Rod Stevens, Ducky End., Lorna Whitlesey. Bruce and Sherry Fahnstock, Jim Robbins, Bill Taylor and Jeff Davis.

Today the fleet at Essex is split between Interclub Dinghies and Blue Jays. The skippers, for the most part are big boat skippers, too, and the competition is sharp.

The Spring series this year began on Easter Sunday and will end on May 7. Racing was to have started the Sunday before Laster, but ice on the River, particularly at the launch area delayed it.

So far this season, the weather has been calm by frostbite standards. There has been only one capsize and no races have been cancelled. But the fleet turnouts have been better than ever and competition is at a peak.

This season, too, has seen the arrival of fiberglass Blue Jays. In the Essex fleet, Don McNair was in first place as of April 16 and Dave Peterson was in third. Both are sailing fiberglass boats.

Photos by John Turner



GETTING READY — Walter Rowe, who was instrumental in founding the Essex frostbite fleet back in 1933, and his daughter Melissa jockey their IC Dinghy after launch.

Boatbuilder McNair is sailing one of his own boats and Peterson is sailing a Blue Jay from Saybrook Yacht Yard which is currently completing about three a week in fiberglass.

This has led to speculation about superior performance of the glass boats.

Among the sailors at Essex, the consensus to the notes that both McNair and Peterson are red hot sailors.

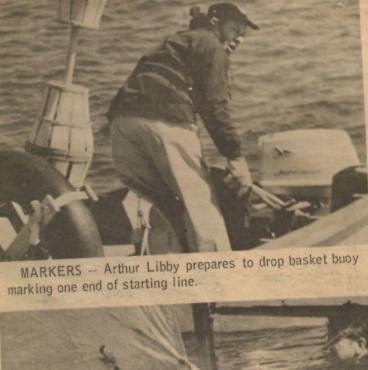
Standings as of April 16:

Interclubs - Ed Birch of Bloomfield, 1st with 97.6 points; Stan Renchan of Essex, 2nd with 89.2; George Hart of Essex, 3rd, 88.5; Loch Syme - Don Charbonnier, both of Essex, 4th, 85.9.

Blue Jays Don McNair, Higganum, Ist, 90,0; Dr. Wayne Southwick, New Haven 2nd 86 for anything can happen.



WITH FINAL SIGNS OF WINTER in foreground, Allen Perrins swabs road dirt and mud from his Ja;







BLUE JAYS just after the start. In all, 19 Jays turned out for the competition. Of the fleet, three boats were fiberglass. They not only attracted attention but performed well and in the words of one observer will be "formidable foes" in the season ahead.



RACE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN B. V. Harrison, Jr. father of the commodore, calls instructions to skippers as they pass dock on way from club to river. For first three Sundays, the race committee operated from long dock which juts out into river from the club. For the remainder of the season they use a conventional committee boat.



IC DINGHY IS LAUNCHED -- Arthur Hamilton (right) owner and skipper gets an assist as he guides Interclub off floating ramp. Throughout preparation period shouts of "free beer" summon willing hands to the task of launching.

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COMMODORE Varrick D. (Rick) Harrison of the Connecticut River Squadron of the Frostbite Yacht Club briefs skippers.

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