



Sentinel file photo

The 67-foot yacht 'Heart of America' in the Santa Cruz Small Craft Harbor recently.

8-3-86 'Heart of America' heads Down Under

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SANTA CRUZ — The time has come for Santa Cruz to bid adieu to the heart of America. The 67-foot yacht, "Heart of America" will hoist anchor Monday and begin its journey to the land Down Under in a shipping crate.

The sailboat and its crew arrived

in June to practice on breezy Monterey Bay and has been sailing six days a week, all in preparation for winning the America's Cup back from the Australians. The "Heart Of America" will compete in the 12-meter Challenger races in Perth, Australia.

And the "Heart Of America" will win, too, according to skipper Harry

C. "Buddy" Melges Jr. of the Chicago Yacht Club. He should know — he already has a host of sailing trophies. Now 56, he was a bronze medalist in the 1964 Olympics in Japan and a gold medalist in the 1972 Olympics in Germany. He won the U.S. Men's Sailing Championship in 1959, 1960, and 1961. He also won three world titles in other sailing

events.

Melges, speaking at the Santa Cruz Rotary Club meeting Friday, said that the thermo-condition in Santa Cruz made this the perfect place for the Chicago Syndicate to test "Heart Of America's" sails.

"The wind doesn't blow in San

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'Heart Of America'

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Francisco and in San Joaquin it sucks," Melges said.

Santa Cruz also offered the "Heart Of America" a chance to compete with other Cup contenders, Melges said. The "Canada II" and "True North" were here to determine which of the Canadian boats would go to Perth, and they provide an opportunity to exchange information as well as compete.

Melges said that his crew escaped any incidents with their boat and crew but the Canadian team was not so lucky. One sailor on the Canada II crew nearly lost his leg when a spinnaker line coiled around his leg and pulled him into the water. Karl Marits escaped drowning, but suffered a broken leg and vascular damage.

"The people on the boat are like a football team," Melges said. "If someone misses a block up there and lands me, the quarterback, on my tail, it's not going to work."

Project manager Harry Powell said that working out of an unfamiliar harbor sometimes makes his job difficult, but locals were very

Just what is a 12-meter sail boat?

SANTA CRUZ — Just what is a 12-meter sailboat, anyway? Contrary to popular landlubber beliefs, it's not a boat that measures 12 meters long. "Heart of America" Skipper Buddy Melges explains.

"First you take the water line up seven inches from the real water line," Melges said. "Then you add the beam, circumference, shear height, length, and four triangle. Then you compute that and divide it by something and you get a 12-meter."

Got it? No? Let me try again. This is how Les Long, an experienced racing-sailor, explains it:

"You crank in these measurements — sail area, length, width, girth and depth. Then you divide by a certain number and it has to come out 12. Most boats

come out 65 or 70 feet long."

Still lost? Here's the official formula, from Sports Business magazine:

Add the length of the boat, two times the girth difference (the length of a line running along the contour of the hull minus the straight-line length), height from water line to deck, and the square root of the sail area. Divide the total by 2.37. After the computations, you must arrive at 12 meters exactly, or you can't compete in the race. When testing the boat, one small adjustment in any of those areas means you have to adjust the rest.

Yes, the "Heart Of America" IS a 12-meter sailboat.

helpful to the crew.

"The marine industry here has been just super," Powell said. "They'd just drop what they were doing to help us. It made my job much easier."

Sharon Benton, dock operations manager, also said that Santa Cruzans have been friendly during their stay.

"The local business people have been very enthusiastic," Benton

said. "We had a lot of visitors, too, who came down to look at the boat. The crew members would take them on the boat for guided tours."

Powell said that they didn't get to see much of the social life in Santa Cruz, though.

"We only had three afternoons off," he said. "But I went on the two roller coasters — once."

"Saturday is our last day to sail here, and we're sorry about that, but

looking forward to Australia," Melges said. "Thank you, Santa Cruz."

The crew will return to Chicago for more practice on two other boats, "Clipper" and "Defender," before rejoining the "Heart Of America" in Australia in September. The first race of the America's Cup 12-meter Challenger Series begins Oct. 5.