



All Russia TV Series Presents  
**“By the Wind Power”**  
 Ice Sailing on Lake Baikal



[http://russia.tv/video/show/brand\\_id/3966/episode\\_id/708147](http://russia.tv/video/show/brand_id/3966/episode_id/708147)

*Translation Courtesy of Valeriy Dichenko R166*

Irkutskaya Oblast', Lake Baikal  
 Boundless expanse, hundreds of kilometers of  
 hyaline ice, minimum amount of snow and strong  
 gusty winds – all reckless speed lovers need.  
 The same applies to those who have got used to  
 breath with full breast, who once turned the mast  
 toward air flow and caught the real drive, to cast  
 his lot with sails by hard knot forever.

**“All Russia” TV program series present  
 By the wind power**

It is certainly not jet engine roar, though the  
 sound is very similar; nor is it an aircraft flight  
 over ice expanse, although it seems exactly the  
 same from above. It is Baikal's upper wind that  
 fills the sail with great power to push ice yacht –  
 small boat, which is capable of accelerating up to  
 120 kmh.



A large number of this competition's participants experienced sailing the holy sea quick as the wind for the first time.

- **Right side! Ready?**
- **Left side! Ready?**

Ice F1 is how this competition is called. Ice yacht racing. Baikal Cup. Speedy sailing cockpits races that take place on boundless frozen lake.

Ron Sherry, Baikal Cup's participant (USA):  
 – *Look around you. Have you ever seen any smarter place in the whole world? It is spectacular, gorgeous. I wanted to see it. We went to the Springs. I climbed the mountains that provide astonishing view. It is fantastic, wonderful.*

A man, who resembles a character of Chuck Norris's action movies, knows what he is talking about. He is Ron Sherry, the most titled ice boater on Earth, fivefold world champion who has conquered virtually all freezable water reservoirs in America and Europe. He could easily play tennis in hot Arizona, but once he knew about Baikal Cup, he promptly moved halfway around the world to Siberia, to the deepest lake in the world, to compete with competitors and talk to friends.



Jorg Bohn, Commodore of International DN Ice Yacht Racing Association – Europe:

– *Baikal is a beautiful place, and there are awesome people. So many participants, being rapt in one cause – ice boating have gathered from all over the world. We are all as a one big family.*

Almost 70 boatmen clashed for Baikal Cup. Representatives of every national flag, from the Stars and Stripes, i.e. American one, to Royal flag, i.e. Swedish one, visited us. We stood the pace for geographical representation too: we gathered the best ice boaters from all over the country, from its capital to as far as Vladivostok. Juniors were the first to toe the starting line, to be followed by experienced racers. To ice yacht racing all ages yield surrender. Even competitions for those over 60 regularly take place.



Jacob Schneider, Baikal Cup's participant (Poland):

– *I do not know. I do not know why. It is like a drug, you know. Once you tasted it, you want it more and more. This is a first thing. Secondly, I have a lot of friends, and every time we meet there is a big friendship for all of us.*

Jacob Schneider is another top ice boat racer. He is a World Champion too. Jacob lives in Germany, represents Poland, and tries to speak Russian. He has been riding his sailing boat on the

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ice for more than 30 years. Jacob came to Baikal Lake with his son, who keeps his father's business running and sport dynasty, although they represent different countries.



Martin Schneider, Baikal Cup's participant (Germany):

*– He tried to bring me ice boating when I was 14, but I did not like it. During that time, I was big on swimming and triathlon. I joined the national team, and was preparing for the Olympics. But I was amazed by ice boat racing, its speed and wind, so I decided to ride my sailing boat on the ice too.*

It is difficult to compare ice yacht racing even with standard sailing races by popularity. Many people have never heard the word "ice boat". Yet it appeared in the Netherlands, in the 17th century.

The Flemish used to use it as a name for a mast boat mounted on steel skates.

Such a unique invention was taken over and brought to Russia by its emperor, Peter I. The emperor was known to like riding his ice boat on the cleaned square of the Winter Palace.

Ice boats were constructed on Saint-Petersburg's Admiralty Shipyards, and their first race took

place in 1882, in the Gulf of Finland.



"Snowstorm", "Fur Tree" and some other skate boats toed the starting line. However, the modern type ones that are used for all international competitions were developed in the United States.



Andrey Astashev, Commodore of International DN Ice Yacht Racing Association – Russia:

*– DN is the most wide-spread ice boat type in the world. It was originally built for the contest conducted by "Detroit News" magazine in 1932. That boat was designed to be capable of being constructed by the owner himself in his garage.*

Yet at present the construction of such boats is ordered to professionals, and they are produced like violins, i.e. there are no any plants or factories, and every boat is ordered individually, made by hands, and tailored to personal needs.

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Ron Sherry, American champion, is just one of such professionals, being Stradivari and Guarneri of ice yacht racing. He makes cockpits by himself, and many racers eagerly use his boats, though Ron argues that everybody can construct sailing ice boat.



Ron Sherry, Baikal Cup's participant (USA):  
 – *There are no secrets. I do not even paint boat body, so everybody could see that it is just a wood, and everyone is capable of making a boat by himself, using saw and plane. However, good ice boat makes only one third of the success – it is also important to set it correctly, and it is a precise work. It is necessary to select skates in accordance to the weather, and sharpen them at correct angle, to prevent the boat from sticking in “pancakes” – ice boaters’ slang for snow banks. There are no brakes, so the boat is stopped by moving upwind and using “cat claws” – giant shoe studs that pierce into ice. The key factor is mast and sail setting.*



Valentin Uvarkin, Baikal Cup's participant (Russia):

– *Mast performance is influenced by its tumbling, i.e. whether it is leaned forward or backward, and also by jackstay and shroud tension, mast position against boat body. All these things matter. Besides, the extent, to which you raise or lower a sail, influences mast bending. There are a lot of parameters, and if you fail to set any of them correctly, you may lose a lot of time in the race. For example, yesterday I set my ice boat incorrectly, and came in 27th. I came in about 7th in a previous race, so I wanted to improve it and change something, so, as you can see, I did change, but it was a wrong direction.*

Valentin Uvarkin is our best ice boat racer, Russian Cup's champion. He is a professional sailing sportsman. Like many other athletes, Valentin got in ice boat cockpit straight from the yacht. It is not the first time he came to Baikal Lake. He has been sailing its water and ice. Racer's skills and experience are another key to great victories.

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Valentin Uvarkin, Baikal Cup's participant (Russia):

– Frankly speaking, there is no engine or anything like that, so you drive your boat by your hands and head, thinking about how you can go faster or improve your ice boat. Of course, sometimes boat collisions or racer's injuries occur. For example, during Russian Championship that took place here, on Irkutsk's Baikal Lake last year, one of our fellows broke his leg as a result of collision. Observance of all rules is checked by judges who are honored veterans of sailing racing. It is only them who can understand all the details of the race. Nonetheless there is something that resembles road traffic. The main principle of car drivers, i.e. to yield the right-of-way, is applied to ice circuit too.



Yuri Astashev, Baikal Cup's chief judge.

– Two signs are placed: upwind and downwind respectively, with both of them being located on the wind line. To get to the upper sign, a racer has to play to windward, since there are about 50 of them, and when they do, it seems to side-liners that there is a real chaos, but, in reality, it is a tough tactical and technical fight. It is much

easier for a traffic policeman to manage traffic, since he got a straight road to deal with, while we have to keep an eye on the whole bunch of ice boats.

4 heats per day is a completion schedule for ice boat racers. But the sport fighting spirit does not fade away even after the race is over. Boaters continue clearing up who is faster, higher and stronger, using tabletop rod soccer and billiard. Nevertheless, the most crucial thing is weather or, rather, wind. When there is no wind, you will not go far, but when it is too strong, the race gets dangerous.



Alexander Buenkov, Baikal Cup's judge.

– 7.2, 7.3 m/s... When the wind speed is up to 9 m/s, it is tolerable, but when it exceeds this figure (it may be up to 15 m/s), the circuit is dangerous.

And how did the wind respond? The respond was such that race had to be cancelled. Churly blasts and frequent direction changes made the judges end competition before its time, since they can not put racers' health at risk. It is young stars of sailing racing who are upset most.

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Maxim Sosnin, participant of Baikal Cup juvenile championship (Novosibirsk)

– *Well, I am upset. True, there is a wind, but it was raining yesterday, so the amount of snow banks has fallen, so it would probably be possible to conduct a couple of heats.*



Lada Smyshlyaeva, participant of Baikal Cup juvenile championship (Irkutsk)

– *Of course, I am upset. I would like to race more, so I could get a higher standing. (– And what is your current one?)*  
 – *Only 5th. Needless to say, I have got a great wealth of experience about how to ride, to round signs smoothly, to haul in the sheet faster and much else. It is all about technique.*

Sharp skate blades are lubricated and put into cases, and masts and sails are disassembled and put into the trunk. The boat is covered with waist cloth and laid up.

Conquerors of ice expanse say “Good Bye” to Baikal Lake. But it is for ever, just till the next championship. Meantime, everybody is moving to awards ceremony, especially as the lake master, the Baikal ringed seal has come to visit it too.

As a result of 8 heats, the juvenile division’s Baikal Cup was by Vladivostok racer

– *And now, the winner’s Cup and your applauses!*

As for adults, as many as 6 racers climbed the symbolic podium that had shape wooden steps. Our champion came in 4th, while bronze and silver medals were won by Schneider’s father and son respectively.

Having a distinct advantage, Ron Sherry, guru of ice yacht racing, became the winner of Baikal Cup.



In his champion speech, the winner did not mention his achievements. He was speaking about importance of promoting ice yacht racing and attracting as many children to ice races as possible. Baikal Lake meets all conditions necessary for it: astonishing Siberian nature, ultramarine ice and favorable wind

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Racing DN Ice Boats & Components



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