



The Shields

In 1963 Cornelius Shields, one of the foremost proponents of one-design sailing in the U.S., conceived of a modern followup to the International One Design. The new boat would have the balance and beauty of the IOD while incorporating modern trends such as fiberglass construction. Shields commissioned none other than Olin Stephens for the design. The Shields, though not inexpensive, became a popular class at many clubs. About 250 have been built.

Shields, a Mallory Cup winner and veteran Meter boat sailor, gave his class more than the concept; he gave it momentum. He donated fleets to universities around the country, where they are still sailed. In donating the boats to New York area schools, he asked they be made available to Long Island Sound fleets during the summer months.

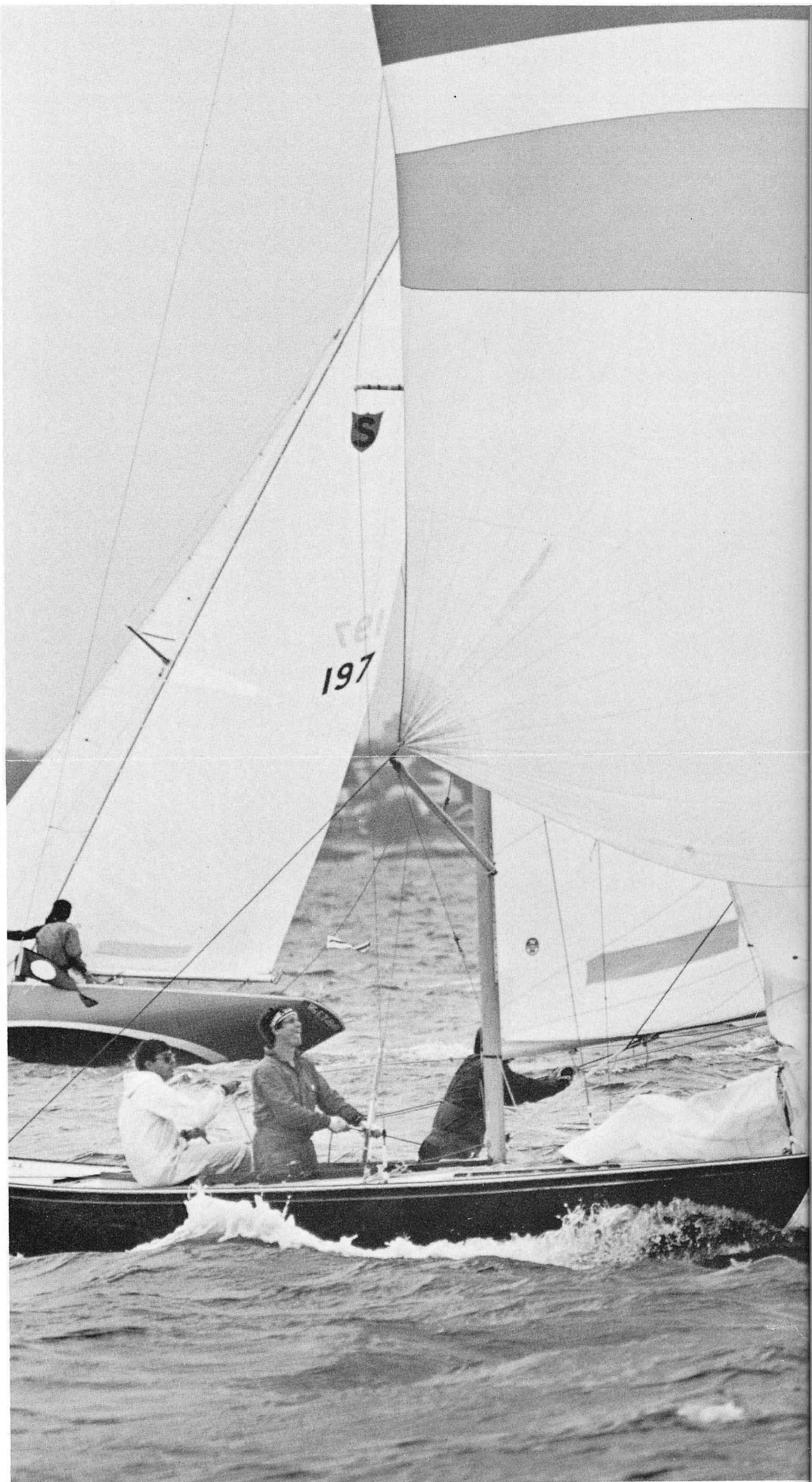
With its long overhangs, low freeboard and narrow beam, the Shields is an eminently graceful one-design. Upwind the boat has balance and power, with two-thirds its weight in ballast. Downwind it carries a large spinnaker that comfortably, steadily pulls the displacement hull through the water. While not a very fast accelerator, once in the groove, the Shields provides good all-around performance. Arthur Knapp Jr., one of the many famous names in the annals of Shields class history, simply described the boat as "lovely to sail."

The deck layouts are void of the flurry of high-tech go-fasts that adorn many one-designs. Keeping the boats equal, right down to the bullet blocks, is more of the Corny Shields legacy. Little has changed since the boat was first built, though more purchase is allowed on the backstay and vang. In keeping with the one-design principle, sails are also strictly regulated. Only one sail can be replaced per year, and often fleets settle on a single sailmaker and places an order on a group discount. Experience and skill, not dollars, buys victories.

Shields are usually sailed by a crew of four, though they can be sailed by three or five. No hiking straps are allowed, keeping athletic demands on the crew to a minimum.

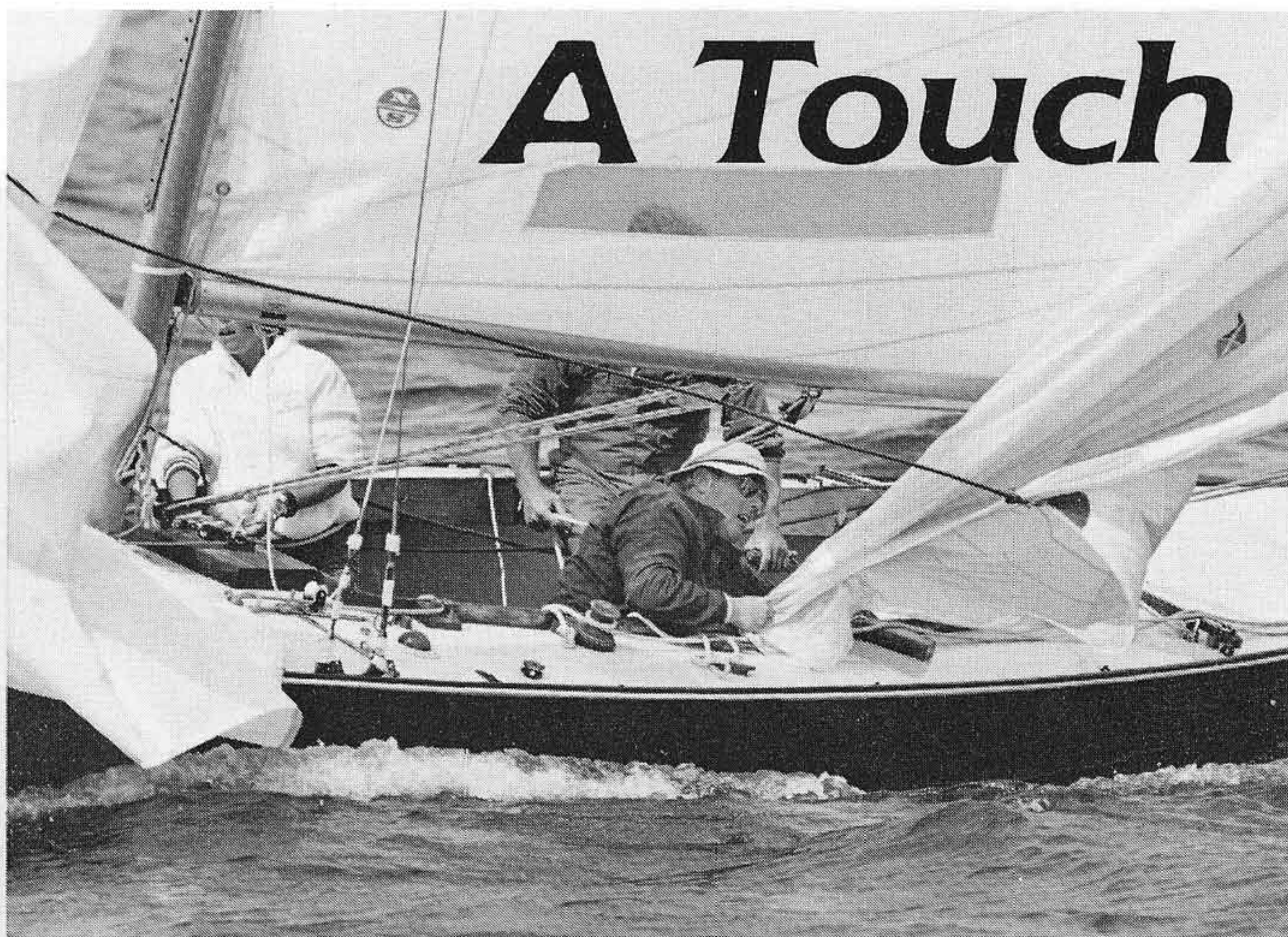
The class organization is strong. There are 11 active fleets, scattered across the northern East Coast and in Chicago, Dallas and Monterey, California.

Class members strive to perpetuate the class. Members of the Western Long Island Sound fleet, for instance, often form an informal syndicate to buy a Shields and keep it on hand for interested



Shields, one working to weather and one running, made their way around the course during the 1986 Prince of Wales match racing series. The winner was Marc Eagan.

A Touch of Class



parties to charter or buy.

One of the Shields' strengths is that old hulls generally remain competitive. The 1986 nationals, for instance, were won by hull number 21. The strict limitations on equipment changes ensure a boat's competitiveness. Used boats sell for approximately \$13,000, depending on condition.

New boats, being built by the original builder Cape Cod Shipbuilding Co., sell for \$25,610.

Fully equipped for racing, they cost about \$27,000.

ED. NOTE: For more information on the Shields and its class association, contact the Shields one-design Class National Sailing Association, 107 Cliff Ave., Pelham, NY 10803, (914) 738-3857. For information on new Shields, contact Cape Cod Shipbuilding Co., Box 152, Wareham, MA 02571, (508) 295-3550.

One Shields was covered closely by another, above, as they sailed from Larchmont Y.C. on a cool day. A crew member, inset, quickly gathered in a spinnaker behind the large main.

SAILING pictures by Mitch Carucci

Principal dimensions: LOA 30' 2", DWL 20', beam 6'5", draft 4'9", displacement 4,600 lbs., ballast 3,080 lbs., sail area 360 sq. ft.

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