

BRUCE "WRINKLIE" FIELDS ■ HOBIE FLEET 25, TULSA, OK, DIVISION 14, HCA SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR - 2011

Have you ever known someone who is truly a character? Someone who has a refreshingly unique outlook and perspective on living and life in general? A guy that has been there and done that and he knows more about whatever you're doing than anyone else. He's No Nonsense, opinionated, and doesn't shy away from letting you know it, like it or not. His message may be blunt and direct, but he is one of the kindest and most unselfish people you are likely to meet. Most importantly, at 78, he still has loads of energy to spend pursuing his love of Hobie Cat sailing. All of this describes Bruce Fields, aka, Wrinklie to a tee.

Originally from the prairie of Topeka, KS, Bruce discovered Hobie sailing while living in Marina Del Ray: "I saw a Hobie 14 sailing circles around the other boats in the harbor and thought, hey, that looks pretty cool." Shortly thereafter, he bought

a brand spanking new Hobie 14, sail number 360.

After sailing around and getting to know the boat a little, Bruce decided it was time to join a fleet and sail in a regatta.

That first regatta was Vail Lake, CA. The year was 1972. As Bruce tells it, there wasn't much wind so he walked out on a rocky point to get a better view. Squatting there on the rocks looking for wind was another sailor who asked: "is this your first regatta?" Bruce affirmed that it was and the guy stood up, shook hands and introduced himself. Bruce didn't know it at the time but he had stepped into the beginning of a movement that would change the world of sailing, and he was shaking hands with the guy who started it all, Hobie Alter Sr.

Bruce was christened with the nickname "Wrinklie" while sailing at the 1979 Hobie 14 Worlds in South Africa. Bruce had just turned 45 and was one of the oldest sailors

at the event. Apparently, the young Australians referred to anyone over 45 as "Wrinklies". The nickname stuck. Today, after nearly 40 years of participation in California and most recently here in the middle of the country, Bruce is one of the oldest, if not THE oldest active Hobie Cat racer in the world.

Bruce has quite a resume of racing. Over the years, he has sailed the Hobie 14, 16, 17, 18, 20 and Tiger. He has raced in at least one, and more often multiple National events every year for 40 years, a total of something like 60 events overall. By his own account he has raced in 21 or 22 World events.

When not racing, Bruce can usually be found working events. Typically running a chase boat, Bruce has worked approximately 16 championship events worldwide. If asked, he will load up his well-traveled Boston Whaler and be at an

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event 2 days before anyone else, ready willing and able to do what needs to be done to assist and assure another great Hobie event.

What really makes Bruce an outstanding candidate for Sportsman of the Year, and ultimately more important than a long career of racing and race committee, is his overall contribution to the sport on a personal level.

Active and enthusiastic, Bruce is the first to lend a hand to a new sailor, and even to those relative new-comers who have only been sailing 10, 20 or 30 years, to make suggestions and offer his knowledge and experience.

He loves nothing more than sharing with others tuning tips, sailing techniques and little devices and solutions he has discovered to improve performance. Despite his famously gruff exterior, Bruce

is always approachable and open and would literally give you the shirt off his back. His passion for the sport he loves is contagious, life-long and an inspiration to everyone he meets.

Even today, if there is a regatta within 500-miles, or any National event anywhere, he's likely to be there.

Every time he sails he seeks to learn, improve and impart to others what he has learned. If you sail with him, you always come away with some new idea or perspective, and you are better for it. Countless sailors have benefitted from his experience, knowledge, and are inspired by his example. I am proud to submit this nomination of Bruce Fields for the 2011 HCA Sportsperson of the Year.

Submitted by: Dan Jarrett  
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