



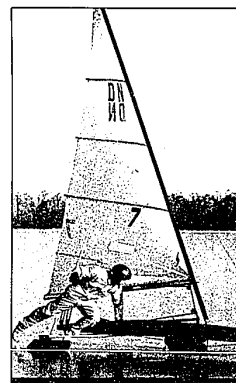
The ultimate feeling of ice sailing — a tilted horizon and wind blowing in your face. (Below) Nature, even during the winter, has a way of captivating a sailing buff.

photos
by
Dan Dean



Sailing in the fast lane

by Richard Lech



Pushing off helps get the streamlined craft started. But after that, a captain is one with the wind.

T

HE ICE SAILOR roars across the ice at speeds of 50 to 60 mph. Yet all that speed is accompanied by ghostly silence.

No engine knocking. No splash of keel against water. Just the faint sound of the boat's thin blades pressing against ice.

Lying flat in a boat that's just big enough to contain a human body, the ice sailor steers the tiller while making the sail ever slacker for greater speed.

Suddenly land looms ahead. The sailor must quickly turn the vessel or it will smash into the ground and disintegrate.

The turn is made, and the ice sailor heads for the race course's finish line.

"To stop, you have to turn into the wind, and you've always got to give yourself plenty of room because you have no brakes," said West Bloomfield resident Robert Stack.

As his grandfather and father before him, Stack is an ice sailor. Stack, 29, has been tackling the cold winds of Cass Lake every winter.

Continued on page 20