

The colorful Minx is still a tough racing competitor

STUART — Most of John Pierpont Morgan's racing yachts ended up at the bottom of the sea or in the hands of a favorite museum or charity.

But not the Minx. The sleek yacht, once a flagship of the magnate's fleet, got away. C.F. "Clancy" Shaffer has owned the Minx for 30 years.

In less than two months, the Cleveland Yacht Club opens its racing season and Shaffer, a retired business executive, will probably be on hand, aboard the Minx, of course.

Shaffer's eyes light up as he describes the rich history and achievements of the Minx.

Measuring 45½ feet in length, the Minx was built for Morgan in 1905 by Nat Herreshoff at Bristol, R.I.

Herreshoff built 17 others, and the buyers seem like a page out of the Social Register. The DuPonts bought a Herreshoff yacht. So did the Roosevelts and the Harrimans.

Shaffer paid a substantial price to buy the Minx and he spent a lot of money refurbishing it.

The Rocky River, Ohio resident ordered a 70-foot

aluminum mast from England and fitted the yacht with 18,000 new bolts and a fiberglass coating.

In yachting parlance, his yacht is a 1,000 flagger, Shaffer said.

He uses the Minx almost exclusively for racing and the yacht and its crew have won 64 percent of the competitions entered, whipping 60,000 competitors in the process.

Shaffer's investment and competitive efforts are rewarded with \$4 flags of red, white and blue and 400 to 500 silver cups, which the yachtsman has begun distributing to his crew.

During the season, Shaffer and his crew of seven will race against other yachts about three times a week on Lake Erie.

At 68, Shaffer said, he's not sure how much longer he can withstand the rigors of racing. Nor is he sure what he'll do with the prized yacht when his racing ends.

"I talk about quitting every year and then I forget about it when the season opens," he says. Morgan and the Minx wouldn't have it any other way.



Times photo by Nick Bergant

Clancy Shaffer looks forward to another racing season