

LakeErieWX

Marine Weather Education and Forecasting Resources

Chicago Yacht Club Race To Mackinac Preliminary Briefing – Wednesday, July 18, 2018

Friday's Forecast

General

The weather for the 2018 Chicago Mac will be dominated by a relatively strong low pressure system moving toward the Great Lakes from the upper Plains. The system is expected to deepen and occlude as it approaches Lake Michigan. Modest changes in the timing or track of this low across Lake Michigan could result in significant changes in the wind and wave forecast from Friday through late on Sunday afternoon.

At 7:00 am on Friday morning, the current forecast suggests this occluded low will be located over north central Wisconsin. The system's occluded and cold fronts will extend southwesterly through Wisconsin and Illinois. During the day on Friday, the low is expected to move very slowly east-northeast toward northern Lake Michigan while the system's occluded/cold fronts sweep east across southern Lake Michigan.

Precipitation/Thunderstorms

Widespread showers are expected with the approach and passage of the low pressure system. Total precipitation from 7:00 am Friday to 7:00 am on Saturday will range from .25" to .50". Thunderstorms are also expected on Friday, with the highest risk extending across the southern half of the Lake. While thunderstorms are likely, the risk of organized severe weather is currently categorized as *Marginal* by the Storm Prediction Center. This risk will have to be monitored as the weekend approaches.

Marine

Southern Lake Michigan – South 18 to 23 knots with gusts to 25 knots early. Veering to southwest and decreasing to 10 to 15 knots by late afternoon. Southwest 10 to 15 knots overnight. Waves 4 to 8 feet early and subsiding to 2 to 5 feet overnight.

Northern Lake Michigan – South southeast 15 to 20 knots early. Veering to south by early afternoon. Slight decrease to 12 to 16 knots by late evening. Waves 5 to 8 feet, subsiding to 3 to 7 overnight.

Saturday's Forecast

General

Early on Saturday morning, the occluded low pressure system is expected to be centered over northern Lake Michigan. The system's occluded, cold and warm fronts will be east of Lake Michigan by this time. A weak surface trough will extend from the low west into northern Minnesota. This surface trough will drift across Lake Michigan as the low moves southeast during the day on Saturday. High pressure will fill in as the low moves southeast.

Precipitation/Thunderstorms

The potential for showers will continue into Saturday as the low and its surface trough move southeast. Total rainfall from 7:00 am on Saturday to 7:00 am on Sunday will range from .10" to .25". The potential for precipitation will be highest in the morning and diminish throughout the day. The potential for thunderstorms on Saturday is very low.

Marine

Southern Lake Michigan – Southwest 10 to 15 knots early. Veering to west at 10 to 15 knots during early morning. Veering to northwest and increasing to 15 to 20 knots by late morning. Veering to north at 15 to 20 knots during afternoon. Waves subsiding from 3 to 5 feet to 2 to 4 feet early. Waves building to 3 to 5 feet.

Northern Lake Michigan -- Southwest 10 to 15 knots early. Veering to west at 10 to 15 knots during early morning. Veering to northwest and increasing to 15 to 20 knots by late morning. Veering to north at 15 to 20 knots during the afternoon. Waves subsiding from 3 to 5 feet to 2 to 4 feet early. Waves building to 3 to 5 feet.

Sunday's Forecast

General

By early Sunday morning, the troublesome low pressure system is forecast to be near western Lake Erie while a stationary front from a low in northern Ontario will extend over the Straights while high pressure moves in from the west. In addition, an occluded low pressure system will be approaching Lake Michigan from the Dakotas. This system is not expected to reach Lake Michigan until Monday afternoon.

Precipitation/Thunderstorms

The combination of the stationary front near northern Lake Michigan and the low near western Lake Erie, will prompt the chance of precipitation to linger into Sunday. The potential for thunderstorms on Sunday is currently very low.

Marine

Southern Lake Michigan – North 15 to 20 knots early. Slight veering to north northeast and increasing to 18 to 23 knots by early morning. Diminishing to 10 to 15 knots overnight. Waves 4 to 7 feet building to 5 to 8 feet. Waves diminishing overnight.

Northern Lake Michigan -- North 15 to 20 knots early. Slight veering to north northeast and increasing to 18 to 23 knots by mid-morning. Diminishing to 15 to 20 knots overnight. Waves 4 to 7 feet.

Monday's Forecast

General

On Monday morning, Lake Michigan will be sandwiched between an area of low pressure in central Ohio and an occluded low pressure system approaching from the west. At 7:00 am on Monday, the warm front from this low is expected to reach western Wisconsin. The system's cold front will lag slightly behind the warm front. Both of these frontal boundaries are forecast to sweep across Lake Michigan on Monday. The warm front should reach the Lake by late morning, while the trailing cold front will cross during the afternoon.

Precipitation/Thunderstorms

The passage of the system's warm sector (the triangular region between the warm and cold front) across Lake Michigan will promote showers and thunderstorms on Monday. While thunderstorms are expected, the potential for organized severe weather is currently very low. The risk of severe weather on Monday will come into better focus as the weekend approaches.

Marine

Southern Lake Michigan – North northeast at 10 to 15 knots early. Diminishing to 7 to 12 knots and backing to north by mid-morning. Continued weakening to 5 to 10 knots by Monday evening. Waves 3 to 5 feet.

Northern Lake Michigan - North northeast at 10 to 15 knots early. Diminishing to 7 to 12 knots and backing to north by mid-morning. Waves 3 to 5 feet.