

Quissett Yacht Club Round the Bay Race

Saturday September 12, 2020

On Saturday September 12th, the Quissett Yacht Club hosted the 68th annual Round the Bay Race. The race is held on the Saturday after Labor Day each year and this year's event garnered 14 entrants despite the challenges that Covid 19 imposed on the race.

The weather was spectacular with clear blue skies and a fresh NorthEasterly / Easterly breeze, and as usual the race committee led by Doug Jones and Ed Jackson did a great job of setting a good course and communicating the process to the competitors.

The race started outside of Quissett Harbor and the course sent the competitors north from there to the "R2" buoy near Cleveland Ledge Lighthouse, and then southwest, to the "BB" buoy in the middle of the bay and then back to the harbor for the finish. The 20 mile course featured a downwind start and then a tricky run / reach down the bay and an upwind final leg to the finish line.

As the race began, the first choice the boats had to make was whether to fly a spinnaker right at the start. Because the wind was coming over the land near and the starting line was near to shore, it was hard to determine what the conditions in the middle of the bay would be. Most of the racing fleet elected to set their spinnakers just after the start. Eventual race winner Hardtack did a great job of disguising their intent to set the spinnaker until the last minute when the neon yellow sail emerged from belowdecks just after they crossed the starting line. It was a well timed, aggressive move which paid immediate dividends as they were able to separate from their nearest competitors very quickly.

The boats quickly moved toward the first mark and boat-handling from Dark 'n Stormy, Kindred Spirits, Bela Sirena, Gut Feeling and Blue Pigeon were worth seeing at the start as they showed mastery of their vessels in the strong breeze.

At the gybe mark near Cleveland Ledge, the sail-handling of the teams were tested again. The fleet showed their experience in conditions that are typical of Buzzards Bay, but with the wind blowing from the opposite direction than normal. In addition to the wind and waves, the competitors had to work against the current as they headed for the middle of the bay. Matt Schmitt on Hardtack noted, "it was squirrely from R2 to the BB Buoy, we were lucky to keep our feet".

The upwind leg back to the finish line featured a following current that pushed the boats in the right direction, however that same current helped to build a big sea state and dictated the tactics as the boats worked their way to the finish line.

There were several former race winning boats were on hand to compete and the competition was tight right from the start. At the end of the day Hardtack (skipped by Matt Schmitt) won the race handily. He was followed over the finish line in the racing division by Dark 'n Stormy (Eric Wagner) and Gut Feeling (Ted Herlihy). In the cruising class the day was won by Blue Pigeon (Melissa Gordon) with second place going to last years overall winner Glory (Barry Steinberg) and third place awarded to KAOS (Scott Belliveau).

This race also has a trophy for the first Quissett boat to cross the finish line. This year's winner was Sandy Williams aboard Shadowfax. It is amazing to look at the trophy for this award and realize that Sandy is not only a multiple winner of this award, but that he has won it in the same boat as far back as 1992.

It was a great day on the water. Well done to all competitors!

2020 official results							
Sail#	Skipper	Boat Name	Class / Fleet	Make / Model	Finish Time	Racing Division	Cruising Division
563	Matthew Schmitt	Hardtack	Racing	J / 105	3:46:25	1	
413	Eric Wagner	Dark 'n Stormy	Racing	J / 105	4:00:00	2	
72	Ted Herlihy	Gut Feeling	Racing	J / 109	4:01:59	3	
51824	Melissa Gordon	Blue Pigeon Too	Cruising	Swan 53	4:05:53		1
51102	Butch Joy	Kindred Spirits	Racing	J / 120	4:06:03	4	
USA 33	James Barnes	Bella Sirena	Racing	Cross Current 33	4:06:15	5	
52540	Barry Steinberg	Glory	Cruising	Taylor 54	4:07:09		2
227	Ed Lobo	Waterwolf	Racing	J / 105	4:15:14	6	
41880	Scott Belliveau	KAOS	Cruising	Frers 41	4:17:57		3
73195	Rich Gleason	Fir Na Tine	Cruising	Lafitte 44	4:18:59		4
9	Nick Brachet	Dune Buggy	Racing	Pacer 310	4:20:59	7	
40697	John Sheridan	Checkmate	Cruising	Frers 33	4:54:00		5
221	Albert Williams	Shadowfax	Racing	Holliday 30	5:02:53	8	
J35	Twice Tougas	Saturnalia	Cruising	J / 35	DNF		