

## KOCOL RIPS THE BAY

John Kocol bought an F-25 C belonging to Canadians early in 1997. He then relocated to San Francisco's Bay Area, taking his boat (hull # 28) which he renamed JA MON. John has been an avid racer before buying the F-25 C. Many of you may remember meeting him in Pensacola this Spring where he skippered Duane Zelinsky's newly launched boat. The article that follows is John's first hand report from this years prestigious Double Handed Farallones Race. It's interesting to note that in the big waters of San Francisco Bay the F-25 C sails well to a -33 PHRF handicap rating. This should add perspective to Mike Guthries feeling that we need a +25 rating. ~Ed.

Greetings from the West Coast! I was recently asked to write about my first race experience in my newly acquired F-25 C. The Double Handed Farallones is the only race I have ever sailed, where trophies are named after people who were killed competing in the race. Being new to the Bay area, the only details I knew of these incidents is that a Stiletto (27?) crew member and a monohull skipper were lost at sea. It can get real rough out there, but this day the weather was great. The Farallones Islands is a small island chain, 29 nautical miles west / southwest of the Golden Gate. The rules require a crew of only two people on board. The race starts in the bay, in front of the Golden Gate YC. The course takes you out under the Golden Gate, out to the southeastern most island and back to the start / finish line. As the crow flies, the course is 58 nautical miles. With the prevailing breezes, it is a beat out and a broad reach back. We started with an ebb and finished with a flood tide, making the ride even more manageable. In San Francisco, the F-25 C rates at a -33. Along with 128 monohulls, 8 assorted multihulls started the race. The competitors ranged from a Telstar 8m tri PHRF'd at 180, to a Cross and an Antrim 30+ designed exclusively for ocean racing. The Antrim also rates a -33. The F-25 C seemed to own the course upwind in 12-15 kts of air, out pointing and sailing faster than any other competing boat. Outside the Golden Gate, the waves were 3 ft. And the swells 7 - 10 ft. The lumpy water slowed us down, but our upwind VMG was still better than the other big Tris, as we reached the Islands five minutes ahead of the second place tri. The island we saw was beautiful; very remote and pristine. We managed to snap a few pictures of some stunning natural sculptures created by the surf slapping against the tall rocks that compose the island. There were also many species of birds, and seals. The view was such that it was hard to pay attention to the race. Downwind, the F-25 C was incredible. We lost our lead position to the big rigs in a lull, but quickly regained it when the wind came back. As the wind freshened to 20+ kts., we found ourselves blasting over lots of lumpy water. Steerage was a problem when the boat heeled significantly as we had to crack sheets to regain helm control. When I sailed the boat flat (dragged the main), I had complete helm control. A pair of goggles would have made this leg much easier. After clearing the east side of the Golden Gate, we picked up some weird wind turbulence (which several locals claim is a venturi effect off the Golden Gate south tower). The breeze went from 15 kts. to 30+ kt. puffs instantly. The first puff stuffed the boat hard, up to the front Aka! We blew the sheets and she popped right up. After trimming again, the same thing happened, except this time it was more violent as the stuff was up to the mast! The guys on the Cross 46 R said the transom was ticking out of the water at a 45 degree angle. We cracked the sheets and the boat popped right back up. In both situations, I never felt in danger of pitch poling. At the time, we were in a gybing duel with the Antrim and happened to be in the cockpit. We were not holding on to anything other than sheets when we stuffed. Both of us slammed against the companionway bulkhead. The only casualty was my crew's sprained wrist. When going downwind in a stiff breeze, I now religiously stay as far back as possible and hang on to something. As a side note, there was no hull damage or even paint stress cracks from compression. Only the deck hatch

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leaked water into the V berth, which can be attributed to a faulty seal. Both Amas were bone dry. Special thanks to Ian Farrier, Bill Adams of CCI, and David Barnes of Calgary, who assembled the boat. While we were getting the chute down, the Cross 46 R squeaked by for line honors and finished by less than a minute in front of us. This after sailing over 70 miles in seven hours. We finished second, but corrected out in front of the Cross and won the race. If we had not tripped over our bow, twice, we would have been first boat! The closest monohull, a Mumm 36, finished almost an hour behind us after starting 45 minutes before us. Special thanks to Mile Klimpl of Milwaukee (who usually drags lead when he sails) for a superb crewing job. I love my new boat!