

Lightship (thank you for the photos, Steve Green)

We were treated to a gorgeous crisp day. With the wind from the north, it was a straight shot out and back with screech or spin carried virtually the entire time, and the dreaded flood was paltry.

Shadow tried a barging pin start which made for serious mayhem, but things were quickly sorted out as we buzzed under the Bridge in good pressure, Tatania just walking away from the fleet. Once outside, the wind lightened, Shadow first sailing far to the north and then far south of the rhumb line. I'm not sure if this was strategy or calmity; unfortunately they retired on the way out.

About halfway to the Lightbucket the wind gave out and the entire fleet accordioned, with boats flopping all over the place while way too close together. Then the breeze filled in again, chutes came out and the multihulls left the monos behind. Tatania rounded the Lightbucket about 12 min ahead of us and then just opened up a huge lead as we struggled to find the right gear, dousing the chute for the screech and then going back to chute. For a half hour the Coast Guard cutter chaperoned us while a Coastie chopper flew overhead--clearly our sailing skill filled them with confidence! Tatania got so far ahead we needed binoc's to see her, disappearing along the south shore.

Then we saw the Mini-Transat breaking out of the mono fleet, sailing a much hotter angle in good pressure to the north of us. So Henry and I abandoned our plan, headed up and caught the breeze, aiming for Pt. Bonita.

And then the fun began. The waves got much bigger and steeper, and we began to surf the big ones, watching our speed double or triple on each downhill slide. We sailed looking aft more than forward--disorienting but thrilling. We edged ahead of the Mini and could finally see Tatania again. We grazed the Pt. Bonita rocks with the lighthouse tourists watching, hugged the north shore in the ebb, crossing under the Bridge and then kept to the Crissy field shore.

The finish held even more mayhem than the start, as the breeze was up, a StFYC dinghy race was in progress with about half of the boats capsized near the pin, with protectors all over the place. We threaded between the beautiful 505s, 29ers, Wetas, and Lasers, and all of us on a plane, and crossed.

R o s s

Ross Stein
BAMA Race Chair
Corsair 24 #357, Origami

BAMAanians,

Thanks to IYC for the great weather and race, though I don't think I can forgive them for the lack of wind at times. Thank you for each of the responses and offers for EPIRBs and PLBs as I scrambled to meet the requirements for this race. It was a bit inconvenient, but luckily I had the time yesterday, and purchasing a PLB is something that I had been wanting to do - so it all worked out.

Ross talked about a mayhem on the line. Because of my Race Start Clinic practice, we (my crew, John Dahle) found it remarkably easy to negotiate and crossed the line with clear wind and no stress. This is not too surprising given that the fleet had already started about 3 minutes before us. My timing was a bit off. Had I completed making my stovetop espresso a little sooner, then we might have tangled it up with the racers on the line. However, civility first.

Now fired up, we stayed ahead of the 80 and under PHRF fleet for a good time. We passed close to the South Tower, and then kept to the middle of the channel. This was fine for a bit, but then for some reason we went north of Point Bonita instead of south, like most of the fleet. This was working out okay for a time, but then the wind died to 1-2 knots.. 0 knots.. backwards sailing.. flogging sails and building seas as we wandered well into the Potato Patch. As it turned out (wind later on), this would have been a good decision, but I was getting a bit nervous and wanted out of there. Good for safety, somewhat, but as we tried to get back to the channel, the waves pushed us towards SF. Watching the VMG increase was fantastic, too bad there was that negative sign in front.

The second half of the race was tremendously better, by second half of the race, I mean half-way to the Bucket. Much to my surprise, and perhaps to you as well, good reader, it was about this time that we flew past Tatiana. Well, depending upon your requirement for detail, I may elaborate on the overlooked assessment that Tatiana was speeding toward the Gate, and we were beating to the turn around. At this point I was checking to see how many hulls we had. I was seriously hoping that I had missed their retirement notice - we were so far, far, far behind. However, even with such a deflating moment, it is a matter of fact and cannot be denied that despite the relative speed and expertise of Tatiana, we arrived at the Lightship and completed our port rounding well before they finished their starboard rounding. Good for my word, I won't tell the RC. Congratulations, honestly, to the crew of Tatiana.

We didn't set the spinnaker on the way home. This would have meant either jibing and setting, or moving the lines to the other side, neither option being very gentleman like before afternoon tea was completed.

During the slog out to the big buoy I had kept in mind the tales of those who suffered through the wind, waves and current on the DH Farallones Race last year, only to be justly rewarded for the wind, waves and current on the way home. Going home made the effort to stick to the race completely worth it. We had the added benefit of having the Hanse 54 a couple of boat lengths beside us all the way to the Gate, changing the lead all the way in. We surfed and sustained a lot of 10 knot waves, many at 11-12 knots, peaking out a couple times at 14.

I wasn't going to bring this up, but it wouldn't be very sporting of me if I didn't brag about how on one of the waves we lifted the port ama and main hull out of the water. Surfing clearly on one ama was a bit nerve wracking for the new-to-multis John,

but it did enable me to tether down to the underside and scrub the bottom for a few minutes. (Depending on your slavish desire for "facts" one or two of these memories may not be entirely accurate).

This is now the second race for Jabberwock, the first was Great Pumpkin. I've got a tremendous learning curve to climb, but it's all in good fun. If you haven't got your boat out to race recently, it's a great excuse to go sailing. If you don't have a boat, then come aboard Jabberwock. Thanks again to IYC and the CG and congratulations for all racers on making it home safely.

-phillip

BAMAanians,

Approaching the start line it quickly became obvious that one large boat had not participated in the BAMA start race clinic. It did a classic barging start and fouled pretty much all boats who were approaching the favorite north end of the line properly. I had the impression that the skipper was surprised to see that many BAMA boats, on time, on the favorite side, with right of way (and knowing it.). Clearly the effect of the race clinic a few weeks ago. To his credit I have to mention that the offending boat did do a 360 turn before the GG to try to exonerate himself!

We soon went to the screecher and made good (relative) speed going out the gate, keeping to the middle and weaving up and down for max boatspeed in the fluky wind.

Outside Pt. Bonita, the wind got even weirder and the swells bigger, which allowed us to catch up and pass Shadow. He gybed, went south in search of more wind and was never seen again.

Shortly thereafter we discovered what became 'the parking lot'. The wind disappeared completely, but the swell was pretty big. Due to the wave motion we had 4kn of 'wind' from ESE on top of the swell and 5kn from WNW at the bottom. All the fast boats caught up to us which was very frustrating, as we were almost a mile ahead before parking. At some point we caught a first little puff and I ordered Pieter onto the front of the leeward ama. This got the other ama out of the water, the leeward heel kept the sails more stable and the distributed weight seemed to dampen the pitching and rolling. We managed to pull away from the fleet again, going almost upwind towards the mark. After rounding it was. Almost upwind again (don't know why) and entering the bar it was annoying to be too slow to catch the swell (some of which was 'friendly' breaking on top.). The wind finally settled to what it was supposed to be, we set the spinnaker and had some excellent surfs until the pole bracket exploded about 2nm W of Pt. Bonita. After a few minutes of mayhem we had everything tied down and proceeded under jib & main. We were very concerned that there would be too little pressure and too much ebb on the north side for our sail configuration, plus we had too little oomph to surf the waves, so we jibed for Mile Rock and found good wind and some current relief on that side.

Origami was rapidly catching up but we managed to finish ahead (he beat us by far on corrected time) and without killing one of the dinghies and Wetas who had put their starting line onto our finish line (same as last year, I would have though we scared them enough back then.)

Thanks to Bill Quigley for letting us use his great boat!

And thanks to my great crew Pieter Versavel on his first F-boat ride. He normally races Musto Skiffs which had prepared him perfectly to the speeds, angles and general mayhem of a racing F-boats.

Urs Rothacher