

# WindCheck

Sailing the Northeast

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# The Around Aquidneck Island Race

By Nick Bowen

The Twenty Hundred Club had their second race of the 2020 season on Saturday, June 20. The Around Aquidneck Race starts just south of Hog Island near the Mount Hope Bridge, takes the sailors about 12 nautical miles (nm) south to buoy “R2” at Brenton Reef. This mark is about 2 nm south of Castle Hill and there the boats turn east for a 5.5 nm run across Rhode Island Sound. Then at the buoy “G1” that marks Cormorant Reef, they turn north and enter the Sakonnet River for a 9.1 nm run upriver to the finish line just south of Gould Island before the Tiverton basin. The total distance for the race is 27.7 nm.

Twenty-four boats competed in four classes, with seventeen spinnaker boats and seven cruising class boats. This is almost up to the 2019 level of twenty-eight boats as racers are slowly getting back on the water.

The forecast for the day was southwest winds at 5-10 knots. High tide was at 7:54 AM and low tide was at 1:09 PM, which meant the boats would have favorable conditions all day. They would ride an outgoing tide all the way to Newport and then an incoming tide all the way up the Sakonnet River. The Around Aquidneck Race is always the third weekend in June, and there is a notorious trend that there are often very low winds until around noon when the sea breeze kicks in. Fortunately, just before the first start at 10:00AM the winds kicked up to 10-14 knots. Between the winds and the tides this was going to make a fast rounding of the island.

A unique attribute of this race is that the starts are staggered by fifteen minutes for each of the four classes. The slowest boats, Cruising II, start at 10:05 followed by Spinnaker B at 10:20. Cruising I starts at 10:35 and finally Spinnaker A starts at 10:50. John Brady of Portsmouth was the designer of this race, and legend has it that he set the staggered starts so all the boats would cluster near the finish line and he could always enjoy the view of dozens of colorful spinnakers sailing past his house that faces the Sakonnet River.

Brian Cunha's Ker 55 *Irie2* was the first to the turn at Brenton Reef around 12:30 PM. This was a remarkable 7.8 knots VMG while tacking down the bay. He was closely followed by Bill Shaw's J/29 *Meddler* by about five minutes. That was another remarkable performance by a Spinnaker-B boat down the Bay. The wind was too far to the south for the lead cluster of boats to set their spinnakers, but about a third of the way to Cormorant Reef the wind shifted to the southwest and the spinnakers all popped open.

The story of the day was between the highest and lowest



**Tim Grimes' Melges 24 *Zephyros* blasting around the island.**

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rated boats in Spinnaker A. The lowest rated boat (the fastest) was *Irie2* with a PHRF rating of -63 and Tim Grimes' Melges 24 *Zephyros*, with a rating of 99. This rating difference meant that Grimes would be given one hour and fourteen minutes of time credit. *Zephyros* had a tough ride from Castle Hill out to Brenton Reef because of the mix of outgoing tides and in coming winds made for some very steep ocean swells. *Zephyros* rounded Brenton Reef at 1:18, a full 48 minutes behind *Irie2* with less than half the race completed. At this point, their prospects of winning were low. *Zephyros*, aptly named for the Greek God of the West Winds, saw the miraculous wind shift from south to southwest and set their spinnaker shortly after rounding the mark. Tim's crew reported boat speeds of sixteen knots with a few blasts up to twenty. *Zephyros* was the third Spinnaker-A boat to finish and corrected to a first place victory.

A vibrant and growing sailboat racing club on Narragansett Bay, the Twenty Hundred Club hosts a wide range of races including island circumnavigations, destination races and pure adventure races. Interested sailors are encouraged to register at [twentyhundredclub.org](http://twentyhundredclub.org). ■

## Results

### Spinnaker A Class (PHRF Base < 100)

1. *Zephyros*, Timothy Grimes

2. *Memory*, Kevin Dakan
3. *Spirit*, EC Helme
4. *Vento Solare*, Bill Kneller
5. *Serenity*, Curt Spalding
6. *Irie2*, Brian Cunha
7. *Falcon*, Charles Stoddard
8. *En passant*, Jim Archer
9. *Resolute*, Terry Arndt
10. *Mischief*, David Schwartz

#### Spinnaker B Class (PHRF Base > 100)

1. *Vela*, Michael Zani
2. *epiphany*, Nick Bowen
3. *Odyssey*, David Brodsky & Alfred Van Liew
4. *Cetacean*, Peter Maloney
5. *Highlander*, Jonathan Bixby
6. *Mystic*, Christopher Borden
7. *Meddler*, William Shaw

#### Cruising I Class (PHRF Base <= 140)

1. *R' Buoy*, Mark Levin
2. *Relentless*, Robert Laska
3. *Warrior*, Phillippe Perut
5. *SeaTreat*, Mark Treat

#### Cruising II Class (PHRF Base > 140)

1. *Serendipity*, Gary Venable



*Spinnaker A boats passing Sandy Point in the Sakonnet River. Left to right are Kevin Dakan's Memory, David Schwartz's Mischief, Bill Kneller's Vento Solare, and Charlie Stoddard's Falcon. © Tristan Mouligne*

2. *Tamanoa*, Gregg Morash
3. *Pau Hana*, David Wilson
4. *Kestrel*, Mark Franklin

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