

WindCheck



Sailing the Northeast

**Third Time's the Charm
Song of the Solo Sailor
Block to Bermuda**

windcheckmagazine.com

July 2022

A Fiasco of a Season Opener

By Nick Bowen

The Twenty Hundred Club opened their season on Saturday, May 22 with the third annual “Bridge Fiasco” Race. The rules are simple: Start the race just south of Prudence Island and sail under each of the three Narragansett Bay bridges – the Newport Bridge, the Jamestown Bridge and the Mt. Hope Bridge – in any order. The course is 27.8nm long and the format of the race is pursuit style, which means your handicap is taken at the start of the race. The highest rated boat, *Able* (an Able Poitin) sailed by David Bruce, started at 9:35 and the lowest rated boat, *Mischief* (a Lyman-Morse 40) sailed by David Schwartz, started at 10:48.

Ten boats competed in two classes, with six Spinnaker boats and four Cruising class boats. This was down significantly from our high of 21 boats in the 2020 race. This was largely driven by miserable weather in May (cold and fog) that caused many owners to delay their launching. We also lost several boats to practice sessions for the upcoming Newport Bermuda Race.

The forecast was for low morning winds and fog. Low tide was at 6:25, which normally meant riding the tide to the Mt. Hope Bridge first would be the wise choice. What was not expected was the density of the fog. Curt Spaulding’s *Serenity* ran aground leaving their harbor when a fishing boat suddenly emerged from the fog and was blocking the channel (fortunately on a soft sand bar that they easily backed off from and then decided to use auto pilot to get to the starting line). Race Committee chair Marcus Cochran had to make the starting line only 100 feet

wide because that was as far as he could see. Marcus delayed the race by half an hour to go from zero breeze to at least enough that he thought boats would be able to get across the starting line.

The logic behind pursuit races is they make for an exciting finish because your penalty is taken at the start and in theory all boats should finish at the same time. However, in super low winds (when a breeze is expected later) it is incredibly unfair to the boats that start first. David Schwartz’s *Mischief* started more than

an hour after the first boat and was able to pass the entire fleet within an hour. But as karma would have it, after *Mischief* turned at the Jamestown Bridge they found a deep wind hole north of Jamestown and retired at 14:00.

The boats that wanted to ride the incoming tide north to the Mt. Hope Bridge would not see a breeze until 15:00 and all would retire. The smart move was to head south to the Jamestown Bridge, which is where all but one of the Spinnaker boats would head (*Mystic*, who headed to the Newport Bridge, would retire). Once the fleet turned north after the Jamestown Bridge, the sea breeze started to fill in. The fleet collectively decided that a long run to the Mt. Hope Bridge would be the right choice. Curt Spaulding decided to lone-dog it to the Newport Bridge and he would emerge the winner of the day. By the end of the day the racers would see 17+ knots of wind. *Party Tree Racing* reported boat speeds of 12+ knots as they approached the finish line.

It was a long day with the boats finishing around 18:00 but overall, but the first of the club’s six races this summer was a great start to the 2022 season. ■

Results

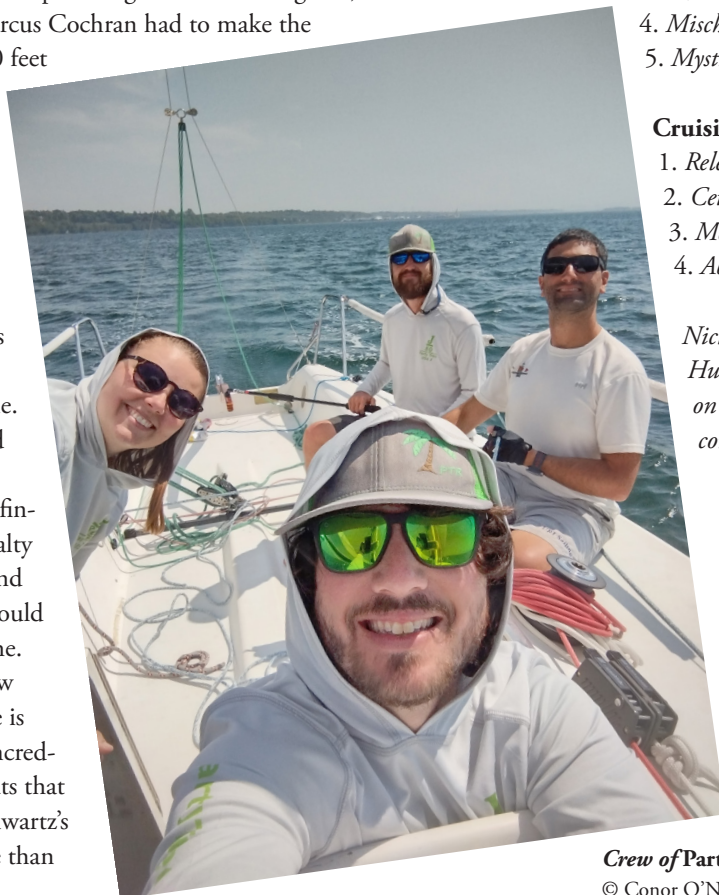
Spinnaker Class

1. *Serenity*, Curt Spaulding
2. *Party Tree Racing*, Michael Filimon
3. *Lead Mine*, Alexander Young
4. *Mischief*, David Schwartz (Retired)
5. *Mystic*, Christopher Borden (Retired)

Cruising Class

1. *Relentless*, Robert Laska
2. *Cetacean*, Peter Maloney (Retired)
3. *Mental Floss*, Randy Church (Retired)
4. *Able*, David Christopher Bruce (Retired)

Nick Bowen is the Commodore of the Twenty Hundred Club and races his Lyman-Morse e33 on Narragansett Bay. He can be reached at commodore@twentyhundredclub.org.



Crew of Party Tree Racing after the fog cleared

© Conor O’Neil