

2007 IDA LEWIS DISTANCE RACE: NEWS

Challenge Like Never Before: Rumours, Paladin and Decision Persevere

NEWPORT, RI (Aug. 13, 2007) -- A low pressure system delayed the planned Friday (August 10) start of the 2007 Ida Lewis Distance Race, but 17 hours later--at 8 a.m. Saturday morning (August 11)--sunshine prevailed and a fresh northerly enabled a colorful "spinnaker sendoff" for the 14 boats competing. By that time, the Race Committee had shortened the race--originally set at 177 miles--by 27 miles and two teams had dropped out due to schedule conflicts caused by the delay. The race started off Fort Adams State Park at the mouth of Newport Harbor, continued past Castle Hill and Brenton Reef, then incorporated Block Island, Montauk Point, Martha's Vineyard and Buzzards Tower into its configuration before returning to Fort Adams and just beyond to the finish line at the historic Lime Rock location of the race's host Ida Lewis Yacht Club.



Race photos by Amory Ross

"A severe weather warning had been issued on Thursday and the call was for 25-35 knot gusts Friday night when the sailors would be on their leg from Montauk to Nomans Land (south of Martha's Vineyard)," said Principal Race Officer Peter Gerard. "In the spirit of caution and safety we decided to delay and shorten course, diverting the second of two Montauk legs to a mark southeast of Block Island."

In the end, it was lack of wind instead of too much wind that foiled the efforts of half the fleet and allowed only seven boats to finish, four of those being the larger IRC entrants that made it back to Newport before the light-medium winds on the backside of the front began playing games with the rest of the fleet.

"The bigger IRC boats got away from us at Block Island when the wind first died and the southwest breeze, which wasn't predicted to come at all, took more than four hours to fill in across Rhode Island Sound," said PHRF defending champion Tim Woodhouse (Newport, R.I.), who wrought every last ounce of power from his Thompson 35 Rumours to become the only one of five teams in his class to finish.

Woodhouse's closest competitor, Tom Rich (Middletown, R.I.) aboard his Peterson 42 Settler, was keeping his handicap time on Rumours up until the last mark of the race, but then an oncoming ebb tide proved stronger than the breeze and Settler couldn't go anywhere. "We took the risk of trying to go between a rock and the shore for current relief and it didn't pay off," said Rich. "We were being swept up onto the rocks, so we turned on our engine. It was a great race until then."

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According to Woodhouse, "Settler would have beat us easily if the breeze had held." Woodhouse himself had been fortunate to get to Castle Hill on the last of the flood tide, but it took him one hour to get from there to the Dumplings, a mark near the finish line and a distance of less than one mile. He was fighting a 1 1/2 knot current in only four knots of breeze, which again was coming from the north. "An hour after that, the boats behind us had to battle a three-knot tide," said Woodhouse. Two more PHRF boats gave up, and one raced until the time limit expired at 3 p.m. on Sunday--all were just short of the finish line after more than 30 hours of sailing.

Two of five double-handed boats--sailing in a new division for this race--were the last to officially finish on Sunday afternoon and the only ones to take home trophies after the rest of their fleet gave up. They were Paladin, a J/35 skippered by Jason Richter (Mt. Sinai, N.Y.) in first, followed by Off Beat, a J/109 skippered by Doug Hannah (Jamestown, R.I.).

Stephen Murray (New Orleans, La.) defended his IRC title with his TP52 Decision, edging out Ron O'Hanley (Boston, Mass.) and his Farr 50 Privateer. Germany's Norbert Plambeck, with his Frers 80 Hexe (formerly Boomerang), finished third in that division.

According to O'Hanley, "This is a terrific race because it starts and ends in Newport and there are quite a significant number of navigational challenges. We were a bit disappointed by the delay because we lost a few crew members and we prefer heavy air, but the Race Committee had to make its decision. My congratulations go out to Decision who navigated the light air beautifully."

The Ida Lewis Distance Race has been newly added as one of the qualifying events for the first-ever DHORT (Double-Handed Ocean Racing Trophy), administered by the Stamford (Conn.) Yacht Club and added to that club's line-up of other prestigious trophies for which the race is a qualifier as well: the NELS (New England Lighthouse Series for PHRF boats) and the NORT (Northern Ocean Racing Trophy for IRC).

The Ida Lewis Distance Race is sponsored by North Sails and New England Boatworks, with support from Churchill Yacht Partners, Harken and J Boats.

For more information, go to <http://www.ildistancerace.org>, or contact Event Chair Dirk Johnson at info@ildistancerace.org.

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<i>2007 Ida Lewis Distance Race - Top-three Results</i>					
Finish	Boat	Type	Owner	Hometown	Corrected Time
<i>IRC</i>					
1	Decision	TP52	Stephen Murray	New Orleans, LA	1:03:33:33
2	Privateer	Farr 50	Ron O'Hanley	Boston, MA	1:05:34:01
3	Hexe	Frers 90	Norbert Plambeck	Cuxhaven, Germany	1:06:40:45
<i>PHRF</i>					
1	Rumours	Thompson 35	Tim Woodhouse	Newport, RI	1:00:15:54
<i>Double-handed</i>					
1	Paladin	J/35	Jason Richter	Mt. Sinai, NY	1:04:21:25
2	Off Beat	J/109	Doug Hannah	Jamestown, RI	1:05:00:08