

## 2008 IDA LEWIS DISTANCE RACE RESULTS

### *Slow Going at First, But a Blast by the End*

NEWPORT, RI (Aug. 17, 2008) – While most Rhode Islanders were peacefully sheltered ashore on Friday and Saturday night, an elite group of sailors was enjoying an intimate encounter with Mother Nature during the Ida Lewis Distance Race, which started Friday afternoon at 3 p.m. not far from the famed lighthouse that serves as host Ida Lewis Yacht Club's clubhouse on Newport Harbor. Competing were 11 teams, four of those sailing in a handicap-rule class for IRC, four sailing under PHRF and three competing in a Double-Handed division. The PHRF and Double-handed contenders sailed a 150-mile course, while the IRC boats sailed a slightly different, longer course of 177 miles.

A light 10-12 knot breeze marked the start, then sputtered to barely nothing overnight while the teams made their way to Montauk Point, immediately putting the fastest boats behind schedule on an expected early afternoon arrival back at the club on Saturday. Sailors were anything but bored, however, when the trip from Montauk to No Man's Land and then to Buzzard's Bay Tower served up extreme wind shifts that had them hurrying to change head sails and figure out their next moves.

"We had a three-hour period where we didn't move even one nautical mile," said Hap Fauth (Newport, R.I.) whose Reichel/Pugh 69 *Bella Mente*, was first to finish-- in just over 24 hours, at 3:30 p.m. on Saturday afternoon--and won the IRC class. "And in my last ten years of racing I don't think I've seen so many sail changes in a single race."

As one of a pool of new super-fast, high-tech IRC boats that debuted in Newport this summer, *Bella Mente* stayed behind while its grand-prix racing counterparts moved on to the Mediterranean to take part in the European racing circuit. "*Bella Mente* just wasn't ready for prime time yet," said Fauth, who thought the Ida Lewis Distance Race was a perfect way to test some boat modifications that were made recently. "We also practiced with the crew for two days prior to going on this race," he added.

Because she made it around the course fastest, *Bella Mente* missed out on most of the stronger winds of up to 23 knots that made the last 50 miles of the race a "real blast" for the rest of the fleet. A scattering of severe weather cells, marked by fantastic shows of lightning, necessitated close scrutiny of radar systems and "a snaking through" to avoid unwanted encounters.

"It looked pretty scary at times," said Mike Coe (Milford, Conn.), crewman aboard Bill Jurgensen's (Stamford, Conn.) winning PHRF entrant *Falcon*, a Tripp 50 design. "It seemed like the lightning was actually striking all around us."

Lightning was not the only thing that caught *Falcon*'s attention. John Brim's (Newport, R.I.) Reichel/Pugh 55 *Rima* (from the IRC class), which finished second in the race two years ago, had been close with them up until the Buzzard's Bay Tower mark, when the IRC fleet had to diverge from the two courses' common legs to take another leg out to Montauk while *Falcon* and the others sailed to a closer mark off Block Island before heading back to Newport. It led the *Falcon* team to believe that, had they chosen to enter IRC instead of PHRF, they might have done well there, too.

As it was, *Falcon* finished at around 6:30 p.m. Saturday evening, the second boat over the finish line after *Bella Mente*. *Rima*, which wound up fourth in IRC class, finished fourth over the line a little after 8:30 p.m. on Saturday, only 15 seconds behind William Byron's (Newport, R.I.) PHRF entrant *Fearless*, an Alden 72, which finished third in its class.

Jason Richter (Port Jefferson, N.Y.) returned to successfully defend his Double-Handed crown in the J/35 *Paladin*. Asked why he likes sailing shorthanded in the Ida Lewis Distance Race, he laughed, saying, "I like the punishment. While we're out there, sometimes we say 'why do we do this?!'"

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The last boat to finish was Simon Day's (Newport, R.I.) 21-foot mini Transat boat, Josephine, which he, too, sailed with only one additional crew. She finished at 4:15 Sunday morning, completing the course in just shy of 37 hours.

Each boat was greeted at their finish by a crew of volunteers from Ida Lewis Yacht Club, powering alongside in one of the club's committee boats and bearing a congratulatory bottle of champagne. Since the finish line was sighted off the deck of the clubhouse, the boats that finished before midnight made an impressive show for members enjoying that night's Lobster Fest on Lime Rock. It was from there that the heroine Ida Lewis, the female keeper of the Lime Rock Lighthouse in the early 1800s, famously rowed her lifeboat to wherever a sailor was in need. Legend has it that in daring rescues she saved 18 lives, each represented by a single star on the Ida Lewis Yacht Club burgee.

For having the fastest elapsed times, Bella Mente and Falcon were awarded, respectively, the Russell L. Hoyt and the Lois J. Muessel Perpetual Memorial Trophies.

Sponsors for the race are New England Boatworks, North Sails and Mac Designs. For more information, contact Dirk Johnson, [info@ildistancerace.org](mailto:info@ildistancerace.org), or go to <http://www.ildistancerace.org>