

2016 IDA LEWIS DISTANCE RACE: NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: [Barby MacGowan](#), Media Pro Int'l, +1 401-849-0220

Ida Lewis Distance Race: Big Decisions, Plenty of Action

NEWPORT, R.I. (August 22, 2016) – The 12th edition of the Ida Lewis Distance Race concluded on Saturday, August 20 after 37 boats completed either a 121 nautical mile course (Doublehanded, PHRF Spinnaker and IRC classes) or a 107 nm course (Cruising Spinnaker) that started and finished off Newport, R.I. After almost 13 1/2 hours of racing, Steve Benjamin's (Jamestown, R.I./South Norwalk, Conn.) TP52 *Spookie* was first to finish at just after 2:35 a.m. Saturday morning, while the last boat, Alfred Van Liew and David Brodsky's (Middletown, R.I.) S&S 48 *Odyssey*, finished at around 12:30 Saturday afternoon.

Spookie ended up winning the Russell L. Hoyt Memorial Trophy for best elapsed time in IRC division and the Commodore's Trophy for best corrected time in her nine-boat IRC class, making this the second year in a row for her to do so. (*Odyssey* finished seventh in IRC class.)



Steve Benjamin's TP52 *Spookie* won line honors and the IRC Division of the Ida Lewis Distance Race in 2015.
(Photo credit: Cate Brown)

This is one of our absolute favorite events," said Benjamin, the current Rolex Yachtsman of the Year and a sailing Olympic Silver Medalist. "We've been doing it for years, and the whole thing came together very nicely."

One of the critical decisions of the race had to be made after the rounding of a government mark west of Block Island and east of Montauk Point. Benjamin had passed south of Block Island to get to the mark and then went south of the island again on the way back to Newport. This worked fine for him, but for others who got there later in the evening, a route north around the island would be the faster, better bet. Twenty-two PHRF boats started together on Friday afternoon, when the race started, but were scored to make two separate PHRF classes. The Ker 55 *Irie 2*, skippered by Brian Cunha (Newport, R.I.), and the Beneteau First 36.7 *Elan*, skippered by John Hammel (Jamestown, R.I.), emerged as winners,

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respectively, of PHRF Class 1 and Class 2. In addition, *Irie 2* won the Lois J. Muessel Memorial Trophy for best elapsed time overall in PHRF division and the Lime Rock Trophy for best corrected time overall in PHRF division.



Irie 2 took PHRF Class 1 victory and overall victory in PHRF Division at the 2016 Ida Lewis Distance Race.
(Photo Credit: Cate Brown)

According to *Irie 2*'s tactician Jan Lynch, his team hit a "dead zone" of wind just under the cliffs of Block Island. "Our plan from start to finish was *not* to go north, because we knew we were getting there early enough, but inadvertently, we got a little too close to the island, so we did stop for a while." Skipper Brian Cunha was surprised that *Irie 2* won PHRF overall: "We won by only five minutes on corrected time over *Oakcliff Farr 40 Black* (the youth entry from Oakcliff Sailing in Oyster Bay, N.Y.). After 18 hours of racing, that's not by much!"

It turned out that *Irie 2*, which was among five boats that made it home before 6 a.m. Saturday morning, was just about the last boat to take a southern route successfully. Said *Elan*'s tactician Ed Doherty about his team's PHRF Class 2 victory: "We knew the race was going to be decided between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. We had already planned in advance, though with lots of debate, to go north of Block Island on the way back, because if the wind went light, the current would be favorable and sweep us north back to Newport, and that's what happened. It was a very tough race, lots of good boats. Getting it right feels good."

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Elan, winner of PHRF Class 2 at the 2016 Ida Lewis Distance Race, is in the foreground as the fleet heads past The Dumplings in Narragansett Bay.

(Photo Credit: Cate Brown)

Doublehanded class was won by Adrian Little's (Newport) Sunfast 3600 *Helios*, while Cruising Spinnaker was won by Matthew and Priscilla Pilon's (Houston, Texas) Oyster 54 *Liberty Call*.

"We love doing this race," said Priscilla Pilon, who said the full moon added to the remarkable conditions, which included light air at the start but better-than-expected winds of 10-12 knots over much of the course. "The challenge of the different courses makes for an interesting race, the communication is great, and of course the finish is fun with champagne delivered to your boat."

Collegiate and Youth Challenges

Two races within the race were the Collegiate and the Youth Challenges, designed to give young adults exposure to offshore racing. *Oakcliff Farr 40 Black* finished an impressive second in PHRF Class 1 and won the Youth Challenge for the Arent Kits van Heyningen Trophy, while Michael Cashel's (Boston, Mass.) R/P 44 *Miracle* won the Collegiate Challenge for the William E. Tuthill Trophy by taking fourth in PHRF Class 1.

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Clockwise from left: Collegiate Challenge winner *Miracle* under sail (Photo credit: Cate Brown), *Miracle* team accepting William E. Tuthill Trophy, Youth Challenge winner *Oakcliff Farr 40 Black* accepting Arent Kits van Heyningen Trophy (Photo credits: Robbie Benjamin).

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Max Nickbarg, navigator on *Miracle*, was a first-time Ida Lewis competitor as were his mates who were sailing alumni from Brown, College of Charleston, Columbia, Denver University, Roger Williams, University of Rhode Island and Yale. “We had a few challenging times,” he said, describing how they snagged an anchor line sailing through a fishing fleet and how, at the Montauk mark, his team had to put out its own anchor to stop from going backwards in the current. “All the boats were stacked up there, and we were there for about three hours and couldn’t tack around it,” said Nickbarg.

As for the youth sailors aboard *Oakcliff Farr 40 Black*, their stellar performance was backed up by the confidence they had in each other and their team. “We were the first boat to go north,” said main trimmer Kyle Collins. “We decided instead of fighting the current and staying south it was faster to ride it and go north. Main trimmer Richard Kertatos added, “All the boats after us that went south got stuck in light wind.” For both, this was their first Ida Lewis Distance Race and the longest race they’ve done. “It was great weather; the full moon made trimming sails easier,” said Kertatos, adding that the race had accomplished its purpose by encouraging youth teams. “I definitely plan to someday own my own big boat!”

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A club-member friendly chart shows four possible course choices, which were ultimately narrowed down to two for the Ida Lewis Distance Race 2016. It shows Block Island on the rhumb line to a government mark east and slightly north of Long Island's Montauk Point.

(Photo credit: Ida Lewis Yacht Club)

Sponsors

Sponsors for the 2016 Ida Lewis Distance Race include [Bluewater Technologies](#), [City of Newport](#), [Helly Hansen](#), [New England Boatworks](#), [Newport Shipyard](#), and [Triton Insurance](#); Contributing Sponsors are [DYT Yacht Transport](#), [Flint Audio & Video](#), [Goslings Rum](#), [Mac Designs](#), [North Sails](#), [Rig Pro](#), [Southern Spars](#), [Stella Artois](#), [Toni Mills Graphic Design](#), and [Z Blok](#).

For more information on the Ida Lewis Distance Race, visit <http://www.ildistancerace.org> or contact Skip Helme, racechairman@ildistancerace.org, 401-641-2109.

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(end)

(Top Three results follow)

Top-three Results

Ida Lewis Distance Race 2016

Place, Yacht Name, Type, Owner/Skipper, Hometown, Results, Total Points

IRC (IRC - 9 Boats)

1. Spookie, TP52 52, Steve & Heidi Benjamin, Jamestown, R.I./South Norwalk, CT, USA - 1 ; 1
2. Privateer, Cookson 50, Ron O'Hanley, Boston, MA, USA - 2 ; 2
3. Siren, RP 57, Will Hubbard, New York , NY , USA - 3 ; 3

PHRF - Spinnaker 1 (PHRF - 13 Boats)

1. Irie 2, Ker 55, Brian Cunha, Newport, RI, USA - 1 ; 1
2. Oakcliff Farr 40 Black - Youth, Farr 40 40, Oakcliff Sailing, Oyster Bay, NY, USA - 2 ; 2
3. Heron, J/120, Greg Leonard, Annapolis, MD, USA - 3 ; 3

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PHRF - Spinnaker 2 (PHRF - 9 Boats)

1. Elan, Beneteau First 36.7, John Hammel, Jamestown, RI, USA - 1 ; 1
2. Samba, Quest 30, Tristan Mouligne, Boston, MA, USA - 2 ; 2
3. Breakaway - Youth, J/35, Paul Grimes, Portsmouth, RI, USA - 3 ;

PHRF - Doublehanded (PHRF - 3 Boats)

1. Helios, Sunfast 3600, Adrian Little, Newport, RI, USA - 1 ; 1
2. Oakcliff Ker 11.3, Ker 11.3, Sean O'Halloran, Oyster Bay, New York, USA - 2 ; 2
3. Dragon, Class 40, Michael Hennessy, Mystic, CT, USA - 3 ; 3

Cruising Spinnaker (PHRF - 3 Boats)

1. Liberty Call, Oyster 54, Matthew Pilon, Houston, Texas, USA - 1 ; 1
2. Haerlem, Nautor Swan 55, Hendrikus Wisker, Round Hill, VA, USA - 2 ; 2
3. Duck Soup, C&C 37, William Clavin, Warwick, RI, USA - 4 ; 4

For Details regarding sponsorship levels please contact:

Skip Helme
Event Chair
(401) 641-2109
RaceChairman@ILDistanceRace.org

Ann C. Souder
Sponsorship Chair
(401) 439-6377
AnnCSouder@aol.com