

2009 IDA LEWIS DISTANCE RACE



Wind and Bell Mente Photo by Amery Ross

Ida Lewis Distance Race Titan 15 Triumphs in IRC; Cutlass, Jeroboam and Lolita Claim Victory in PHRF

NEWPORT, RI (August 23, 2009) - Tom Hill's (San Juan, Puerto Rico) Titan 15, a new 75-foot Reichel-Pugh design that was launched this year at New England Boatworks in Rhode Island, handily won the IRC Division at this weekend's fifth Ida Lewis Distance Race, which started and ended off Newport, R.I., where host Ida Lewis Yacht Club makes its home. Starting at 3 p.m. on Friday with a fleet of 39 others (divided into classes for IRC, PHRF, PHRF Double-Handed and PHRF Cruising Spinnaker), Titan 15 finished its 150-mile course at 4:42 a.m. on Saturday, covering the distance in just over 13 hours and 42 minutes. (Hill also won the inaugural Ida Lewis Distance Race in 2004.)

Though Titan's time was the fastest ever logged in this race, it did not qualify as a record, since Race Officials had shortened both of the traditional courses used for this event to insure that Hurricane Bill, stalking northward in the Atlantic Ocean, wouldn't find a vulnerable fleet on which to pounce should it veer from its predicted course on Sunday. The IRC boats, which normally sail the 177 nm "Montauk" course, instead sailed the 150 nm "Block Island" course typically reserved for the PHRF boats, while The PHRF boats sailed a newly published "Buzzards Bay Tower" course that was just over 103 nm long.

"It was a hell of a race," said Hill, explaining that Titan was "screaming" both upwind and downwind in the predominately 16-20 knots of wind. "The conditions made for the best sailing we've had since putting the boat in the water."

Mechanical failures dashed any hope for the regatta's two larger boats -- George David's (Hartford, Conn.) 90-foot sloop Rambler and Irvine Laidlaw's (Monaco) 82' Wally yacht Highland Fling-to upstage it. Rambler's running backstay broke 25 miles into the race, and when the boat crash-tacked to save the mast from falling, the clew ring pulled out of the mainsail. Only minutes before, Highland Fling's jib cunningham had broken, causing the sail to blow

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out of the headfoil. A second jib was set only to have the same thing happen again. While Rambler managed to repair (two crewmen successfully changed out the runner while hoisted near the top of the 130-foot rig), Highland Fling was forced to retire. "It's hard to win a race with no jib," said Highland Fling's captain Xavier Mecoy, who had explained in an earlier interview that this was the boat's shakedown race and the crew wasn't sure what to expect.

"We literally had had only 15 sailing hours on the boat," said Mike Toppa, Highland Fling's mainsail trimmer for this event. "There were sails we hadn't even seen yet, but we learned and accomplished a lot." For the record, Highland Fling smoked upwind before the mishap, and Tom Hill said he was disappointed he didn't get to pace against the boat going downwind. "She is 25 tons and we're 16 so maybe we would have been faster, but maybe not," said Hill.

Rambler wound up second, correcting out at a bit less than two hours behind Titan, while Ron O'Hanley's (Boston, Mass.) Cookson 40 Privateer took third.

The PHRF class's scratch boat Cutlass, a Class 40 owned by Nick Halmos and Alex Mehran (both of Newport, R.I.) knocked out their 103-nm mile race in just under 14 hours and 20 minutes. "Upwind is where our boat performs the worst, and three out of four of the legs were reaching and running," said Mehran, who with Halmos recently won the Bermuda One-Two race both in class and overall.

According to Jonathan Green (Wakefield, Mass.), another class winner from the Bermuda One-Two, winning the Ida Lewis Distance Race's PRHF Double-handed class in his Beneteau 351 Jeroboam wasn't as hard as he expected it to be because the conditions were straightforward. "What was really great was that it was a fun race. The course they chose to send us on was a blast. You had to choose which way to round Block Island and it had upwind and downwind legs that were tons of fun."

Winning PHRF Cruising Spinnaker class was Frank Savage's (Jamestown, R.I.) Lolita, which completed the course in 16 hours and change.

The race is a qualifier for the 2009 New England Lighthouse Series (PHRF); the Northern and Double-Handed Ocean Racing Trophies (IRC); and the US-IRC Gulf Stream Series.

Each boat is greeted at their finish-which is sighted off the deck of the Ida Lewis Yacht Club clubhouse -- by a crew of volunteers, powering alongside in one of the club's committee boats and bearing a congratulatory bottle of champagne. It was from the yacht club's home on Lime Rock 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.

Primary sponsors for the Ida Lewis Distance Race are New England Boatworks and North Sails. Other sponsors are Dockwise Yacht Transport, Mac Designs, Media Pro Int'l, Narragansett Beer, the Rhode Island State Yachting Committee, Sea Gear Uniforms and Vineyard Vines.

For more information, go to www.ildistancerace.org.

Ida Lewis Distance Race Results

Class 1 - IRC (IRC - 10 Boats)

	Yacht Name	Type and Length	Owner/Skipper	Hometown	Results	Total Points
1	Titan 15	RP Custom 75 75	Tom Hill	San Juan, Puerto Rico, USA	1	1
2	Rambler	Water Ballasted Sloop 90	George David	Hartford, CT, USA	2	2
3	Privateer	Cookson 50 50	Ron O'Hanley	Boston, MA, USA	3	3

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Class 2 - PHRF (PHRF - 17 Boats)

	Yacht Name	Type and Length	Owner/Skipper	Hometown	Results	Total Points
1	Cutlass	Class 40 40	Nick/Alex Halmos- Mehran	Newport, RI, USA	1	1
2	Jest	Rodger Martin 32 32	Anson Stookey / Phip Hallowell	Middletown, RI, USA	2	2
3 (t)	TRUE	J 42 42.0'	Howard Hodgson	Ipswich, MA, USA	3	3
3 (t)	Tempress	IMX-45 45	Arent/Robert Kits van Heyningen	Newport, RI, USA	3/RDG	3

Class 3 - PHRF - Double Handed (PHRF - 6 Boats)

	Yacht Name	Type and Length	Owner/Skipper	Hometown	Results	Total Points
1	Jeroboam	Beneteau 351 35	Jonathan Green	Wakefield, MA, USA	1	1
2	Paladin	J 35 35.5	Jason Richter	Mt Sinai, NY, USA	2	2
3	Ceol Mor	J 42 42	James Wilson	Washington, DC, USA	3	3

Class 4 - PHRF - Cruising Spinnaker (PHRF - 7 Boats)

	Yacht Name	Type and Length	Owner/Skipper	Hometown	Results	Total Points
1	Lolita	Swan 56.4	Frank Savage	Jamestown, RI, USA	1	1
2	Vixen	Swan 44 44	John Wayt	Jamestown, RI, USA	2	2
3	Perseverance	Swan 56 57.51	Tom Puett	Atlanta, GA, USA	3	3

**Ida Lewis Distance Race
Record Fleet to Start at 3 p.m. Today
Course Shortened Due to Hurricane Bill**

NEWPORT, RI (August 21, 2009) - The fifth running of the Ida Lewis Distance Race, which will host a fleet more than double the size of previous years, begins at 3 p.m. this afternoon (Friday, August 21) off Newport, R.I., where host Ida Lewis Yacht Club makes its home. With 40 boats entered -- the largest being George David's (Hartford, Conn.) 90-foot Rambler and the smallest being Doug Mitchell's (Boston, Mass.) 30-foot The Cone of Silence - the event will send off its IRC class (with 10 boats) first, at a starting line just off Fort Adams, and follow with three subsequent starts for PHRF (17), PHRF Double-Handed (6) and PHRF Cruising Spinnaker (7) classes.

Because of reports that Hurricane Bill, the first major Atlantic storm of the season, is making its way northward, Race Organizers announced a shortening of the two courses used for the event. "The idea is to have everyone back safe in the harbor and secure by midnight on Saturday, when we expect some form of weather disturbance," said Race Chairman Peter Gerard.

The IRC boats, which normally sail the 177 nm "Montauk" course, will instead sail the 150 nm "Block Island" course typically reserved for the PHRF boats, while The PHRF boats will sail a newly published "Buzzards Bay Tower" course that is just over 103 nm long.

Both groups enjoy a signature champagne finish, the line for which is sighted off the deck of Ida Lewis Yacht Club, where members gather on Saturday night for a finish line party.



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