

SPRING SERIES

SHIELDS FLEET 9 JUNE 21

Certainly a day to remember. Not because the sun was out, or that the wind was blowing between 9 and 15 with gusts to 18 and consistently south, southwest. Because a micro burst blew through when the race was over. I will get back to that. Robin Wallace was busy today and I was PRO with Dan Eardley as driver, timer. Betsy Reed and the volunteers from Shields 181 boat crew, were aboard Ida; Peter, Trish and Christine. Socrates Vavalotis, Adam Ray and John from boat 181 were on Capt. Hosea handling the start, finish and leeward mark. Phyllis Detwiler drove Limerock with Alyce Wright handling the windward mark.

Wind readings were 215 to 225 between the Fort and Clingstone as well as off Rose Island, with a more consistent wind at 220. There were occasional right shifts to 230, but always came back quickly. High tide was 18:15 and was in full gear by 17:00. I set up the starting line just south of Mark 6 for a 220 wind direction. The course was set as #63, SRM 4 to port 6 to port, twice around. The starting line was pin favored 5 degrees due to the wind shift to the right. The wind was from 215 to 230 during the 5-minute count down, but the fleet was straight across the line for the start and the flood tide kept the lead boats back by 3 to 5 feet before the clock counted down to zero and the bang. We had 16 boats on the line.

Three boats broke too the right and headed to clingstone. The rest of the fleet went left to hug the coast and get out of the flood tide. The wind did not change for the first windward but there were signs of small left and right shifts as the fleet headed to the leeward mark. There were no changes on each of the five legs.

Ida pulled up anchor, after the first rounding and headed south to extend the finish leg from mark 6 and dropped anchor about .4 miles from 6 slightly to the west to accommodate the right wind shift that was occurring. The distance from 6 to SRM 4 was 1.35 miles, making the today race distance 5.8 miles. We noticed dark clouds on the west horizon and checked the radar. The radar showed significant rain clouds heading east with a slight southern slant. The storm was quite large but diminished as it moved east. Expected rain was at 7:15pm. Shields 14 spoke with RC by VHF and withdrew from the race.

The boats finished by 18:54 with 217 getting the bullet, 33 in second place and 121 in third place. We lifted anchor and began to head to the dock. Lightning was seen on the west horizon and rain could be seen moving in our direction. Radar showed that the storm continued to diminish, yet there was an area of clouds with yellow and red radar colors in a circle about 2 to 3 miles wide. As we got to the dock the rain began, and some of the drops were so big that they looked like large snowflakes. Five minutes later, a wall of water moved west to east with a down pour that was so hard you could not see for more than 200 feet and then the hail began. Hail the size of marbles. So loud under the ILYC deck enclosure with the corrugated fiberglass panels that it drowned out all conversation, and it seemed to go on for 10 minutes. You could see the hail splashing in the harbor. People were trying to talk with each other and their lips were moving but you could only hear a loud drumming roar. It slowly went away and within 30 minutes, the sky line had sections of deep blue with puffy clouds and eventually we had a fantastic sunset as the sun sank at 8:24pm. Certainly memorable.

Bill O'Hanley