

SPRING SERIES

SHIELDS FLEET 9 JULY 12

I checked the radar throughout the day, since the forecast had a chance of thunder storms. By 3:30pm the radar was clear and where there were thunder storm clouds, was well north of the bay. Parking the car at ILYC, a little after 4:00pm, I decided to look at the radar again. There were significant thunder storm cells lined up to the west from west of Hartford, heading east southeast with the south edge of the storm over our sailing area, expected to arrive at our starting time. I spent a few extra minutes confirming the direction, most of the radar color was red with yellow outlines. Walking up the dock, I spoke with race teams to let them know not to go out to their boats, we were going to do an early AP until we had a better idea of what was going to happen. This information was broadcast over the fleet channel, 79 before and at 4:30. AP was raised at ILYC with two horn signals.

We spent the next 40 minutes watching the radar on several different apps, some of those apps provided future casts that showed where the storm was going and at what time it would start to rain. As usual for Narraganset bay, there was significant evaporation as the cells approached the bay, especially the south edge. By 5:15, the radar apps showed that the rain would stay away until 8 to 8:30. The AP was dropped at 5:30 and the fleet was getting to their boats and heading out. We met South of the bridge, south of Rose Island since all the other yacht clubs had cancelled their Wednesday races. There were two very large yachts at anchor east of Rose that did not pose an issue. We positioned Ida between Nav 6 and Sierra. The wind was 210 for 15 minutes then started to go right until it finally stopped at 230. The course was 80 once around, which was Q to port then 6 to port with an up-wind finish.

Phyllis Detwiler drove Limerock with two members from Fleet 9 boat 245. Capt. Hosea was driven by Ross Cann with a member of boat 245. Capt. Hose dropped the starting pin, which was slightly favored. Limerock stood by the windward mark Q. At the start, most of the fleet stayed close to Ida, which turned out that they wanted to go right, thinking there was more pressure there. It turns out the lead boat that went right and the lead boat that went left, rounded Q at the same time. The tide was flooding, but not at peak.

We had two commercial ships early. A cargo ship came in from Brenton 10 minutes after the start, but stayed close to Fort Adams and dropped anchor Northwest of the fort, far enough away from the course. There also was a Car Carrier going outbound that passed Clingstone when the fleet was more than half the way to the windward mark. Clearly these two ships effected the sailing strategies of the racers, to stay clear. Both ships were conscientious to a fault. The car carrier slowed down to a point where it kept the fleet from tacking back to the center.

Shortly after the fleet rounded the windward mark, the wind started going left, but returned to 230. We set the finish line at the starting line area. We had two members of boat 245 on Ida with David Brown, Betsy Reed, Dan Eardley as driver and timer and myself as PRO. Boat 33 got the bang, there was a good separation with 226 in second and 254 not far back for third. The boats got back to the moorings and on shore before the rain. Bill O'Hanley