

LOWER LAKE HURON SOLO CHALLENGE 12 SEPTEMBER 2009

We had 20 entries this year, up from the 15 of last year. This was the result of a fine effort by Mark Gutteridge who recruited 5 out of the 6 of the new first time entries. 5 sailors made the long trek up the St. Clair River to participate.

The weather forecast for Saturday was for a sunny day with light and variable winds early on and 10 knots from the north around noon and then turning northeasterly. On the way out to the start line with zero wind we had a repeat of last year where Mark and I talked about calling a short course. About 30 minutes before the first start the wind came and we had 5 to 10 knots from the northeast. No more talk of short course!

The first leg of the race was a close reach up to R12. After rounding the mark the wind was right on the nose and the sailors had to chose between the northerly tack or the southerly (shore side) tack. Most boats went north but those who chose the shore side were well rewarded when after a couple of hours the wind shifted to the north and they were lifted up to the Kettle Point buoy.

The final leg back to the finish line was a sail not to be missed. With the sun beating down on us, it was a beam reach in up to 15 knots of wind. Towards the finish the wind shifted and the ride became a broad reach with boats surfing down the waves.

The early finishers crossed the line from 5.30 pm on and most of the boats were finished by 7pm, in plenty of time for the party at Sarnia Yacht Club. Five out of the six first time entrants went home with flags and "cleaned up" in Spinnaker A" Division. Derek Jackson taking first and Kyle Griffin taking second.

Harold Beaton continues to show us how it's done, coming first in "Spinnaker B" yet again.

More people than usual stayed for the awards party, which resulted in lively conversation about the winning and losing strategies that unfolded during the race. See pictures below.

Special thanks go out to:

- Sarnia Yacht Club for the use of their facilities
- John and Joan Chorostecki for the start line committee.
- The finish line committee: Marianne Clift, Denise McCaffrey, Sarah White, Lori Lester, Maureen Woolvett and Cynthia Harris.
- Adrienne Hughes for organizing the food.
- All the others who contributed in one-way or another
- And last but no means least all of you who took up the challenge to compete

Tom Hughes

and

Mark Gutteridge



First time entrant Larry Fair, 3rd JAM B



Jeff Neuhalfen tells his "hard luck" story



First time entrant Bill Kern, 2nd Spinnaker B



First time entrant Al Schmidt, 3rd JAM A



First time entrant Kyle Griffin, 2nd Spinnaker A



First time entrant Derek Jackson, 1st Spinnaker A



JS 3 Approaching the finish line



RATS0 Hard on the wind