

Hi Wally,

I want to tell you that I really enjoyed my attempt at the GLSS membership. It was great to meet you and the participants at the meeting.

My account of the race.

I started under white sail close aboard 2 minis and Taz. Once I got going I was encouraged to put up my socked asymmetrical spinnaker. It deployed well and my speed improved. I was keeping pace with the others. I noticed 2 separate cells. One astern to port the other on starboard quarter. The waves were getting higher and my auto helm was not doing the best job so I hand steer surfing nicely. Soon the wind increased and I knew I should be reducing sail yet could not leave the helm to the auto when I tried. I decided to stick it out in the hope that it was a prolonged gust and it would pass. Well it was longer and stronger than I had hoped. One Mini and I believe Taz were both sideways slightly ahead to port. I narrowly passed by them both on my port side. I lost my asym spin just before the Gibraltar mark. It was recovered but ripped up quite badly. It was discouraging so early in the race to use up this sail. Complete carnage for a while. I saw Yuk Fu II ahead near the mark making the best of recovering what was left of his. I sailed past Gibraltar mark (2:00pm) towing my chute since it was easier to recover at a different point of sail after I rounded. After I got squared away I saw Striker astern, he had recovered and he soon passed me. I was having some lunch under a reefed main & partially furled head sail when I saw Pearl. All sails were down. I saw Brent standing on his boom reaching up with his boat hook to retrieve something. The weather was getting light enough to let some canvas out. I saw Brent astern, he raised sails and he was gaining on me. So I raised some more canvas since the weather had seemed to have passed. Pearl sailed by south of me and we exchanged words. He encouraged me to continue without the Asym spinnaker which I was prepared to do. I was finishing my lunch and occasionally looking over at him. It was around 2:30 when I took a look over at Brent out of the corner of my eye I saw nothing but white water. I knew a huge prolonged gust or worse was coming. I hit my main halyard clutch. The main dropped about half way while I was trying to roll in the head sail. Too late to get it all in when it hit me. It was an unimaginable event. The strength and suddenness of it. No waves initially they came later. My boat was on her ear and sideways. I looked over to Brent & he appeared worse. He looked as though he had a full genoa up. I saw him at the mast yanking down the main. I was sideways and out of control for the longest minute or so in my life. I did my best and eventually get settled. That is when I noticed the head sail had ripped along the leech. I was heartbroken. I knew that I could not continue the race with 2 sails badly damaged. Thus around 3:30 pm I started the motor and put it in gear sealing my retirement. I was about 15 miles south west of my home port of FBYC so decided to head home.

I turned the VHF to Chanel 16 and tried to hail race committee. No answer. I listened to 16 and heard all the problems on the lake. A lost mast, an overturned boat and the worst - people in the water. It was on the numerous occasions that I tried hailing that I realized my VHF had crapped out. I could only listen, not be heard from on either the RAM nor

the main radio. That along with my cell phone being stolen at PCYC that morning also told me that without any communication it was foolish to continue.

I made FBYC approximately 5:30 pm. All safe, just broken hearted.

I sit here at home watching the other single-handers on the trackers knowing that they are all great sailors. I wish I was with them.

My race is over but I know their will be other ones.
All the best.

Chuck Watson
Why Not, Sail #72
Express 30
FBYC