

## **LOWER LAKE HURON SOLO CHALLENGE 10 SEPTEMBER 2011**

We had an encouraging increase in entries this year to 22. One other "definite" entry cancelled just before the skippers meeting due to work commitments. Of the entries 3, Glenn Weier, Herb Huber and Bob Ormond were First Time entries, all of them completing the challenge. The light air forecast prompted a number of initial JAM entries to transfer to Spinnaker resulting in only one JAM division and three Spinnaker. Many thanks to Jeff Neuhalfen, David McVinnie, Jeff Golding and Dave Evans who made the long trek up the St. Clair River to participate.

After almost a week of rain and cold North Winds, the weather forecast for Saturday was much better, other than it looked like the wind Gods were going to give us a hard time. Zero to 5 knots of wind.

It was nice and sunny on Saturday morning but the forecast still called for light airs and the JAM division was deemed a short course race before the commencement of the event.

The first leg of the race to R12 was a painfully slow beat in sloppy seas left over from the strong north winds of the previous days. On the way up to R12 there was much discussion as to which spinnaker divisions wanted to stick with the long course or go short course. The majority favored staying with the long course and therefore all divisions were declared to be so.

Approaching R12 the Lake flattened but with extremely variable light winds. Several of us had great difficulty rounding the mark, as every tack became the headed tack. In addition, a number of us were caught out on the wrong side of the shipping channel and had to wait to get over the channel to R12 while three freighters came by in quick succession. That basically was the end of my chance of victory! Should have learned from a previous experience of doing the same thing!!

After rounding the mark the wind picked up a little and it was a beat in 5 and occasionally up to 10 knots of wind. Mid afternoon a couple of long course boats figured out it would be "the middle of the night" before they finished and called it quits. The first JAM boat, Nereus, rounded the short course mark around 2 pm and the first spinnaker boat rounded the Kettle Point buoy at just after 3 pm.

The leg back from the marks was a broad reach in variable winds with the wind dying as the day wore on. 3 more boats retired as a result.

The first JAM boat, Glenn Weier on Nereus, crossed the line just before 5 pm and the first Spinnaker Boat, Kyle Griffin on Gong Show crossed just before 7 pm. Three Boats, David McVinnie on Windstar, Bill Kern of Luff 'N Stuff and Larry Fair on Gale Runner, all stuck it out to "the bitter end" finishing between 11pm and 1130 pm. A great show of perseverance.

The slow race unfortunately resulted in lower attendance at a somewhat subdued late Après Sail get together. Those that made it were pretty tired and most, except Dave Evans, just wanted to get to bed. The late finish for those in Spinnaker B division resulted in the final placings not being determined until Sunday.

Special thanks go out to:

- Sarnia Yacht Club for the use of their facilities
- Ron Pickard, Kyle Griffin and Jim Bennett for helping with the overall organization
- The Start Line committee and use of their boat, Marty Hayes and Lindee Cole

- The Finish Line committee: Reta Ray, Marilyn Grimshaw, Cynthia Harris, Mary Jo Bennett, Tara Griffin, Mavis Sanger, Jim Sanger, and Marianne Clift
- Our Bar Tender Lloyd Pemberton
- Adrienne Hughes for organizing the food.
- Dave Kember for his excellent job on the BBQ
- Dave Clift and Ed Stronach for helping out at the Skippers Meeting
- 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

## RACE PICTURES BELOW



Jeff Neuhalfen on Christine Marie making his way past Stag Island on the way to the Skippers Meeting.



Bill Kern on Luff 'N Stuff making his way to R12



Phil Magill on Ptarmigan trying to get the most out of the light winds.





Bob Griffin on Grand Slam trying to make R12 in the fluky winds. R12 is close to the boat in the distance beyond the stern of Grand Slam.



A view from Tom Hughes' boat Split Decision finally approaching R12. Ahead, Bill Kern on Grand Slam and Phil Magill on Ptarmigan having just completed the rounding.



Ed Stronach on Serenity following Split Decision round R12. It turned out to be a very long day for Ed.



Glenn Weier on Nereus on the return leg to the finish.



Ron Pickard on 100 Proof just after rounding the Blue Point Mark





Tom Hughes congratulates Kyle Griffin on his First Place finish award in Spinnaker A Division



Ken Colborne receives his First Place award in Spinnaker C Division



First Time entrant Glenn Weier receives his First Place award in JAM Division