

The GLSS Solo Challenger

March 2025

solosailors.org



*The Official Newsletter of the Great Lakes Singlehanded Society
Spring 2025 – Ken Verhaeren (verhaerk@aol.com) editor
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Starting with the next Solo Challenger, Rob Burger will be the editor. If you have any ideas for articles or would like to write about your GLSS or sailing experiences please contact Rob. The Solo Challenger is your newsletter and will be enhanced by your contributions. Thank you for all of your help, ideas and articles over the years of my doing this.

2025 Board of Directors

Officers

President: Russ Krock
Vice President: Jeff Marshall
Treasurer: Luke Brockman.
Recording Secretary: Brian VanWieren

Directors

Jack Jamison
Mac McKenzie
Matt Rubsam
Elisabeth Reichling
Ben Thorsen

FROM THE HELM

Solo Sailors, Solo Sailors, Solo Sailors,

I would like to start by looking back and expressing my thanks and gratitude for all members, spouses, and friends who joined us for our Annual General Meeting. This year our meeting was held on the spectacular 39th floor of the Key Bank Building in Cleveland and it was even clear and sunny for beautiful views of Lake Erie and the City. It is also an important event for our organization where we thank those who helped make last year possible and successful and share our congratulations of our fellow sailor's accomplishments. Not to mention tall tales and sea stories from the past. We also thanked Kris Kimmons, Brian Crabb, and Dave Courtney for their service on the Board of Directors and welcomed Jack Jamison, Mac McKenzie, and Ben Thorsen to their 3 year terms.

Looking ahead we have probably our busiest year yet offering the most solo sailing opportunities including additional Solo Shakedown and of course the Trans-Superior Challenge. As always, please see the website for the latest events and dates, links to registration pages, and important documents such as the 2025 Required Equipment List at solosailors.org

New for this year we will be moving ahead with our tracking by using the YellowBrick equipment. The safety features and the user interface experience is much improved over the previous SPOT/Kattack setup. Therefore the SPOT/Inreach requirement has been removed and no longer required for the safety requirement. See the 2025 REL and the NOR and SI for the individual events for more information.

So let's get our boats ready, check our lists, and start our year off with a Solo Shakedown near you to warm up for a Challenge or 2 on our Great Lakes. Also don't forget to renew/update your MWPHRF which is offering an early bird special prior to April 1.

Finally, I would like to thank Ken Verhaeran for his dedication and time to this Newsletter over the past many years. We appreciate this and your many other contributions to the GLSS. This will be Ken's final issue and Rob Burger will lead this effort into the future.

Fair Winds and Standing by on 72, Russ Krock, President

AGM

A celebration of the Past Year
And anticipate of a great year to
come!

Special Awards

A number of our members have reached a milestone in their GLSS journey. One look at our membership rolls show most members complete less than 5 Challenges and many just one. As everyone knows, there is a reason why we call them Challenges.

5 Challenges Completed

James Roscoe

10 Challenges Completed

Russ Krock, Jeffrey Stack, Kris Kimmons and
Brian Van Wieren

15 Challenges Completed

Jon Jacobs and Rob Burger

20 Challenges Completed

Noel Brockman and Joey Baker

25 Challenges Completed

Lease Shock

So do you know who are the top 5 members with the most completions? Those five have completed 203 Challenges for way more than 60,000 miles! Check the GLSS website at solosailors.org

2024 saw 44 sailors complete our Challenges this past summer. Six sailors completed both the Port Huron to Mackinac and the Lake Erie Challenges. Blair Arden, Joey Baker, Noel Brockman, Russ Krock, Lease Shock and Ben Thorsen.

Change in Vessel Tracking

The following change was voted on and approved by the GLSS membership.

CURRENT REQUIREMENT **DELETED**

29. A Spot or other Messaging and Tracking device using satellite communications capable of sending a manual “OK” signal and set to a ping rate of no less than every 30 minutes. It must be turned on and transmitting for the entirety of the event.

NEW REQUIREMENT **ADDED**

The GLSS Board of Directors will require individual vessel tracking for all boats on all Challenges with the equipment and operational requirements to be given in the Notice of Race (NOR) and Sailing Instructions (SI).

Rational

Making these changes allows the Board of Directors to be flexible in providing race tracking and safety aspects of a vessel tracker with changing technology. This is similar with how other events are addressing this requirement.

Currently the best option is the Yellowbrick system which is also used in the LO300 and TransSupior events

Financial

The 2024 season was another great sailing season for the GLSS and a profitable one for the coffers. Continuing our efforts to remain responsible to our members on the fiscal side of running our Challenges we had a \$1580.87 profit for the year. Quite remarkable considering we ran so many events this past year. And our most expensive Challenge came in with a strong profit. The GLSS BOD continues to stress the importance of keeping costs low.

GLSS

Special Recognition

Awards

Ralph Eilberg Award for Outstanding Seamanship

John Hoskins

Ralph Eilberg was one of the Founding Fathers, Charter Member and past President of the GLSS. A top ten collegiate marathon runner, one of Ralph's greatest loves was sailing. Ralph also established the Port Huron to Chicago Solo Challenge in 1981. The Super Mac, as it is known, is the second longest freshwater solo sailing venue in the world only superseded by the solo Super Mac and Back established in 2008.



John was nominated for his rescue of a sailor who fell overboard during the 2024 Crewed Chicago to Mackinac Race. The rescue took place in total darkness requiring John's leadership, crew preparation and modern technology. The rescue was accomplished very quickly. Because conditions were rough, great skill was needed once the sailor was spotted to get him onboard. All the sailors on John's boat knew their jobs and performed them flawlessly. The ability to get into position and recover the sailor depend on a crew trained and practiced for spotting and safely maneuvering the boat into position. During his acceptance, John greatly praised his crew for their dedication and ability to follow job responsibilities for the rescue.

Noel Brockman on left



Outstanding Sportsmanship Award

Noel Brockman

Awarded to the member who exemplifies the very best in Sportsmanship. A strong competitor who encourages others to be their very best on the land and water.

Noel Brockman is a shining example of this award. Always putting every effort into his sailing, he exceeds that in his efforts to encourage other sailors. Always willing to give an assist, discuss sailing techniques and how to get the best out of a particular boat. Noel is well known among his competitors as someone who can be depended on.

Spirit Cup

Mark Gannon

The Spirit Cup is presented to the individual (s) who exemplifies the foundation of all GLSS Challenges.

Through their Seamanship,, Determination and Persistence, provide the GLSS with the “**Never Give Up, No Matter What**” inspiration. Mark certainly fits the bill for this award. He has persistently worked in all aspect of our organization. He has been a Solo Mac Race Director for 4 years, GLSS Board member serving as Treasurer and Vice President. Mark also organized GLSS safety events at the Chicago Yacht Club. Combine all of those things with excellent seamanship in our Challenges we have been fortunate to sail with him.



Mike Silverthorne Memorial Trophy

Ken Verhaeren



Lake Michigan solo sailors are fond of saying that “It takes a pair to do it alone.” More often than not, Mike, known to his close friends as “**Laughing Gull**” found himself half of a pair; he was constantly assisting his fellow singlehanders whenever and wherever it was needed. This award is presented to the skipper who best embodies the exemplary spirit of Mike Silverthorne and Solo Sailing. As such, it is only presented upon by a committee of past Mike Silverthorne Therapy recipients’ recommendation after consideration of the candidates’s significant contribution and merits.

Ken joined the GLSS in 2005 after completing the Chicago to Mackinac Challenge. In 2008 he completed

in the first Chicago Super Mac and Back Challenge He has assisted in numerous Safety Seminars in Illinois and Michigan. He has also served as the Mackinac Race Director, assistant for other Race Directors and the GLSS Board of Directors. This issue of the Solo Challenger completes his years as the editor.

New Yacht Scoring Registration

The Yacht Scoring program has been taking over by a revised staff and appearance. When you register for this years events you will see a different format. You **may be** required to upgrade your password to get in but if so you can reuse your old password. Many of your previous entries will populate the current fields. It was pretty easy to complete the entry though some items have not be entered for access yet. It is easy to go back and update entry information.

Calendar Go to solosailors.org for details

- | | |
|---|--|
| 5/31/25 - Solo Shakedown | 6/06/26 - Bermuda 1-2 |
| 6/21/25. - Mackinac Solo Challenges | 6/21/25 - Transpacific |
| 7/12/25. - Lake Ontario Solo Challenge | 7/12/25. - Hook Race |
| 8/02/25. - Trans-Superior Solo | 8/09/25. - Lake Erie Solo Challenge |
| 8/23/25. - Lake Michigan Solo Scramble | 9/13/25. - Lower Lake Huron Solo |
| 9/20/25. - Sandusky 45005 | 9/27/25. - St Clair Solo |

Water Level Updated 3/21/25

There have been significant changes to the Great Lakes water levels over the past few years. From being at or near all-time high water levels we are now at much lower water levels. Currently Lake Superior is below Chart Datum with the projected change by Apr 21 still below Chart Datum. All sailors need to be aware of water levels they will be sailing through.

ALERTS

Water levels shown are still-water surface elevations over the entire lake surface. Water levels at specific locations may differ due to meteorological influences. Official records are based on monthly average water levels and not daily water levels. Great Lakes, connecting channels, and St. Lawrence River users should keep informed of current conditions before undertaking any activities affected by changing water levels. Mariners should use navigation charts and refer to current water level readings. Find ice information at National Ice Center's [website](#).

	SUPERIOR	MICH-HURON	ST. CLAIR	ERIE	ONTARIO
Forecasted Water Level for Mar 21, 2025 (feet)	600.66	577.92	574.08	571.39	244.72
Chart Datum (feet)	601.10	577.50	572.30	569.20	243.30
Difference from chart datum (inches)	-5	+5	+21	+26	+17
Difference from average water level for Feb 21, 2025 (inches*)	0	+2	+14	+4	+6
Difference from average water level for Mar 21, 2024 (inches*)	-5	-9	-10	-11	-6
Difference from long-term monthly average of Mar (inches)	-6	-7	+2	+2	-4
Difference from highest monthly average of record for Mar (inches)	-21	-42	-33	-31	-31
Year of highest recorded monthly mean	1986	2020	2020	2020	1952
Difference from lowest monthly average of record for Mar (inches)	+13	+22	+37	+38	+26
Year of lowest recorded monthly mean	1926	1964	1934	1934	1935
Projected net change in levels by Apr 21, 2025 (inches)	+2	+3	+4	+5	+4

ALL DATA SHOWN IN THIS SUMMARY ARE REFERENCED TO IGLD 1985
 *VALUES FOR SPECIFIC DAY ARE BASED ON 3-DAY DAILY AVERAGE AROUND SPECIFIED DATE
 LONG TERM AVERAGE PERIOD OF RECORD, 1918-2023

President Cup Winners

Lake Erie

Mark Brockman

Surprise

Lake Ontario

Kim Downing

Rocketman

Check out the GLSS website for information on the President Cup at solosailors.org