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STORM TRYSAIL CLUB'S ROUND THE ISLAND RACE SEES FLEET TACKLE WINDY CONDITIONS

NEW SHOREHAM, R.I. (June 23, 2015) – After yesterday's idyllic opening day to the Storm Trysail Club's 50th anniversary Block Island Race Week the wind gods turned up the volume today and gave the fleet a boisterous ride for the traditional Round the Island Race.

With two courses measuring 21 nautical miles (IRC 1, 2, 3, 4) and 18.5nm (all other classes), the first boats in the fleet of 167 got underway at 11:05 a.m. in winds around 20 knots. By the time the fleet got to the north end of the island, three-quarters of the way around, the wind had built to 30 knots and the seas to 5 feet. Many sailors said they had the ride of their life in testing conditions.

"It's nice to come so far and have high quality racing," said James Blakemore, owner of the Swan 53 *Music* from Johannesburg, South Africa. "Those were good conditions for us. We're a big boat and like strong winds."

"That was the most fun I've had on a boat in 30 knots of wind," said Jack LeFort, owner of the Bill Tripp-designed Bermuda 50 *Watermark*. "We hit a top speed of 22 knots."

The race committee sent the fleet on a counter-clockwise circumnavigation of the island. After an initial beat into the southwesterly wind, the fleet turned left towards the east for a wet and wild run past Southeast Lighthouse with many bows alternating between submarine and airborne as they caught a wave and took off.

Off Southeast Lighthouse a jibe to port was required to head northerly towards 1BI, the familiar green bell at the north end of the island. That stretch was the toughest of the race. Many in the fleet doused their spinnakers before 1BI as the breeze had become too strong to carry. Once around 1BI, the fleet had a tough beat to the finish line.

"I give the race committee heaps of credit for running that race today," said Ken Read, the president of North Sails who is sailing aboard *Watermark*. "It would've been easy for them to say it was too windy, but for many it was an epic day that they'll remember forever."

Gunther Buerman's 52-footer *Hooligan* won line honors, completing the 21nm course in 2 hours and 5 minutes. Buerman complimented his crew for sailing a solid race.



"This is the second time racing with this group of guys, and they're a good group," said Buerman. "The seas were challenging, especially upwind, but if you come out here to race you should be able to handle winds in the high 20s. We broke a batten but that was it."

Although *Hooligan* won line honors, it lost the IRC Class 1 victory to Austin and Gwen Fragomen's new 44-footer *Interlodge* by 44 seconds on corrected time. *Interlodge* tactician Andy Horton said they decided to go straight to the spinnaker after rounding the southwest corner of the island instead of setting a fractional Code 0. "We went the simple route," said Horton.

Interlodge and *Hooligan* are tied for the class lead with 6 points.

Three crews in the 13 racing divisions – *Christopher Dragon*, *Themis* and Iris Vogel's *J/88 Deviation* – have posted all first-place finishes and share the low score of 4 points.

Andrew and Linda Weiss's *Christopher Dragon* (Sydney 43), with veteran race week sailor Butch Ulmer calling tactics, has accomplished the feat in IRC 2 after winning today's race. "That was the best race around the island that I've ever done," said Andrew Weiss, who's sailed Block Island Race Week for 25 years. "We blew out the A3 spinnaker and then changed down to the A2 and hit a top speed of 22.8 knots."

Racing newbie Walt Thirion has done it with *Themis* in the C&C 30 class. "That was fantastic," said Thirion. "It was a lot of fun passing boats on the downwind leg. Our top speed was 19 knots."

In IRC 3/Swan 42, Ken Colburn's *Apparition* finished first and now has a 1-point lead over Paul Zabetakis' *Impetuous*. John Hele's *Daring* is another point behind in third place.

Blakemore's *Music* scored the victory in IRC 4 and leads the class with 8 points. Ed Freitag and Molly Haley's *DownTime* (Summit 40) is second with 10 points, followed by Mike Bruno's *Wings* (J/122) with 11 points. *Wings* also leads the J/122 sub-class over John Pearson's *Red Sky*.

PHRF 1 is led by Kevin McNeil's *Seabiscuit* (Farr 30) which has 8 points after winning today's testing race. Bennett Greenwald's *Perseverance* is second with 14 points after placing third today.

Jim Bishop's *Gold Digger* won the J/44 class but is placed third with 12 points. Jeffery Willis' *Challenge IV* leads with 8 points, followed by Don and Rick Rave's *Resolute* with 10 points.

In the J/109 class, Rick Lyall's *Storm* has taken control after posting a fourth today. *Storm* has totaled 9 points and leads Donald Filippelli's *Caminos* by 1 point.

The J/105 class is led by James MacDonald's *Distant Passion*, which has 12 points after placing fourth today. Paul Beaudin's *loulou* is second with 13 points and Bruce Stone's *Arbitrage* is third with 15 points.



Damian Emery's *Eclipse*, the overall winner in 2013 and J/105 class winner the past two race weeks, is fourth with 19 points.

In the commotion of the day Tom Lee's crew aboard the Melges 24 *Jammy Beggar* might've put in the best performance. Racing against boats as much as 18 feet longer, *Jammy Beggar* won the PHRF 2 Class on elapsed time, finishing the 18.5NM course in 2 hours and 45 minutes, and corrected time. William Purdy's *Whirlwind* (Beneteau First 36.7) placed third and leads the class with 7 points.

After winning today's race, John & Tony Esposito's *Hustler* (J/29) leads PHRF 3 with 5 points on finishes of 1-2-1-1, good for a 4-point lead over Ed Tracey's and Tim Polk's *Incommunicado* (Omega 36).

"It was just another day at the office," said John Esposito, who has won his class each of the past four race weeks. "We had the bow wave back to the shrouds and the rooster tail coming off the transom. *Rumor* (John Stock's J/80) was the only one in the class besides us to carry a chute. It was a great ride."

David Alldian's *Cymothoe* (Sabre 362) won PHRF 4 by more than 9 minutes on corrected time over *Brer Rabbitt III* and leads David Strang's and Bill Loweth's 40-year-old C&C 33 by 3 points. Strang and Loweth played it conservatively today, foregoing the spinnaker all together.

In the navigator classes, Ty Anderson's *Skye* (Farr 395) leads the Doublehanded Class, Brian and Debra Mulhall's *Testing Life* (Tartan 46) leads the Cruising Spinnaker division, and Christopher Schneider's *Rascal* (Ericson 39) leads the Cruising Non-Spinnaker Division.

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About Block Island Race Week

Founded in 1965, the Storm Trysail Club's Block Island Race Week is one of the oldest race weeks in the U.S. The regatta is held in odd-numbered years on idyllic Block Island, about 13 miles off the coast of Rhode Island. Measuring less than 10 square miles in area, Block Island has been named one of "The Last Great Places" by the Nature Conservancy. The Storm Trysail Club wishes to thank its many supporters and partners, including sponsors [Mount Gay Rum](#), [North Sails](#), [Block Island Wind Farm](#), [Caithness Energy](#), [Vineyard Vines](#), [New England Boatworks](#), [Bainbridge International](#), [Gill](#), [Hall Spars](#), [Gowrie Group](#), [Trident Studio](#), [US Watercraft](#), [PhotoBoat.com](#), [Heineken](#), [Newport Vineyards](#), [WindCheck](#), [Sailing World](#), [Utz Potato Chips](#), [Bitter End](#), [Commanders' Weather](#).

About the Storm Trysail Club



The Storm Trysail Club is one of the world's most respected sailing clubs. Established in 1938, its membership includes skilled blue water and ocean racing sailors, who have flown a storm trysail (a small triangular sail flown in very strong winds) or severely reduced canvas during an ocean voyage. The club is headquartered in Larchmont, N.Y., and has regional stations throughout the U.S. The club hosts Block Island Race Week in odd-numbered years, the annual Block Island Race and Fort Lauderdale to Key West Race, Quantum Key West Race Week, the biennial Miami to Montego Bay Race and many other events. The Club's affiliated 501(c)(3) organization, The Storm Trysail Foundation, holds annual junior safety-at-sea seminars and the Intercollegiate Offshore Regatta for college sailors using big boats. For more information, visit [Storm Trysail Club](#).