

2018 SJRYC Rhumbline Regatta

You couldn't have asked for a worse day to race, or a lousier forecast. It was overcast and at times with rain pouring down from 8 AM off and on right through the scheduled Skipper's Meeting at 10:30. Worse, the prediction was for T-storms off and on mostly all day, with weather maps showing big green, red and yellow blobs aimed our way until about 3PM.

The RC Team, led by Jim Scholz, held the Skipper's Meeting inside the first floor bar at the Club so everyone could stay dry. No one seemed to mind the delay he set--or the fact we were all warm and toasty inside. I worked the check-in table and more than one skipper looked at me right in the eyes and asked if we were really going to have a race in this hash. I sincerely answered that we are going to try like heck to get a race today, but it would be delayed. How long? I wasn't sure.

After a 90 minute delay, Jim Scholz gathered the skippers together and felt the weather gave us an opening and the race was on--to start as close to 1PM as possible. Spinn 1 set out first a bit after 1PM and as usual, three twisty, convoluted courses of different lengths were drawn up. The Rhumbline is about more than raw boatspeed. You also have to find your way around the course. But this year, everyone had a special and completely unpredicted, handicap.

Fog. Thick fog. Pea-soup fog. Cut it was a knife fog. And shockingly, big winds right behind the fog ranging up into the 18 - 21 knot range. As all this hit realize that most boats had their #1 Genoa's up and full mains. And now, with the fog, they were all sailing partially blind. The Rhumbline is well known as a challenging race, but this was an unusual test. Oh, and I forgot, the weather brought a never ending series of windshifts, as well.

Many boats just let the big sails flutter and kept going. Some were able to reef and change down to proper headsails. Others just hung on and hoped it would all be over soon. Competitors would appear out of the fog, tack away, and not be seen again. But by 3PM, the course designs worked perfectly so that big groups of boats from all sections were finishing together.

The results show some things we expected, and some surprises as well. No surprise that in Spinn 1, Gint on his Farr 395 Imagine won yet another Rhumbline. They have a long winning streak for this race and this win makes it ever harder for anyone to catch them. And although Gint won by over three minutes, Mike Jones on his Farr-Mumm 36 Mrs Jones (that was the name on the boat when he bought it, I am told), in second place he led a pack of six boats that all finished within three minutes of each other. In third was hometown hero Patrick Nelson on his Schock 36 Captain Blood, with Jud Brown sailing fast close behind on Silk, a C&C 110, followed by Michela, Sea Raider, and Mercedes.

In Spinn 2, the always dangerous (in a good way) Andy Grootendorst led the Cynthia's crew to another Rhumbline victory, correcting out about 99 seconds ahead of the truly dangerous Tom Jacobs on Dandelion, for a hard fought second place over Jim Grant's beautifully restored Infinity, just over a minute back. Next was Tom Mullen in a C&C 27, not to be confused with Eric Mallen in his Ultimate 20, and then the our unstoppable octogenarian, Gordon Dill in his J/88 with all finishing within about 90 seconds of each other.

Over in JaM visiting yachtsman from South Haven Alan Silverman captured first place, with Patrick Coady also from SHYC in second. Moody Blue claimed third for SJRYC. When we tally up the scores between yacht clubs, it looks like five flags for the home team of SJRYC, two for our fast Northerly friends from South Haven, and two for our cordial colleagues to the South in Michigan City. Many thanks to Herb Philbrick, of MCYC, for bringing such a great group of

boats to race with us again this year. While we are delighted to win the event this year--as we know--there is always next year.

We take our hats off to Louie Tremblay, Chair of the Rhumbline, who was up early out in the lake setting marks, our RC Crew of Vickie Frees, and to our new RC Team Leader, just a bit more than a year into the position, Jim Scholz, who skillfully found a way to get in one heck of a good race in spite of one heck of a lot of lousy weather.

SJRYC Spring Series race, 06 June 2018

This one started out as a downwind start with one slight problem: the air went dead just as the Spinn sailors took off. So the Jammers had to sort through the wreckage of the dead and dying Spinn boats some of whom were wearing their half-ounce chutes still at the starting line as the Jammers started. When the big switch in the sky turned the wind back on, the downwind leg became an up wind fetch. The Spinn boats did an up/down course while the Jammers had a triangle.

The wind filled in very nicely to 8 - 10 knots and when the smoke cleared, Wellenreiter, the Farr 395, spanked the rest of the Spinn fleet by a bit over three minutes. Captain Blood was next and Distraction just five seconds behind Blood. Jud Brown was looking quite competitive on his C&C 110 about 20 seconds further back ahead of Dirk Kruger--also in a C&C 110--in fifth who led a pack of five more boats all finishing within two minutes of each other.

In JaM, Moody Blue again finished first as the last race over Carrera but this week was able to save her time by about 30 seconds. Dan Emery had the bad luck to be over early and still sailed a good race to finish third. Fourth found Jeff Mitchell's Little Beauty, ahead of Keith Sawyer on Windspirit.

And now, some comments from the RC Boat:

"You've got me going in circles. Round and round I go" are lyrics from a song by the Friends of Distinction's **Grazin'** album released in 1969. It also fits to what we had going on with the wind on Wednesday night.

Before each race, the Race Committee makes a run around the buoys to make sure they are still in place, and to measure the wind speed and direction on the course. This week, every time we stopped, the wind was coming from a different direction. The initial course should have been a downwind leg for the Spinnaker section and a broad reach for the JaM section but the wind shifted between the starts and it turned out to be another one of those crazy Wednesday nights in St. Joe. Think of this week as your opportunity to test your abilities to read the wind and adjust on the fly, over and over and over again...

We did what we could with what we had to make a race of it. I hope everyone enjoyed the evening on the water as much as the Committee did. It was a great night for some fleet photos and a photo finish for a couple of boats.

- Jim Scholz, SJRYC RC Team Leader

2018 South Haven Invitational

Three SJRYC boats participated in the annual South Haven Invitational race the Saturday following after our Spinn fleet races to South Haven the previous evening--which was quite a tough slog. Eight boats competed in the SHYC Spinn section, with Imagine the highest SJRYC boat placing third, Captain Blood earning fifth, and Silk sixth. These points, along with those collected in the Rhumbline, will count for SJRYC Offshore Series flags.

It has been a wild and woolly early part of our season, which is the norm. Next race is Wednesday night, and perhaps we'll get settled down a bit after all the excitement of the unexpected conditions which are so common this time of year. But then again, maybe not.

This issue of the Windward fleet has gone to all skippers who sailed the Rhumbline with us this week-end. If any of you would like to be added to our mailing list, just drop an email my way.

We'll see you Wednesday night on the water.

Best regards, Jim Scholz and Jim Schragger

The Windward Sheet, founded by Ken Zimmerman, follows the SJRYC Sail Race Program and is published at irregular intervals throughout the race season.