

Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta Diary

Day 1 “Old Road” Course - Saturday 22nd April

Its possible that the downpour at 3:00 am on Saturday could have been a blessing... as most of us managed to tear ourselves away from the Last Lemming in time to be in decent shape for Saturday's race – although the weather hadn't improved by the first start at 10:00 either. With no breeze in sight the fleet of 54 yachts ranging in size from 29ft to 136ft, headed into a flat sky. *Maggie B.*, the 63ft Nigel Irens design gaff schooner had been the first in the Big Boat class to cross the line in Friday's (largest ever) Single-handed race, and having been launched during a January blizzard in Nova Scotia, I thought she would provide quite an interesting day out. The owner/captain, the sail-maker, the builders, and Mr. Irens himself were crewing the boat together for the first time, and experience proved itself as she came in second in her Classic Class D. 31ft *Apsara*, won Classic Class A with a corrected time of 154.213, whilst two Laurent Giles designs; 37ft *Tiger Maru*, and 112ft *Blue Leopard*, as well as 136ft Herreshoff *Eleonora* took first in their respective Classic Classes B-D. 44ft *Flicka*, was the winner of Vintage Class A, followed by the winner of Friday's Concours d'Elegance - the gorgeously-maintained 107ft Fife design gaff schooner, *Altair*. 79ft *Mariella* won Vintage Class C and 40ft *Genesis* was first in the traditional Class. 41ft Rhodes sloop *Sunshine* was at the top of Classic Class GRP, while the new locally-built 36ft Fife *Nada* won her Spirit of Tradition Class A. The 136ft J-class *Ranger* arrived long ahead of 76ft *Annagine*, to win her Spirit Class B. Though the course was slightly shortened for the green and brown flag classes, it ended up to be quite an excellent day out as the rain had nearly cleared and been replaced by a pleasant breeze (approximately 12knots average) by the first mark four miles from the start, and didn't really threaten again until the final leg.

Day 2 “The Butterfly” - Course 23rd April 2006

The morning appeared pleasantly promising; sun glinting off of ripply navy blue water, and plenty of breeze. Enthusiasm was abuzz as we headed out for the Butterfly course, which is shaped with two triangular “wings,” thus covering twice the ground as the first day's one - triangle course. Just before the pink flag gun we found ourselves between two visibly-dark squalls.... Well at least the island is looking vibrantly green. An hour later it was back to perfect Antigua sailing weather, and between eight and 15 knots true wind. The race committee had made put two amendments into play - #1 being 9.3 part c) “any loose-luffed sail may be flown aft of the foremost mast at any time.” Amendment #2 would act as a replacement for SI 9.2 and stated a) “Yachts will be rated for jib and main and are allowed to fly any other sail as per S1 2.1.1” and b) “Replace S1 9.3 B with “Yachts may use any free flying sails as per S1 2.1.1.” With regard to first

places, the race results were much the same to Day 1 – note the corrections to yesterday's results - *Charm III*, the 50ft Alden staysail schooner, came out above *Altair* in both Race 1 and 2 in Vintage Class B, while 59ft Laurent Giles ketch *Pazienza* took first in Classic Class C both days, and 94ft staysail schooner *Seljm* was the consecutive winner of Classic Class D. With regard to quintessential Caribbean sailing, we will be surprised to see if tomorrow can get any better.

Day 3 “The Cannon” Course - 24 April 2006

The 24 mile Cannon race is definitely the most sociable race of the three days, as the first and third marks are the same, six miles out in a southeast direction from the Falmouth Harbour start, thus all of the boats end up passing each other, making for beautiful photographs and quite the convivial ambiance. I had reserved day three for *Ranger*, my personal favorite of the Jboats, as – due to the course configuration - she would be in the midst the rest of the boats rather than miles ahead on her own. Unfortunately the other Jboat in Antigua at the moment, *Endeavour*, wasn't able to compete, which left us without any real competition. The start however, proved quite exciting as the sleek black 103ft *Aschanti IV* was just feet from *Eleonora*, who was just feet from us. A bit of excited yelling ensued but with the caliber of sailors at hand, there was nothing to worry about. Though *Ranger's* crew is extremely professional – the permanent crew of 10 was joined by a race crew of 16 led by crew boss Godfrey Cray, with Earle Williams at the helm for the event – the atmosphere on board is always absolutely lovely and the owner's requirement is simply that everyone have a great time. The race crew used the day as a practice session and the guests had a gorgeous day out without a moment's threat of bad weather. Finally the results ended up differently to the first two days, with the Argentinian sloop – 50ft *Gaucha* taking first in Vintage Class A, while *Altair* beat *Charm III* in Vintage Class B, and 72ft ketch *Ticonderoga* came out above *Mariella* to win Vintage Class C. 64.5ft Cariacou schooner *Jambalaya* beat *Genesis* to win the Traditional Class, and 47ft *Nulla Bona* won the Classic Class A. 45ft ketch *Long White Cloud* (the “miniature Ticonderoga”) won Classic Class B whilst 112ft *Blue Leopard* came out on top in Class C and *Seljm* held on to her first place status in Classic Class D. 50ft Alden ketch *Petrana* won Classic Class GRP, while the sweetheart Fife, 36ft *Nada*, won the Spirit of Tradition Class A and *Ranger* of course won Class B. The consensus was – fantastic day, fantastic weather, no drama, no complaints, or maybe not... Thank you to the Race Committee, the crews, the hosts and the sponsors!

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