

Parrothead Regatta Weathers Squall to Reach the Rum

By Frank Parker
Carolina Currents

NEW BERN, N.C. - The 14th annual Parrothead Regatta hosted by the Neuse Yacht Racing Association started out on July 28 with 18 boats registered to race from New Bern to Oriental in a pursuit style race, and most of them made it across the line despite heavy weather. As usual, the San Juan 21s and the Catalina 22s started an hour before the big boats, and they were darn glad of it.

About 20 minutes after we (Brown Eyed Girl) started we were moving up through the fleet nicely, when we saw our rival, New York Times, disappear in a storm on the far side of the river. We laughed at their misfortune as it looked like we would miss the storm, but the storm rapidly intensified so that soon we had taken the jib down and were sailing under main only with



Photo by Frank Parker

winds in the 30s and lightening striking all around us. We couldn't see more than 100 feet in front of us, and at one point I saw one of the cruising boats motoring toward us and avoided them at the last second. We turned on the lights and kept racing.

After a trying 20 minutes, everyone was soaked and freezing, but we were breaking free of the storm. It was still windy and raining pretty hard, but we were back up with the No. 2 jib running wing and wing. The wind started dying quickly as it does after a summer storm, and was swinging all over the place.

As soon as the breeze settled in, it was a beam reach so we threw up the cruising asymmetrical spinnaker and started racing again. For a short period we had to take the spin down and set the No. 1 again (that's three sail changes and a spin set/douse for those of you counting) and headed up for Marker 1AC.

The wind went aft, so up went the symmetrical spinnaker (four sail changes and two sets on a fairly short distance race, my apologies to the bow team) and we jibed around the mark headed for the finish.

We were rapidly closing on Orion (San Juan 21), who missed the whole storm by starting earlier in the day. We

were experiencing some technical difficulty with the spin pole jaw, so we had lashed the pole to the ring with a nylon web. Well, that broke and the pole was a bit out of control, so we figured we weren't going to catch Orion, and no one would catch us, so we took the spinnaker down and finished under just the main.

Once again, Orion won the Parrot head with the fastest corrected time and first to finish.

It wouldn't be the Parrothead without original artwork trophies and rum punch (eight gallons this year) made with NYRA's own secret recipe. The reason it is a secret is that volunteers make it every year, and by the time they get the mixture correct they have tried so many permutations of rum punch that they can't remember what they did the next morning.

The trophies this year were made by the children of some of NYRA's members and were well received. These will be true collectors items in the future. After a couple of hours of anchoring out, swimming and hanging out with friends, it was back up to New Bern for a spectacular evening beat to Minnesott and then set the spin for the return trip to Blackbeard Sailing Club.

Thank you to all who participated in this years event.

Final results from the race were:

Spinnaker

Orion

Brown Eyed Girl

Rambunctious

Anytime

Blueprint

New York Times

Performance non-spinnaker

Silent Pursuit

Packer Tacker

Sails Call

Cruising

Epilogue

Honorable Mention for \"Best Story for Running Engine During Race\"

Arrrgh Ran out of beer and knew there was rum punch at the end

Raga Ran out of wind and knew there was rum punch at the end