

2019 Bunny Hop

The weather forecast for weekend sailing did not look good. Thunderstorms Saturday morning followed by 3-4 mph breeze in the afternoon, followed by more storms. Sunday, Accuweather showed a morning window with breeze at 7-10 followed by more storms.

Certainly, when Chris Gage and Ron Wright rode up I-77 at 8:30 Saturday morning in a vicious thunderstorm, things looked pretty grim. We pulled into LNYC and grabbed two spots by a gazebo that we used to stay dry and keep our gear dry.

The 12 sailors who attended all kinda stalled around unpacking boats. When a light drizzle settled in around 10 am, we figured we better unpack and get ready. At the 11 o'clock skipper's meeting, the RC stated they intended to race - on time! And so we all hustled over to finish up and launch.

The rain did stop as we sailed out to the race course - or to put it more accurately - drifted out in Accuweather's 3-4 mph breeze. The RC called a 30 minute delay as half the fleet could not make the race area on time. And then a funny thing happened.

All of a sudden we were moving! The breeze was up to 6-7 and before you knew it, the first start was called and we were off. Four legs with a downwind finish. I won't say we hiked but we definitely sat high side 95% of the time. And by the time race two was dialed up, we got another bump up to 7-9! **The racing and sailing was absolutely glorious.** Ron was competitive, sailing from 5 to 7 on any given leg, but alas settling for a pair of 7's. Chris - *sailing in his first MC regatta* - did especially well - never finishing last and always on the same leg as the leaders. At the end of race two, the wind was up to 10-11 and there was a thundercloud off to the west. The RC erred on the side of caution and sent us in. In hind-sight we could have stayed out. No one complained. We put up dry!

Jon Few ruled the day with two bullets followed by Kurt Stadelle and Jean-Pierre Bordes. Fred Herr was fourth on the day.

Sunday gave us the Accuweather versus every other weather service dilemma. Accuweather showed 7-10 with cloudy skies from 9 am to Noon. Everyone else had a *LOT MORE*. Ron's Dark Skies app had gusts to 33!! Out we sailed to race and find out who was right. The breeze was really up with a serious chop on the lake. Steady 12-14 with gusts and building.

In race one, Dave Helmick, who was tied with Ron for 7th, showed his experience and sailed a bullet. Fred finished second. The day one leader, Jon Few, struggled in the breeze for a 7. The regatta standings were blown wide open.

Ron and Chris hung on and sailed their butts off. Downwind rides were WILD as we corrected bow submarines, prayed we didn't have to gybe [we did], and did our best to de-power and stay upright. Upwind, it was vang-on, traveler down, and hike. Chris noticed his tiller was delaminating and headed in after three legs. Ron finished dead last and pumped his fist in exhilaration for beating the heaviest air of his sailing career.

By now the constant wind was over 15 and the gusts were touching 20. Ron decided he had enough. Nothing to gain.

Back on shore we listened to the race committee on VHF call up the second race and then repeatedly ask for wind readings and repeatedly get the call "*gusts over twenty*". They shortened the race by one leg and sent the fleet in.

Dave Helmick did it again winning race two. Jon Few's troubles continued as he capsized and took a DNF. Fred sailed a great fourth place finish.

And so the results were turned upside down. Jean-Pierre Bordes went from a tie for 3rd to first. Fred's consistent 3-5-2-4 regatta earned him second place. Dave Helmick's double bullets moved him from 7 to 3rd.

Ron was 10th and Chris was 11th. Because Dave and Fred moved in to the top 3 trophies, Ron was left as top GrandMaster and received a nice YETI cup. He thanked Fred and Dave! Kurt Stadelle won top master outside the top the three.

It was a fantastic regatta, giving us great racing that we never expected. Fred and Jon did a great job with organization. The 20 some Sunfish racers made for a lot of boats! Thanks Fred for a great weekend.

Ron Wright