

DPMYC Sunday IOM Regatta

02/21/2016

E-SW Ave. 13.8, Max. 38 MPH

Hosted by

Deception Pass Model Yacht Club

Position	Skipper	Sail #	Club/City	Hull	MYA No.	Score	1	2	3	4	5
1	Kelly Martin	77	DPMYC, Bellingham, WA	V8		4.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
2	Julian Lee	40	DPMYC, Anacortes, WA	V8		9.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.0
3	Larry Stiles	64	DPMYC, Sedro Woolley, WA	Cheinz		10.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	4.0	3.0
4	David Jensen	68	DPMYC, Bellevur, WA	Kantun		16.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	5.0	4.0
5	Dennis Pittis	57	DPMYC, Clinton, WA	Goth XP		19.0	6.0	5.0	5.0	3.0	7.0
6	Ray Fiedler	06	DPMYC, La Conner, WA	Widget		26.0	5.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0

Folks:

We quit sailing early last Sunday. On my way home I went by the Ranger Station to alert them to what had happened. I found three of them in the back of the office, getting ready to head off duty. I knew two of them, the other was a stranger to me. I told them to be on the lookout for one of our boats that had gotten away from us in the blow. The Ranger that I didn't know didn't seem to understand, but the other two knew I was very serious.

The weather reports had predictions of winds building to a high at around 1:00 of anywhere from 16 to 30 MPH depending who you listen to. When I got there at just after 10:30 I was looking at about 8 MPH steady out of the East. Upper A, no big deal. By the time we started racing we had all rigged down to B's and the wind was still climbing. Interesting but fun with some great nose plants. Nothing we couldn't handle. By the end of the fourth race it was starting to get intense.

At this point we should have rigged down to C or quit, but truth be known I was having a blast. The Cheinz was mostly under control and I felt that if I could figure out the start and got some luck going my way....I wasn't paying enough attention to the overall situation.

In the space of about a minute and a half the wind had not only increased even more but it had clocked more than 90 degrees around to the SW. What had been the leeward side of the dock was now the windward side. Our Rescue dinghy, which was moored on what was now the weather side of the dock, was lifted into the air and almost flipped over onto the dock. Julian, while retrieving his boat, had the wind smack his V8 into the side of the dock, smashing the fin and losing the bulb over the side.

About this time we realized the Widget was in big trouble. It was way out there, in that grey zone where sometimes you think you have control but you don't. You think you can see what your boat is doing but you can't. It may have lost power or it may have lost reception. No matter. In the end there was nothing we could do but watch her sail away. Trying to chase her down with the dinghy was completely out of the question. The anemometer had topped out at 38 MPH.

When I tried to think of a way to tell this story, my mind was coming up with cute stories about the "Wondering Widget" that was last seen by someone on the late ferry run from Bainbridge Island, sailing north, alone, like The Flying Dutchman. That was not what my heart was coming up with though. Not by a long shot. These little boats of ours are very much like musical instruments. They have our finger prints all over them. We put a lot of ourselves into them and they give a lot of themselves back to us. If we do right by them, they will do right by us. We didn't do right by that Widget. I just felt sad.

Late that afternoon, Julian was contacted by one of the Rangers that I had spoken to. They had sighted our boat up on the rocks on the Anacortes side of Deception Pass. Jean and Julian were able to get down to the spot but by the time they arrived the boat was gone, probably swept away by the strong ebb tide that was just slackening.

Larry Stiles

