

Perfect Wind Conditions Welcome 78 competitors for the 93rd Annual Conanicut Yacht Club Around the Island Race



Winner of Commodore Quinn Trophy for Overall Corrected Time, Ben Steinberg's Melges 32 Full Send leading the pack / Photo: Cate Brown

Normally, Labor Day Weekend's [Conanicut Yacht Club Around the Island Race](#) is the culmination of an entire sailing season. Yet, for many sailors who participated on Sunday's 18-mile lap of Jamestown, it was their first regatta of the year as many races were canceled this summer to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

For 93 years, the Conanicut Yacht Club's annual Around the Island Race has been held on the Sunday of Labor Day Weekend and usually attracts 100+ boats from in and around Narragansett Bay for the single distance race followed by an awards party on the lawn of the island yacht club.

This year, 78 boats came out to the starting line but all on-shore festivities were canceled. To maintain social distancing, the race committee volunteers were split among a large starting boat and the yacht club utilizing radio communication to facilitate organization.

"The biggest challenge of 2020 was the question of 'should we or shouldn't we'," said regatta chairman Alan Baines. "The division of the race committee, canceling the party, and

patiently waiting to open registration until we had a solution was the best course for us and it worked."

"It also helped that we had the perfect wind conditions and exactly high tide in the middle of the start," Baines continued. "Thank you to the cooperation of the competitors and Rick and Jody Hill for lending us their Moody, *Buffalo*, for the Race Committee boat, which allowed us to stay spread out."

By the time the 87 boats divided into 10 divisions started at 11 am, there was a strong southeasterly breeze of 15-20 knots that held for the entire day. The smaller boats started just south of the Newport Bridge first and headed south for a clockwise course around Jamestown. With division starts staggered by about 6 minutes, by the time the fastest and largest boats rounded Beavertail point, it was a beautiful sight to be seen with all the boats headed downwind in the West Passage of Narragansett Bay.

Rich Moody skippering *Aurora*, a R/P 66, was the fastest competitor registered and managed to pass every boat and won the Commodore Brakenhoff trophy for the fastest elapsed time with 2:03:22, just shy of the course record.

On corrected time though, it was Ben Steinberg and the crew on his Melges 32, *Full Send*, who captured the Commodore Quinn Trophy with a corrected time of 02:50:48. "We were able to make huge gains by staying in the breeze downwind," said Steinberg upon his win. "Getting up to 19 knots in the 32 was probably the highlight of the race."

Steinberg was among the sailors on the water [during a microburst that occurred](#) during the Jamestown Yacht Club Tuesday night sailing series just a week prior. Luckily, he and the crew were able to get all the necessary repairs to the mainsail to pull off the win.

Just behind Steinberg was Jim Grundy's new Dunning 44, "Rigadoon," in second place, and Matt Dunbar's VXOne, "Smoke." Due to the consistent wind, it was one of the faster Around the Island Race's to get the entire fleet to complete in under four hours.

Two other perpetual trophies are awarded to the CYC Members with the fastest corrected times over and under 30 feet. The Eads Johnson Trophy was awarded to Andrew Kallfelz's Safir (for over 30 feet) and Robert A. MacLeod Rear Commodore Trophy to Mike Hill and his J24 "Obstreperous".

All photos Cate Brown Photography. More can be found here:

https://catebrownphoto.photoshelter.com/gallery/CYC-Around-the-Island-2020/G0000qlxUITuSE28/C0000vEkh9iRrM_Q

For full results:

https://www.regattanetwork.com/clubmgmt/applet_regatta_results.php?regatta_id=21111



Fleet Rounding Beavertail / Photo: Cate Brown



Headed down the West Passage / Photo: Cate Brown

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Race Committee Volunteers at the start / Photo: Cate Brown



2nd place overall Jim Grundy's Dunning 44, Rigadoon, rounding Beavertail / Photo: Cate Brown