



June 27, 2009

Hotspur perseveres, wins Class D Cook's Trophy **"We saw everything out there except hail and locusts"**

By Talbot Wilson

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RHADC, Bermuda, June 27, 2009: When *Hotspur* (Marion, Massachusetts) took her own finish time off St. David's Lighthouse in a brilliant sunset at 8:22PM Friday night, she cinched the Class D Cook's trophy in the Marion to Bermuda Cruising Yacht Race. The little Rhodes 41 sloop took more than a week to cover the 645-mile course. She was the last boat overall.

For Ron Wisner, *Hotspur's* Skipper, this was his first ocean race.



"For my first time, I have no regrets," Wisner quipped. "But it was one hell of a first time. It wasn't the reaching race as advertised. We had a beat most of the way and that is our worst point of sail on this old design. We even had to tack to cross the finish line."

Wisner said he took a conservative approach to the race. They had just a storm jib up for one twenty-four hour period and a storm trysail and storm jib up for twelve more. The gale they hit lasted for thirty-six hours with winds reaching from thirty knots into the mid forties. They flew the two storm sails in the thirty-knot lulls.

Hotspur's cook, Rick Higgins, served up fried eggs and sweet rolls in the mornings and dinners included smoked salmon for the last night out.

Higgins, known as Ace by his mates, said, "Captain Ron (later nicknamed Captain Ahab) worked hard to get the boat ready. This was my first ocean race. With wind in the mid forties and waves about 30 feet from trough to crest, we saw everything out there except hail and locusts."

In the Marion To Bermuda Cruising Yacht Race, the last boat in each class wins a Cook's Trophy. Taking the other not so coveted awards were Jim Geddes in the Class A *Ocean Jasper* (Wilmington, Delaware), Ed Mapes in the Class B *Voyger* (McKinney, Texas), and in Class C Harvey Howalt's *Experience* (Middletown, Rhode Island).



The prizegiving and gala dinner will be held at the Royal Naval Dockyard Saturday evening. More rain is expected, but spirits won't be dampened. Photos will be available on the web in the Marion to Bermuda photo gallery.

Of the original forty-eight entries, three did not start to begin with, and now fifteen have retired in the face of confused seas and big westerly winds early in the race and then eventually shifted to the South.

The non-starters were Paul Hubbard's *Bermuda Oyster* (Hamilton, Bermuda), Stafano Pacini's *Galileo* (Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts), and one of two multihulls *Por Dos* entered by Mark Monwood (Bedford, Massachusetts).

Yachts that retired from the race are

Jonathan Brewin's *Big Bear* (Hamilton, Bermuda),
Harry Bird's *Bluebird* (Essex, Connecticut),
Bremer Speck (Ron Hiemann West Newberry, Massachusetts),
Maren Erskin's *Cayenne* (Bearsville, New York),
David Risch's *Corsair* (Marion, Massachusetts),
Mike Ryan's *Fiona Rois* (Bass Harbor, Maine)
Jim Feeney's *Kathleen* (Marion, Massachusetts),
Alan Benet's *La Retreat* (Basking Ridge, New Jersey),
Philip Clorite's *Lucky Dog* (Waterford, Connecticut),
Lynley III (James Barns, Mobile, Alabama),
Bruce Kinsey's *Memory* (Southport, Maine)
Tom Bowler's *Nightwind* (West Simsbury, Connecticut),
Phantom sailed by Craig Slater (Golden, Colorado)
Jonathan Baxter's *Pond Prowler* (St. George's, Bermuda)
Bill Ferguson's *Sea Fever* (Milford, Massachusetts),
Daniel Biemesderfer's *Shearwater* (Guilford, Connecticut),
David Kingsbury's *Shooting Star* (Orange, Connecticut).

The sole multihull racing, *Falcor* sailed by Steve Gross (Scotch Plains, New Jersey) also retired.

Race and activity information for the 2009 Marion to Bermuda Cruising Yacht Race is on-line at <http://www.marionbermuda.com>.

For race information contact race@marionbermuda.com

For marketing or sponsorship information contact Ray Cullum
Raycullum@aol.com

For media or press information contact Talbot Wilson
talbot@talbotwilson.com SKYPE : talbotwilson

Mobile: +1 (850) 217-7138