



June 21, 2009

Big Bear leads Fleet as winds fill from the west

Lone multihull Falcor drops out with broken daggerboard

By Talbot Wilson

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Marion, Massachusetts, June 21, 2009: Bermuda's great hope, *Big Bear*, Jonathan Brewin's J160 now leads the fleet in the race for line honours in the ocean race from Marion to Bermuda. Overnight reports from iBoattrack show that Brewin had elected to take a more westerly course for the first twenty-four hours of racing. He was driving toward the new westerly wind and seems to have found it.

Brewin wrote from on board, "Herculean efforts by the team over the last 20 hours with every sail combination possible having been up, down and up again. Great stuff. The sewing circle will, sadly for us, have a few yards of material to make some nice new ball gowns out of. Thankfully for all bears on board the owner was at the cutting table when the cloth was cut up."

"It has been frustrating," he added, "as we have tried to figure out what this low is going to do. It feels a bit like that early computer game, where a chomping green circle chased you round the screen and you were never sure which it was going to go next and whether it was going to snare you. Well, thankfully for now we seem to have punched far enough south to be clear, paws crossed that we can keep trucking."

"The boat is beautifully balanced and great to sail." Brewin concluded. "We are still trucking along and will now have to work hard to hold our desired tactical station going south across the Gulf Stream."

Sad news from Cayenne, the J42 skippered by Maren Erskine (Bearsville, New York). The all female crew has packed it in and returned to port.

Cayenne's navigator Deb Gayle wrote, "Maren took a look at the low pressure system moving in from the Great Lakes and decided it was not a good idea to sail on, given the forecast. I am deeply disappointed as we were well prepared and on a great boat."

Falcor, the lone multihull, sailed by Steve Gross (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey) talked by VHF radio to Lynley III which patched through a call to tell the Royal Hamilton Amateur Dinghy Club that Falcor had a broken daggerboard and had retired.

Since this is a race scored on handicaps, determining the leaders so early on the race is difficult. On straight line distance to Bermuda Big Bear leads the fleet and Class A. Crescendo, the Swan 44 MkII sailed by Martin Jacobson (Newport, Rhode Island) leads Class B.

In Class C, Barry Feldman's Avalon, a Baltic 43 (Marion, Massachusetts), had a great start and has worked out a nice lead. Pond Prowler, Jonathan Baxter's C&C 37+ from Bermuda is also up near the front according to iBoattrack reports.

Silhouette, David Caso's Cherubini 44, winner of the 2007 Gosling Rum Founder's Trophy for first in fleet, is well positioned to the west of the others in Class D, but that class is certainly too close to call.

Festivities for friends and families waiting in Bermuda for the sailors start Monday.

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

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