



18' Skiffs sail through smoke from the starting gun in the middle of San Francisco Bay



18' Skiff International Regatta

San Francisco, Calif.

Aug. 25-30, 2014

Aug. 26, 2014

Tuesday's weather: Wind west 20-25k, ebb tide; sunny, high temp. 72F.
Thursday's forecast (next racing): Wind west 14k; partly cloudy, high temp. 68F.

The 18s' secret to success: stay upright

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif.

After Tuesday's wild racing in the 13th annual 18' Skiff International Regatta it was apparent that old boats aren't necessarily a problem as long as you keep them upright.

Howie Hamlin, a six-time winner of the event, is in first place with his 10-year-old backup boat, one point ahead of Australia's Brett Van Munster, who says, "I think my boat is even older than Howie's."

Notably, Hamlin hasn't won a race in the event hosted by the St. Francis Yacht Club, posting a modest log of 3-5-4-2 finishes---but the point is that he has started and finished every race, which only two other of the nine contestants---Van Munster and local competitor David Liebenberg from the Richmond Yacht Club---have managed.

The question now is when racing resumes



Skip McCormack's 18 flips on first tack after the start of Race 4



Spinnakers flying in 25 knots

Thursday after a Wednesday day off, will Hamlin switch to his newer boat if it is delivered by Thursday.

"Absolutely!" he said.

The first two days have been spent repairing his backup boat on and off the water, like when the jib halyard broke Monday, although he and his crew Matt McKinlay recovered to finish fifth in that race.

Tuesday was a stiffer challenge when the breeze blowing in through the Golden Gate Bridge rose from 20 to 25 knots by mid-afternoon, colliding with an ebb tide that turned the 6.7-nautical mile, two-lap windward-leeward course into a mixing bowl.

Only four of the eight boats that started managed to finish. By week's end the non-finishes may not matter. Boats may discard their worst result after five races and two results after nine races.

The foremost victims were Skip McCormack's Events Clothing, which won the first race but flipped on the first tack shortly after the start of the second, and first-day leader Graham Catley's Maersk Line, which was leading the second until its headstay cleat broke next to Alcatraz Island after leading first lap.

"We were going well," Catley said. "We had just come around the leeward mark to go back [upwind]."

Hamlin surmised, "Sometimes you get so much wind that when you head up you can't bear off right away."

Van Munster said that in those kinds of conditions "you just try to stay upright and stay conservative---or stay composed, really."

Nevertheless, Van Munster said, "I haven't been here since '08, but I love it. What a city! What sailing! As long as you're not falling over."



Brett Van Munster' ASCC leads past Alcatraz



Howie Hamlin stayed upright in his good (enough) old boat

Wednesday is designated as a reserve day, to be followed by an 18s race at 4 o'clock preceding the traditional Ronstan Bridge to Bridge Race for anything that sails across and down the bay, starting under the Golden Gate at 5:30.

The boats launch off the beach bordering Crissy Field west of the host St. Francis Yacht Club. Admission is free. The schedule calls for a total of 10 races through Saturday, two per day starting at 1 p.m., except a 4 o'clock start Thursday preceding the traditional 5.3-nautical mile Ronstan Bridge to Bridge Race when they'll join a variety of boats and kiteboards for a 5:30 start under the Golden Gate.

Current results

(after 4 of 10 races)

1. CST, Howie Hamlin/Cameron McDonald/Matt McKinlay, Newport Harbor YC, 3-5-4-2, 14 points.
2. ASCC, Brett Van Munster/Paul Montague/Harry Thurston, Australian 18 Footers, 1-(9/OCS)-3-1,15.
3. Events Clothing, Skip McCormack/Nick Catley/Josh McCormack, Auckland Sailing Club/San Francisco YC, 4-1- 1-10/DNF, 16.
4. Maersk Line, Graham Catley/Tom Peet/Brad Collins, Auckland Sailing Club, 2-2-2-10/DNF, 16.
5. Only 18, David Liebenberg/Dan Morris/John Grey, Richmond YC, 7-6-5-4, 22.
6. WWW.FLYTAC.COM, John Gilmour/Cooper Dressler/Matt Van Rensselaer, Richmond YC, 5-4-7-10/DNF, 26.
7. Yandoo, Press/Andrew Hay/James Beck, Double Bay 18', 10/DN.C, 10/DNC, 6-3, 29
8. Lightning, Chad Freitas/Dan Brandt/Corey Lynch, Skiff Sailing Foundation, 6-3-10/DNC-10/DNC, 29.
9. Sparkle Motion, Dan Roberts/James Clappier/Patrick Lewis, Richmond YC, 9/DNF-7-8-10/DNF, 35.

DNC---Did not compete.

DNF---Did not finish.

[Event information](#)

[Class information](#)

[St. Francis Yacht Club](#)

Founded in 1927, St. Francis Yacht Club, located on San Francisco Bay near the Golden Gate Bridge, is one of the finest racing destinations in the world. Each year, the City Front and the rest of the Bay challenges competitors of our 40+ hosted regattas with its famously unique conditions.

The Club's experienced Race Committee is a network of over 200 trained and dedicated volunteers. With a rich history of championship racing, StFYC has played host to numerous National and World Championships, along with a myriad of annual local regattas and racing series. The Club plays an influential role in the development of numerous racing handicap systems and is considered the birthplace of kiteboard course racing.

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