



RaceWeekNEWS



Sharon Green / ultimatesailing.com

Numbers, a new Judel/Vrolijk 66-footer owned by Dan Meyers of Newport, RI, dips the bow and exposes a significant amount of the underside of her hull while pounding upwind in 17-20-knot winds on Tuesday. Meyers steered his new toy to a pair of bullets and a second in three races to take the early lead in IRC 1 class.

Worth the Wait

By Bill Wagner & Rebecca Burg

While the results rolled in during the first day of racing Acura Key West 2008, presented by Nautica, there were a lot of familiar names finishing at the front.

Winners in the Melges 24 class included such perennial contenders as Franco Rossini and Riccardo Simoneschi. By day's end, *Masquerade* was in her usual perch atop the J/105 class. Two-time defending world champion and past Key West winner *Mascalzone Latino* seized the early lead in Farr 40. Dan Meyers, who has raced a variety of big boats in Key West, showed off his new *Numbers* while moving quickly to the top of IRC 1. Other opening day pacesetters with a history of success at Acura Key West include the J/80 *Rumor* and the Mumm 30 *Groovederci*.

However, there were also some newcomers atop the leader board after Day 1. *No Naked Flames*, a brand new Sllim 37 owned by Irish brothers Andrew and Carl Allen, performed well right of the box in taking the lead in IRC 2. *Stark Raving Mad*, James Madden's new J/125, also posted superb results while showing it could be the boat to beat in PHRF 1. Meanwhile, the

Swan 42 class made its one-design debut at Acura Key West with *Tiburón*, owned by Mark Watson of Newport, RI.

Action at Acura Key West 2008 was scheduled to begin on Monday, but high winds and heavy seas forced regatta organizers to abandon on all four courses without starting a race. Winds were still strong, but more manageable, on Tuesday – blowing steady between 17-20 knots out of the east. That enabled officials with Premiere Racing to complete three races for 15 of 16 classes – the first time that has happened in the 21-year history of the popular regatta.

"To get in three races at a regatta of this size and a venue of this nature can be a daunting challenge. That is a significant number of classes on four separate courses and requires precision race committee work," event director Peter Craig said. "Factor in that we have to hear protests and hand out awards at 6:30... it makes three races in one day quite a feat."

Craig had high praise for regatta scorers Tom Fischer and Jeff Johnson, who had to sort through three races worth of results involving 262 boats under a severe time

crunch so the awards ceremony could start on time.

DIVISION 1

Mascalzone Latino, skippered by Vincenzo Onorato of Italy, put forth an impressive performance in seizing the overall lead in Farr 40 class on the first day of racing while also earning the Sperry Top-Sider Boat of the Day honor.

America's Cup veteran Adrian Stead called tactics for Onorato, who steered *Mascalzone Latino* to a pair of seconds and a third place finish in three races on Tuesday. *Barking Mad* (Jim Richardson, Newport, RI) and *Mean Machine* (Peter de Ridder, Monaco) are tied for second with 10 points, three behind the Italian entry.

"Leading after the first day means nothing. Obviously, we really want to lead after the last day," said Onorato, who won Farr 40 class at Key West in 2006. "For the morale of the crew, it is nice to start off well."

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Wednesday is Mount Gay Rum Day





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Crown Prince Frederik of Denmark had a solid opening day with a pair of Top 10 finishes and stands 11th overall in the highly-competitive 25-boat fleet. Defending Key West champion *Alinghi*, the Swiss boat skippered by Ernesto Bertarelli, had a tough opening day and stands 13th overall. That *Alinghi*, the two-time America's Cup winner, could suffer a pair of back-of-the-fleet finishes shows how strong the Farr 40 class has become, Onorato said.

"This is the second year that we have come to this regatta in the role of world champion and that is a lot of pressure. It is hard to maintain that high standard in this class because the level of competition is always going up," Onorato said. "You have to come to these regattas mentally prepared and your team must constantly improve."

Deneen Demourkas of Santa Barbara, CA, showed consistency in posting a 3-1-2 line to grab the Day 1 lead in the rejuvenated M30 class, which has increased to 15 entries. Demourkas, who won this class in 2005 and placed fourth in 2006, leads John Podmajersky and the Chicago-based *Illusion* team by four points.

Joe Woods steered *Red* to first place finishes in the last two races to set the pace in the rapidly-growing Melges 32 class. *Let's Roll*, winner of Acura Key West and Acura Miami Grand Prix last winter, is three points behind in second.

DIVISION 2

Numbers, the second-largest boat in the entire 262-boat fleet, had a superb day in grabbing the lead in

IRC 1 class. The Judel/Vrolijk 66-footer, owned by Dan Meyers of Newport, RI won two races and was runner-up in the other.

"We're still trying to figure out how to push the boat around the course better," said Meyers, who took delivery of the new design in the fall. "Our crew work was okay today. We had a couple problems at the leeward mark roundings. That is something we need to work on as the week progresses."

No Naked Flames was commissioned by the Allen brothers for the purpose of being part of the Irish team for the 2008 Commodore's Cup. It was designed by Mark Mills and has America's Cup veteran Chris Main on the helm.

"Considering that today was the first time we have ever hoisted the spinnaker on this boat, we are obviously quite happy with our results," Main said of a stellar line of 1-4-2 that gave *No Naked Flames* a tie-breaker advantage over the Swan 45 *Murka 2*. "For the first day of our first regatta, it is really pleasing to be leading the class. If we can continue to get good starts and fine-tune our crew work throughout the week, we will be fine."

Madden, from Newport Beach, CA, won two of three races in PHRF 1. *Stark Raving Mad* has built an early four-point lead over the 1D35 *Spaceman Spiff* (Abigail Ruhlman, Cleveland, OH).

DIVISION 3

Blu Moon, a Swiss entry skippered by Franco Rossini, built a relatively comfortable nine-point lead in Melges 24 class – largest of the regatta with 46 boats. Flavio Favini steered *Blu Moon* to a tremendous line of 1-1-2 for a cumulative score of four points.

Dave Ullman, a four-time winner of Acura Key West, is lurking in third place. Simoneschi, sailing a chartered Melges 24 for his regular sponsor Giacomel Audi Racing, won the third race and cannot be discounted.

"We are still figuring out how to tune the boat. We had problems with boat speed in the first race, but had it set up better by the third race," Simoneschi said. "We had very good sailing conditions today. It was really fun going downwind with the big waves making for fantastic surfing."

Masquerade, skippered by San Francisco native Thomas Coates, is seeking to win J/105 class for an unprecedented fourth straight year. Coates and his veteran crew of West Coast sailors, got off to a good start with a pair of bullets sandwiched around a third. However, Brian Keane and his Massachusetts-based team on *Savasana*, also had an outstanding day and are just three points behind.

"We liked our starts and had the boat going fairly fast, but the competition is fierce once again and we'll have our work cut out for us to maintain that lead," Coates said.

DIVISION 4

The cold front's ragged edges had softened for

Tuesday's much anticipated start in Division 4. Easterly subtropical breezes of up to 18 knots helped boats start the day in the fast lane. The powerful mix of Corsair 28R trimarans and PHRF classes were absolutely energized. Near the conclusion of the second race, fifteen boats rushed across the finish within one minute of each other. Following Division 4, blogger Joy Dorethy eloquently sums up the day's scene. "Wild!"

The Corsair 28R class had a remarkably close fight with Key West veteran, *Flight Simulator*, taking the lead by one point. *Relentless* began in fourth, then took two bullets in race two and three, placing Peter Katcha's St.

Petersburg, FL, entry into second overall. Off to an excellent start, *Tempress*, Robert Hibdon's SR-33 from Charleston, SC, earned three bullets in all three races in the PHRF-3 class. The spray flew as the PHRF-4 class alternately grouped together in a tight bunch, then fanned across

the board. Robert Armstrong's J/100, *Bad Girl*, from St. Croix, USVI, took first by six points and there's a tie for both second and third place. An opposing sea current challenged the PHRF-5 class as they tried to inch as close to the starting line as possible. The competitors quickly spread out, yet sailed in a narrow lane. *Britsar*, Ken Schram's T-10 from Bay View YC, MI, took two bullets and first overall in a three point lead. Ira Perry's J/29 *Seefest*, Padanaram, MA, is in second with one bullet. Perennial race participant, Bruce Gardner, owner of the Beneteau 10m *L'Outrage* of Annapolis Maryland, lost their rig in today's second race. "We lost a shroud and the spreader broke which caused the failure," Gardner said. "We were hoping to sleeve the mast so we could race, but the rig has too much damage. We are packing the boat up and hoping the boat will be ready to race in Charleston." PHRF-6 saw an action packed day with two sisterships competing with each other as well as the class. Lincoln Schoenberger's Wylicat 30, *One Up*, slid into first with a bullet, three points over a three-way tie for second.

Corsair 28R

In high gear from the start, the trimarans packed the starting line, pushing *Evolution* out at the pin end. Kathryn Garlick, from Terra Ceia, Canada, and the *Evolution* team sailed strong and consistent for two third place slots before Valdek Kwasniewski's *Hi Five*, leaped ahead in the final moments to take third overall for the day.

Tom Reese's Corsair 28R, *Flight Simulator* from Youngstown, NY, aced the first race day with a bullet and two second place slots. "There are nine boats that are all very competitive," Reese said. "The sailors are very close in abilities." John Novak's *Overdo* is aiming for the top amateur title this year one of the toughest multihull races around. The Colleyville, TX based boat has a crew of close friends. "The competition's the best I've ever seen," Novak said. He too was thrilled by how hot the Corsair contest was. The boats were tight with plenty of close encounters. Richard Bokkerink's *Condor*, Netherlands, flashed ahead of *Overdue* right before the finish in race two. In race three, *Overdue* caught a shift and rocketed from last to fourth. "Who ever said sailboat racing is not exciting has not been in this one,"

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Novak concluded. The skill level is so close that there's no solid prediction on what will happen on Wednesday. "There's a lot of racing left, so anything can happen," Tom Reese said.

PHRF-3

With *Temptress* solidly in first, Bill Berges Evelyn 32-3, *Bluto*, from Bokeelia, FL, placed second in class. The third spot was secured by *Jack-A-Roe*, John Dybas's Olson 30 from Chicago, IL. "The conditions were excellent," Dybas noted. "We hope to have as much fun tomorrow as we did today." It's *Jack-A-Roe's* sixth year in Key West and the team got a lot of practice early on despite the untimely weather. "You've got to be prepared," Dybas said.

Rick Hamilton's sleek Esse 850 returned this year, now known as *U Plane*. In 2007, they were foiled by a clump of seaweed, which knocked the team down from a potential second to fourth place in PHRF-4. Hamilton is sailing onboard a second Esse 850, *X-Esse*, that's new in the game this year. The owner of the boat's Swiss-based factory, Josef Schuchter, and European sailor, Amadeo Vaccani, are also onboard. "Amadeo consistently places in the top five Esse regattas in Europe," Hamilton notes, pleased to be sailing with such talent. "Today was great racing." There were a lot of weeds scattered on the race course and, again, some ended up toying with the boat's progress. "We could feel the tiller vibrating and the seaweed was there," Hamilton said. The weeds cost *X-Esse* some standing in the class overall, but in the good-natured competition with *U Plane*, they're in a

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Tim Wilkes / timwilkes.com

Relentless, owned by Peter Katcha of St. Petersburg, FL., has the spinnaker filled perfectly while leading *Flight Simulator* during a downwind leg in the Corsair 28 fleet on Tuesday. *Flight Simulator*, owned by Tom Reese of Youngstown, NY, leads the fleet of nine trimarans by one point over *Relentless* after one day of racing.

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Company Information: Rémy Cointreau USA, Inc. is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Rémy Cointreau Group and is charged with importing and distributing an extensive portfolio of premium and ultra premium spirits and wines.

Comments on Key West participation: Mount Gay Rum is synonymous with sailing and is the drink of choice for sailors worldwide. The brand has been a sponsor at Key West for 21 continuous years and this regatta is a key event on Mount Gay Rum's sponsorship calendar. As a premier brand, it is a natural association to be at one of the world's top regattas every January in Key West.

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THE BALD HEAD ISLAND REGATTA

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three-way tie for fourth place. Fred McConnel's Columbia 32 *Resurgence*, from Panama City, FL, is the third boat in this tie.

PHRF-4

"Everyone was anxious to get out," said Mark Jones, mastman for Scott Piper's Tripp 33, *Pipe Dream*. "And it's pretty competitive," Jones concluded. The Miami, FL entry tied for second with *Mr. Bill's Wild Ride*, William Wildner's J/35, in a highly suspenseful PHRF-4 class on Tuesday. Adding to the excitement is *Tangent*, Gerry Taylor's Cape Fear 38, and *Leading Edge*, Tom Sutton's J/35, in a tie for third. Right at the start of a race, a jib sheet shackle parted. The quick-thinking crew tacked, but the second jib sheet let go as well. The rest of the fleet raced away while *Leading Edge* scrambled to recover. To add to the scatteraction two winches broke. "We at least managed to dig out of the dead last hole," Tom Sutton remarked, in good spirits despite the unusual day. Tom's son, Cote Sutton, was also onboard and the crew of Texans frequently sail together. "The chemistry makes everything happen," Cote says. He's been sailing with his dad since he was six. The boat's speedy recovery in the face of the odds shows some remarkable sailing and teamwork.

PHRF-6

Hall Palmer's *Lucky Ducky*, from San Francisco, CA, and *One Up*, Lincoln Schoenberger's Bridgeport, CT, entry are both Wyliecat 30s. The only difference between the two boats are the sails. They were competing against each other as well as their PHRF-6 class rivals. Bristling with enthusiasm, the two jumped the gun at the first start. *Horizon*, Bob Fleck's S2 7.9 from Casville, MI, also nosed over early in the excitement. All three faithfully returned and ended up in a tight net of competition. *One Up* earned first overall by three points, followed by a dramatic three-way tie for second place. Involved in the second place tie is Palmer's *Lucky Ducky*, Peter Fischel's J/24, *Rumblefish* and *Horizon*. The class's excellent teamwork and boathandling was unmistakable. "It was pretty close," said Hall Palmer of *Lucky Ducky*. "We chased *One UP* around and did a good job keeping up," Palmer says, looking forward to a thrilling week "Tomorrow's another day."

"I think it's terrific," Schoenberger said. "The competition was great with lots of nip and tuck racing with *Lucky Ducky*." Schoenberger has sailed in Key West, but this is the first time here with his boat. "We've got a group of condition orientated boats and a lot of good sailors."



Joy Dorethy

Lincoln Schoenberger's Wyliecat 30 *One Up* scored a 1-2-3 finish in Division 4 PHRF-6 to post a 3-point lead in class. Second place finisher *Lucky Ducky* finished 2nd and 1st in races 1 and 3 respectively, but a 6th place finish in race 2 has placed Hall in a 3-way tie with Peter Fischel's J/24 *Rumblefish* and Bob Fleck's S2 7.9 *Horizon*.

Race Day Fit Tips...

Wouldn't be a day of racing without some bumps and bruises. Ice and elevation is an excellent protocol for end of day recovery: Ice and elevate for ~ 10mins dockside, at the crew house getting a few cycles of 10mins on, 10mins off (icing) before heading out and using a pillow to elevate during bed time will help keep the swelling and inflammation in check,

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