

Merlin sets record; Canadians win 4 divisions

The thirteenth running of the biennial Victoria-Maui race made history. Canadian boats won both first to finish and overall honors. Royal Vancouver Yacht Club's Dan Sinclair in his chartered 70-footer *Merlin* was first to finish and broke the record she established in 1978 and won PHRF overall.

West Vancouver Yacht Club's Sandy Huntingford, in his *General Hospital*, won the IOR overall, finishing half an hour ahead of Wink Vogel's *Mad Max*. On corrected finishing times, Canadians won four out of five divisions. Les Crouch's *Maverick*, winner of 1990 line honors, was the only American division winner, taking division II.

Helmut Hann's Centurion 41 *Panache* from Crescent Beach Yacht Club, was first in Division P2. *Nuance*, the 40-footer from Vancouver Rowing Club, skippered by Dr. Tom Ferris, took Division 3. All members of her crew were former heart surgery patients out to prove a point. They finished in eighth place overall on corrected time out of 24 entries. Their elapsed time was 17 days.

Denis Cressey of False Creek Yacht Club, who headed the syndicate chartering the McGregor 65 *McFastrack*, another heart surgery patient, celebrated his 80th birthday during the race. *McFastrack*, with a relatively inexperienced ocean-racing crew, was seventh in elapsed time. She didn't fly her spinnaker at night.

There was the usual damage to gear that goes with 2,300 mile ocean races, but most was repaired by crews in passage. Three boats, among them

Anacortes-based *Ajax*, a regular performer in northwest races, had rudder trouble and went into San Francisco covering 350 miles with emergency steering. *Rocket J. Squirrel* had rudder trouble the following day and put into San Francisco. *Foxfire*, Seattle, used emergency steering for a day and was 350 miles from Maui when she was towed in by a tug.

Dennis Manara's Yamaha 33 *Luna* had some rudder trouble but finished the race in 16 days. All competing yachts arrived in Lahaina Monday, July 20 with 24-hour runs of 175 to 250 miles being fairly common. Navigation appeared to be better this year than in previous races as skippers with greater experience travelled shorter distances. Royal Vancouver's final report predicted solid winds for those sailing well offshore.

For Cheryl Holmes, owner of *Meredith II*, the Vic-Maui was a totally new experience. She had never competed in a club race or Vancouver Area Racing Council race. Barry Ruff, an experienced ocean skipper with a solo Pacific race in his resume, was the skipper. Included in *Meredith's* crew were Cheryl's son, Derek, 14, Dr. David Binding and Colin Jackson. The difference between *Meredith's* division fourth place and second place finish was 46 minutes.

Proving that there's still magic in the name *Merlin*, Dan Sinclair and his crew were owners of another *Merlin* record, 9 days, 23 hours; overall first to finish on elapsed time; top navigator, first to finish, best start, first Canadian yacht to finish; first PHRF overall corrected

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Boat speed, efficient crew work and navigation expertise proved there's magic in the name *Merlin*. Dan Sinclair, and his Royal Van crew, broke the Victoria-Maui record *Merlin* set in 1978. *Merlin*, first boat to finish, set a record time of nine days, 23 hours, 15 minutes, 59 seconds for the 2,310 mile course.

Sea Snaps Photo