

# Yacht Club & Friday Harbor Sailing Club Round the County

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**T**here are so many fun things about Round the County. It's a long race (65 nm), run in two legs on two days, with a night "off the clock" at Roche Harbor. It is a reverse start and alternates yearly between going clockwise and counterclockwise around the San Juan Islands. Held in a beautiful and serenely scenic portion of the Salish Sea, it is one of the best-attended races.

This year's 23rd annual Round the County race had 71 boats on a clockwise course. The weather and conditions were perfect. We enjoyed light to moderate breeze. There was a lot of adverse current, some sunshine, but no rain.

Saturday morning dawned after the rockin' pre-race party at Anacortes Yacht Club. We left Cap Sante Marina in the dark, and during the hour motor to Lydia Shoal, the sun rose and the magic began. As we approached the start line, there were many yachts sailing about. It was a gorgeous sight. There is something about the light in the San Juan Islands and how it illuminates Round the County boats-- simply stunning.

The race began in a light-air southerly, 3-5 knots, and an adverse current. *Kotuku*, Graeme Esarey's Farr 1220, fought the tendency to cross early and arrived at the start line just a bit late but, continues

Graeme, "in perfect position for a beat to weather. And as the weather boat, we got to the wind first and seemed to have current advantage too. Before long we were ahead of most of our competition, except *Reign Maker*, who got to the wind before us and legged out on the rest of the fleet."

The breeze was fluky—sometimes 2-3 knots, sometimes 5 knots. Yachts dispersed over the course, looking for wind and current relief. *Neptune's Car* went straight for the east side of Rosario Strait and, hugging the coast of Cypress Island, did well with a good breeze and better current. Some boats stayed in the middle, like *Tantrum II* and the J/109s *Illusionist* and *Astral Plane*, and had mixed results. Others stayed west along Blakely Island, but it looked light there and boats seemed to slow. About halfway down Rosario Strait, spinnakers went up as the wind swung around to a northeasterly and increased to 5-8 knots.

We rounded Lopez Island at Davidson Rock with the wind steadily increasing. It was now 10-12 knots. We kept our spinnaker up until just beyond the Lime Kiln Lighthouse, then switched to the jib as a fairly strong northerly suddenly came down. The

wind decreased and we watched the big boats in what looked like a struggle to finish.

*Tantrum II* and *Fifth Season*, in Divisions 1 and 0, battled over the final tenth of a mile approach to the finish. *Tantrum II*, in the lead, watched as *Fifth Season* slowly but steadily gained on us. Fifteen seconds before the finish line, she ducked and tacked to leeward, towards the Committee Boat. We considered tacking as well but knew we'd lose time. But would we cross the line on our current tack... inside the pin? It really was a race to the finish. We held our course, and when we crossed the finish line, we were five seconds behind.

Then it was the party in Roche Harbor. Good thing the clocks rolled back that day.

The next morning was gorgeous. The sun was out, shining through dramatic clouds. A shifty, light southerly breeze again prevailed in the wind shadow of San Juan Island. Ben Braden described it this way, "The fleet started off and made huge guesswork of the best way to get around Turn Point and into Boundary Pass against the current with little to no wind."

Gary Morgan sailed his Peterson 37 *What? A Tripp!* to "an okay start, but

we were going the direction we wanted to go. We were one of the first boats in our division to the Spieden side, then reached up the shore with our ½ oz. chute. *Here and Now* did the end around inside of us, and there were lots of boats way outside, but just not going anywhere with more wind, but adverse current."

*Kotuku* rounded Turn Point with about two feet of water under our keel, then watched *Jack Rabbit* cut inside us doing maybe 9 knots. And stopping quickly. The sound — it was memorable."

Through Boundary Pass, boats were sailing both the Canadian and American sides as well as right up the middle. Before the halfway point, Gary recalled, "there was a big current line, and when most people hit it, they gybed in to the Canadian shore, but we couldn't see the reason for that so we kept on going. We gained probably ten minutes on *Corvo*. We were running with *Martha*. This huge 100-year-old wood boat with thousands of square feet of sail up. It looked like they had two chutes up, and yards and yards of white sails!"

Farther on up the road, Ben Braden

**"Tachyon," "Artemis" and "Madrona" coming down Rosario Straits, looking for wind... without the adverse current.**



observed that "*White Cloud* and *Madrona* finished up a tight reaching battle to be first around the lighthouse by high-centering *White Cloud* on a rock near the lighthouse." As with *Jack Rabbit*, she was quickly off the rocks and continued with the race.

Once through Boundary Pass, the next question was, "How far east do we go?" Again, boats tried it all. Gary Morgan, who was racing his first Round the County, listened when his veteran crew, mostly from Orcas Island, advised him to stay on the Sucia (west) side. "We passed *Karma* at that point as they came

over from the other side. We covered them going towards the Pea Pods, as we figured we were the two lead boats in our class, and we rate even. But as we turned the corner into the Pea Pods, we saw the shore lined with boats not going very fast and a bit more wind outside. Our navigator and the Orcas boys all said, Don't go in there, it doesn't pay off. So we stayed out til we got to the layline to the rocks and tacked over onto port. A bit further on we crossed *Teddy Bear*, *Tachyon*, *Voodoo Child*, and a bunch of other, much faster, boats, and *Karma* was way behind. We felt pretty good about the

outcome of that little maneuver. And Ian was ecstatic about beating his sister on *Time Bandit*. We crossed tacks with those boats for a bit, going to the finish line. We ended up beating a few of the Division 0 boats and almost all the Division 1 boats over the line!"

Thanks to Orcas Island Yacht Club and Friday Harbor Sailing Club for hosting another outstanding Round the County, and to Anacortes Yacht Club for the rockin' pre-race party. Thank you to those who shared your stories about the race.

— by Peggy Johnson  
photos by Jan Anderson

PI	OA	Boat	Skipper
<b>Division: M</b>			
1	17	Makika	Jude Stoller
2	47	Blue Lightning	Gumley & none
3	49	Freda Mae	Vincent Depillis
4	50	RufDuck	Linda Adams
5	63	LightSpeed	David Kane
<b>Division: X</b>			
1	1	Icon	Kevin Welch
2	2	Madrona	Carl Buchan
3	3	Flash	Steve Travis
4	4	Paradigm	Gavin Pearce
5	5	Tachyon	Shaun Breese
6	6	White Cloud	Lynch & Johnson
7	7	Neptunes Car	Paul Lamarche
8	8	Strider	David Pickett
9	9	Dark Star	Jonathan McKee
10	10	Velos	Hestehave & Gilbert
11	14	Voodoo Child	Brian Duchin
12	22	Lawndart	William Allan
13	23	Artemis	Louis Bianco
14	29	Jack Rabbit	Hibbert & White
15	52	JOSS	Stout & Spriggs
<b>Division: 0</b>			
1	12	My Tai	Daryl Homan
2	18	Sly D Away	Stroble & Poire
3	24	BRAVO ZULU	Denny Vaughan
4	27	Teddy Bear	Gray Hawken
5	28	Time Bandit	Bob Brunius
6	31	Carrera	Simon Walmsley
7	39	Pegasus XIV	Dan Newland
8	44	Tinette	Lynn Adkins
9	45	5th Season	Jay Platt
10	51	Nefarious	Daniel Randolph
11	72	MAD MAX	Micah van der Heide
<b>Division: I</b>			
1	11	Kotuku	Graeme Esarey
2	13	Astral Plane	Adam Korbin
3	15	Illusionist	David Maclean
4	20	Vitesse	David Steffen
5	32	Marayui	Astolfo Rueda
6	33	Zulu	A.findlay Gibbons
7	37	Cinco De Mayo	John Peterson
8	48	Tantrum li	Robert Hennessy
9	58	Tantulus	Ole Hovland
10	65	Reign Maker	Geoff Pentz
11	62	Kipper Kite	David Spencer
12	68	ALLONS-Y	Richardson & Sleitholme
<b>Division: II</b>			
1	16	What? A Tripp!	Morgan & Wareham
2	21	Karma	Shorett & Burzycki
3	25	Shockwave	Mike Kirkland
4	26	Hravn	Todd Koetje
5	34	Muffin	Garry Greth
6	35	Pangaea	Madenwald & Madenwald
7	36	Corvo	Tom Kerr
8	38	Crazy Ivan	Chris White
9	40	Por Favor	John Denny
10	41	Ragtime	Paul Watson
11	42	Incisor	Currie & Wilson
12	46	Pulelehua	Selting & Wallis
13	57	Dreamtime	Galbraith & Galbraith
14	60	Skookumchuck	Mund & Skubi
15	66	Passepartout	Peter Shainin
16	69	Here And Now	Denney & rawls
17	71	Madame Pele	Andrewes & Andrewes
<b>Division: III</b>			
1	19	Wild Rumpus	Schwenk & Schwenk
2	30	Flying Circus	Eric Yaremko
3	43	Blackfoot	Mike Corcoran
4	53	Celebration	Jim Bottles
5	54	Duke	Baker & Baker
6	55	Martha	Robert Darcy
7	56	Seeker	Ken Greff
8	59	Tir Na Nog	Fraser & Fraser
9	61	Freeflyte	Jonathan Cruse
10	64	Izarra	Andrew Harvilla
11	67	Soul Food	Pamela Mickelwait
12	70	Sol Pacifico	Randall Barnes

results courtesy of Orcas Island Yacht Club and the Friday Harbor Sailing Club