

CBYRA Race Week – Saturday, September 5, 2009

By BILL WAGNER

Staff Writer

Light winds and strong currents challenged the skippers, but the 43rd annual Annapolis Race Week got off to a rousing start with every class completing at least two races. Three classes – J/24, Farr 40 and PHRF B – managed to complete three races.

“I give the race committee a lot of credit. That was a gutsy move to go for three races. They shortened the legs from 1.3 miles to 1 mile after the first race, which was really smart,” said Bill O’Malley, trimmer aboard Farr 40 leader Yellow Jacket.

Bobby Frey, on-water chairman of Annapolis Race Week, applauded principal race officers Taran Teague (Fleet 2), Ed Michels (Fleet 2) and Fred Dersch (Fleet 3) for ensuring that the entire 170-boat fleet got plenty of action. Easterly winds in the 5-8- knot range predominated while the current was ebbing at nearly two knots.

“All the race committees did an excellent job. We had very fair contests on all three courses and I think the sailors were happy for the opportunity to post some results,” said Frey, in his fourth year of directing the popular regatta organized by the Chesapeake Bay Yacht Racing Association. “While it was light, we were fortunate that it was very sail-able. The current was an issue... it was really whipping.”

Wairere, the Thompson 30 owned by Pete Hunter, won both race in PHRF A1 class by using the current to its advantage. Hunter, a resident of Kill Devil Hills, N.C., is seeking to repeat as class champion at Annapolis Race Week.

“We tried to stay out in the deep water on the legs when the current was with us and it definitely helped our speed,” said Hunter, who had Simon Minoprio and Mike Buckley sharing tactical duties. “It was about 5-6 knots all day and that is the best wind for our boat. We got great starts, stayed in clear air, worked the shifts well, managed to stay in the breeze and keep the boat going.”

Turbo Duck, sailed by the father-son team of Bodo and Nick von der Wense, posted a pair of bullets on Saturday to seize the early lead in the Farr 30 North American Championship that is being contested in conjunction with Annapolis Race Week. Bodo von der Wense is steering while son Nick is calling tactics aboard Turbo Duck, which has a four-point lead over Jim Allsopp and crew aboard Moxie.

Catalina 27 class is contesting its national championship as part of Annapolis Race Week for the first time since 2002 and John Anderson has seized the early lead by notching a pair of seconds on Saturday. Anderson, a Pasadena resident who is seeking to defend his race week title, holds a one-point lead over Tom Walsh and Four Little Ducks.

No boat had a better day than A Parent Tripp, which won all three starts in PHRF B. Brett Harrison steered and partner John Yeigh called tactics as the Tripp 26 took a commanding six-point lead over second-place Artemis 2 (William Helf).

“It was perfect weather for a Tripp 26. This boat really goes well in light conditions. More people should buy one of these boats because they are great for the Chesapeake Bay,” Harrison said.

Harrison had his own strategy for how to handle the current whenever it was going against the fleet. “We went hard left every time. If you did that you got about 10 minutes at the end of the leg when you were out of the current and that allowed you to make big gains.”

Farr 40 made its debut as a one-design class at this year’s Annapolis Race Week and Yellow Jacket showed superb consistency in grabbing the early advantage. Co-owners Larry Bulman and Jeff Scholz sailed the Annapolis Yacht Club entry to a solid line of 2-2-3 on Saturday.

“In the first two races we got good starts, had good boat speed and maintained good position relative to the fleet,” said O’Malley, who works for Farr Yacht Design. “We got a bad start in the last race, but were able to fight back, which was encouraging.”

North Sails-Chesapeake professional Willy Keyworth is calling tactics on Yellow Jacket, which holds a one-point lead over Endorphin (Erik Wulff) and Sundance (Gary Beer), both of which won races on Saturday.

“It’s been very close, tight racing. I think the owners are all enjoying this one-design competition,” O’Malley said. Windward is looking to repeat as PHRF A3 winner at Annapolis Race Week and got off to a good start. West River Sailing Club member Randy Watson steered the Frers 36 to a first and a second on Saturday.

“We certainly had a good day. We were coming into the starting line with speed and were able to launch,” Watson said. “The current was a killer. You really had to over-stand whatever you thought the lay line was. The biggest thing was keeping the boat going fast and not worrying about pointing upwind or sailing your angles downwind.”

Windward is locked in a close battle with the Olson 30 Kestrel (Al Holt) and the Donovan 27 Remedy (Bert Carp) for CBYRA High Point honors in A3. Both rivals are just two points behind with two more days of racing remaining.

“This is far from over. Kestrel and Remedy are both well-sailed. We need to keep the pedal down,” Watson said.