

Last Blast! Nyack Boat Club Fleet 75 Nyack, New York October 3, 2009

Pos	Skipper	Crew	Club	Boat#	R1	R2	R3	R4	Total
1	David Peck	Sarah Peck, Andrew Mollerus	Niantic	15215	3	1	2	1	7
2	John Townsend	Dave Sharp, Tim Brothers	Riverton	15385	1	8	6	6	21
3	Gary Hurban	Peter Fernberger, Henry Fernberger	Nyack	14073	2	7	12	2	23
4	Dick Hallagan	John Bloom, John Steiner	Newport	15255	5	6	9	3	23
5	Ryan Sprole	Chris Sprole, Judd Brown	Nyack	15296	7	4	11	5	27
6	Bob Sengstacken	Dan Zitin, Maude Lindsey	Nyack	14888	6	2	1	19	28
7	Allan Crew	Jim Irwin, Nate Benbow	Riverton	14699	10	15	5	4	34
8	Tim Milhiser	Lilli Millhiser, Brouch	Madison Beach	15400	8	12	8	7	35
9	Eric Heller	Christina Beale, Leland Chang	Cedar Point	14819	16	3	7	10	36
10	Joan Hurban	Peter Jodrosich, Gary Hoffer	Nyack	15093	11	11	10	8	40
11	Stephanie Mayo	Bill Mayo, Paul Fishkin	Nyack	15059	9	16	4	14	43
12	Eric Kent	George Penny, Zuzanna Baranski	Nyack	14492	4	14	13	13	44
13	Hugh Hutchison	Elizabeth Hutchison, Jamie Perkins	Riverton	15055	13	5	14	12	44
14	Dan Parietti	Mike Carney, Jeff Sorensen	Nyack	15319	14	17	3	11	45
15	Dick Leonard	Laura Rice, Andrew Graham	Nyack	14238	12	10	15	9	46
16	Robert Sheilds	Kevin Becker, Mark, Asher	Ocean City	14348	17	9	16	15	57
17	Bill Cook	Penny Sengstacken, Ron McCormack	Nyack	14140	15	13	17	18	63

On Saturday October 3, 2009 the clock radio went off at 6:00 am in Old Lyme, CT with the sound of hard rain on the roof.Â Was I really going to get up, wake my 17 year old daughter and drive 2 hours to Nyack, NY; rig, race and unrig in this rain and predicted thunderstorms??Â Why not?Â This addict surely needed another fix of Lightning racing.

In all my years of sailing Lightnings, this was the first time that I’ve seen the host club introduce all the competitors at the skippers meeting.Â It was quite touching and quickly created a very cordial and Corinthian feeling and the thought that maybe we all weren’t just going out on the Hudson to kill each other. Â Even in the parking lot with all the buzz of autos, trailers and rigging activity, the feeling of pressure to quickly remove our car to a proper spot was squelched by one of the club member’s comment to us, “Relax, there’ll be plenty of time to move itâ€}” With our state of mind adjusted and bag lunches in hand, we were ready to go out and race.

Rather than go through a race by race treatise, here are a few comments about the day’s experience on the squirrely Hudson and a final race summary:

1. Leading a race at any point is no reason to feel good about your chances for an ultimate victory. The current and wind velocity differences on the Hudson River will surely make you a skeptic and help you to maintain a very high level of personal race anxietyâ€};Â When you think you ought to go one way and locals Hurban and Bob Sengstacken are going the other, following from ahead can be tricky. In a post race conversation with Gary Hurban, we both agreed that, one time per series, every competitor ought to be allowed to have his boat lifted out of the water during a race by Acme Crane Co. and transported to a better side of the race course.
2. Always look at the course board. An apology to the one or two boats who we needlessly dumped on going into the perceived finish line while we were still under the impression that the course was a Windward-Leeward one time around rather than twice around. Congrats to Bob Sengstacken who went on to win this race by a wide margin!
3. The races were similar in that places changed depending upon the wind, current and positioning. The pivotal race was the last one where we led Team Sengstacken 6 points to 9. Given the light, spotty, unpredictable (at least to this outsider) conditions, there was no reason to feel comfortable with a 3 point lead. Either of the two boats or team Townsend, with 15 points, could win the regatta. Here are a few recollections of that race number 4:

We stayed close to Bob before the start, lee-bowing him as we approached the line to start. At the gun we were right at the pin and were able to pinch him off so that he had to tack, allowing us to crack off and motor to the left side of the course with clear air. Keeping an eye on Bob and fearful of the changing conditions we tacked a couple of times to stay in touch with him as he attempted to stay out of traffic.

Rounding first at the top mark, the fun had just begun, trying to tackle a long, light air downwind leg against the current.Â A bear-away set and wait for Bob; “Where’s Bob”? was the mantraâ€}he’s about 7th around the mark and also does a bear away set along with the others in his group.Â Some locals jibe to port. We stay with Bob for the time being. The five or six boats that jibed to port are looking good and seem to be ahead now. We jibe over to split the difference between the ports and the starboards. Where’s Bob? Soon, Bob jibes and we are less stressed, but Hallagan and Co. are still looking better to weather and closer to the western shore!Â With a dying breeze the only thing we could do is try to super- focus on steering, spinnaker and weight trim and try to stay in the lily pads of breeze. Great focus by our middle crew, 420 sailor Andrew Mollerus and my daughter Sarah carried us through the lee of Dick Hallagan, regaining the lead. For the rest of the run, we focused on trim and, as it turned out, just sailing our own race. The west side breeze was dying, so we jibed to starboard away from the group, heating up our angle enough to keep the chute flying; bearing away with any hint of a puff.Â Now heading toward the east shore and with Gary Hurban, who had headed east early with apparently no prayer, was looking better and better coming down on port.Â We continued to focus on chute trim and steering for the rest of the downwind leg. Rounding the starboard gate with about a 150 yard lead over Gary and with the very favorable current now with us on the final beat to the finish, we were able to finish about 7 minutes ahead of the pack and win the regatta and breathe a huge sigh of relief. A big thanks to my teammates Andrew and Sarah for their positive energy and hard work!Â

In second overall was the Riverton, NJ team of John Townsend, Dave Sharp and Tim Brothers followed in third by former local and current Annapolis transplant Gary Hurban along with Peter and Henry Fernberger. An unfortunate incident at the weather mark left Bob Sengstacken out of the money; he later blamed it on greed and contrary to the Gordon Gecko character in the movie Wall Street, greed is not always good.

The Nyack Race Committee did a great job getting 4 races off in the tough conditions. After the post race libations and “would’ve, could’ve and should’ve” session, the on-shore crew put on a tasty Lasagna dinner, topped off with cannolis and an awards presentation. Many thanks to all the volunteers who hosted this fun day of racing, celebration and commiseration. Congratulations to Nyack Boat Club on their 100th anniversary!

Dave Peck