

69th Frigid Digit Regatta Report – 26 September 2020



The Best of Times in the Worst of Times – Lightning's go downwind on Chesapeake Bay during the 2020 Frigid Digit

Severn Sailing Association and Lightning Fleet 329 safely held the 69th running of the Frigid Digit on Saturday, September 28, a gray cool day that brought light to moderate air and the occasional burst of light rain. 17 boats participated in the one-day event, a very good turnout for the Dixie District in 2020.

The good news is that Lightning's were on the water, out on Chesapeake Bay sailing together with friends and family, enjoying all the trademark elements of a great Lightning day. There were men and women on the water, families sailing together, young people at the helm, lots of close quarter racing, and an age range that started under age 10 on the RC boat, moved on thru teenage skippers sailing with their dad's, to span at least 8 decades of experience into the rarified realms of Lightning Great, Grand Mastership. The fleet was typically competitive, with the first start attempt resulting in a general recall, and the rest of the day starting under the 'I' flag. Lightning normal, all the way!

The classic boat crew was out in force, with 2 woodies (Bob Astrove sailed 'Pandora', Greg Urban brought out 6426, and Charles Rogen debuted his beautifully restored "fiberglassic", 11248). Looking across our past into the future, Measurers Bill Cabrall and Joe Buczkowski collected GPS speed and wind data for Marnix Hoogwater, a naval architecture student in the Netherlands researching the boats performance characteristics.

It was wonderful to see everyone, to be out on the water, lined up for starts with 17 other Lightning's, enjoying what we have done for so many years and so many wonderful regattas. It felt so normal!

At the same time, this being 2020, it was also very different. There were some important changes made in order to allow the event to happen at all, and to organize and run it safely.

The SSA formula for COVID required everyone associated with the event to begin by assessing their personal risk level (and staying home if they have symptoms or might have been exposed to COVID). Mask wearing was mandatory at the club, hand sanitizer available throughout the complex and social distancing built into every phase of the event, from the skippers meeting (done via VHF radio), getting in and out of the water (17 boats spread out over 3 hoists and turning basins), food (positions marked at 6' intervals at the snack bar), and the trophy presentation spread all over the parking lot.

The regatta was organized so that everyone could start and end the day at home and stay in their own 'bubble' throughout. Despite light to moderate air, the sailing day was managed so that the fleet was back in early enough to provide enough time to pack up and make it home Saturday night. On the water the RC managed course length to provide enough time and distance for a decent race, while still making it possible to get all 5 races in. This had the added advantage of keeping the fleet well bunched, and the racing tight and interesting for everyone all day.

In order to accommodate different bubbles, competitors were given the opportunity to sail double or triple handed, and to designate themselves as spinnaker/non-spinnaker boats. Backstay streamers (another Lightning staple) were used to clarify who was what on the water. There was an expectation that the different groups might separate over the course of a race, which did happen some, but given the light to moderate air and short courses double handed non-spinnaker teams that nailed the beats found themselves in the hunt and connected to the fleet throughout each race.

Luke Shingledecker, his wife Susan, and son Peter ably manned the RC boat, keeping those functions and their associated exposure within a single household. Ted Morgan and Kim Couranz were on the Weather Mark boat, and Chris Young manned the mark boat for the event. Starts used an automated 3-minute sound signal system, and once up, the 'I' Flag simply stayed up, all day. A few large shifts affected things occasionally, but overall, the racing was good, quite good actually for a light and shifty day. It is worth noting that Kim is a Snipe World Champion, and the RC team included 3 former SSA Commodores and a current Board Member. Lighting Fleet 329 greatly appreciated their support for the Lighting Fleet, the Lighting Class, and the continuance of our regattas and traditions – Thank you very much!

In order to add additional spice to this mix, the RC tracked who rounded the first weather mark first in each race and an award was given for the best average score, giving everyone something to race for together, regardless of division entered for the day. The resulting mix of teams and sailing strategies was a lot of fun.

I am pleased to report that all competitors took the adjustments and precautions seriously, followed the rules, and allowed the event to happen as safely as anything can be done this year. As Bob Astrove and others commented, "I think SSA did it right. I felt safe".

Addressing the use of double handing and non-spinnaker divisions, Bob also commented "I think the model of allowing 2 people and even offering a non-spin group is something the class might

consider for non-sanctioned events elsewhere and in the future. At least it is worthy of some discussion. If that would drive up general participation it might be a good thing. I think we are going to be under Pandemic conditions well into next year, so maybe it is something we want to talk more about at a district level for 2021.”



© Ted Morgan

Contemplating Spinnaker Options at the Frigid Digit

As the photos show, this topic was on everyone’s mind throughout the day.

So after all this, what was the racing like? Speaking for the non-spinnaker double handed crowd, Bill Cabrall commented “It was interesting, very interesting. The shorter courses kept us in the fleet all day, and the tradeoff between reaching up under just the jib downwind or going wing and wing was a challenge. Noting a flood tide against the wind most of the day, we figured that the fleet would tend to be early to the line, and forced to run down it, creating a hole at the RC boat. It was there. And by charging the line a heartbeat late, we always had space and were able to immediately tack away into clear air on port for better tide and (we felt) stronger pressure. This put us consistently in the top group at the weather mark. The first beats were always hotly contested and the first-to-the-mark trophy was fun to try for. Downwind Jim Alman was unbeatable wing and wing, a strategy that worked better than our plan of heating it up to put more pressure in the jib. Overall, it appeared the non-spinnaker format allowed more couples and families to get out racing together, and this was wonderful to see.”

Ron Buchanan was the overall winner, picking up the Garwood Memorial Trophy after winning a tiebreaker with Trevor Prior. This trophy honors Bill Garwood, who crewed for Past ILCA President Dr. Don Delome and his wife Gwen for many years in the early 1970's before perishing in the crash of TWA Flight 514 on 1 December, 1974 while returning from a Thanksgiving holiday with their parents. The Trophy was donated in 1976 and has been awarded every year since. Bill, a dentist traditionally attended his dental school fall party the evening of the Frigid Digit and was known to sail on Sunday somewhat the worse for wear. In his honor, Fleet 329 awards a bottle of wine to the middle crew of the wining boat. This year's bottle of Prosecco came from Botanos Fajardo, SSA's food vendor, and went to Ron Buchanan

Jim Alman took home first to the weather mark honors.



Ron Buchanan accepts the Garwood Memorial Trophy for the 69th Annual Frigid Digit

Ted Morgan took wonderful photos throughout the day, you can find them all at the following link:
<https://flic.kr/s/aHsmR36iPQ>

Results are below:

Spinnaker Division

Sail	Team	1	2	3	4	5	Total Points	Pos
14485	Ron Buchanan, Jeff Ullman Bucky	5	1	1	[8]	4	11.00	1
15498	Trevor Prior, Gary Hoffer	[10]	2	2	5	2	11.00	2
14907	Ian Moriarty, Shannon Lockwood	2	3	[8]	1	6	12.00	3
14548	Jonathan Guth, Miles Guth	4	4	[7]	4	1	13.00	4
15320	Craig Cobbum, Peter Rich, Leigh Cramer DiEugenio	1	5	6	[7]	3	15.00	5
7603	Robert Astrove, Geoff Fuller	3	6	5	6	[14/DNC]	20.00	6
15084	Joe Buczkowski, Zach Buczkowski, Ed Lane	[8]	7	4	3	7	21.00	7
15131	Patrick Phelan, Rob Pheris, Tom Compton	6	9	[12]	2	5	22.00	8
14900	Gary Hurban, Joan Hurban	7	[11]	3	9	10	29.00	9
15425	Joe Friebele, Elaine Friebele, Dave Friebele	9	[10]	9	10	8	36.00	10
14366	Mark Maglin, yoli Del Buono, Fran Dirren	11	8	10	[14/DNC]	14/DNC	43.00	11
11248	Ched Rogan, Andrew Rogan, Ben Chandlee	[14/O CS]	12	11	11	9	43.00	12
12957	Paul Whitesides	[14/D NC]	14/DNC	14/DNC	14/DNC	14/DNC	56.00	13

Non-Spinnaker Division

Sail	Skipper	1	2	3	4	5	Total Points	Pos
15208	Jim Alman, Karrin Alman	1	1	1	[2]	2	5.00	1
15054	Jonathan Lange, Philip Lange	[2]	2	2	1	1	6.00	2
15615	Bill Cabrall, Raeyane Farrell	[3]	3	3	3	3	12.00	3
6426	Greg Urban, Mike Hass	4	4	4	4	[5/DNF]	16.00	4

Weather Mark Challenge

Sail	Skipper	1	2	3	4	5	Total Points	Pos
15208	Jim Alman	2	2	2	[6]	3	9.00	1
14548	Jonathan Guth	7	1	[11]	1	2	11.00	2
15498	Trevor Prior	[15]	4	6	7	1	18.00	3
15615	William Cabrall	6	6	4	[9]	6	22.00	4
15054	Jonathan Lange	[12]	5	9	5	4	23.00	5
14900	Gary Hurban	4	[13]	1	8	11	24.00	6
14485	Ron Buchanan	10	3	5	[12]	7	25.00	7
7603	Robert Astrove	5	7	3	10	[18/DNC]	25.00	8
14907	Ian Moriarty	3	9	[15]	2	12	26.00	9
15131	Patrick Phelan	[9]	8	7	4	8	27.00	10
15320	Craig Cobbum	1	[12]	12	11	9	33.00	11
15084	Joe Buczkowski	8	11	13	3	[14]	35.00	12
15425	Joe Friebele	11	10	10	[15]	13	44.00	13
11248	Ched Rogan	[18/OCS]	16	14	13	5	48.00	14
14366	Mark Maglin	13	14	8	[18/DNC]	18/DNC	53.00	15
6426	Gregory Urban	14	15	[16]	14	10	53.00	16
12957	Paul Whitesides	[18/NoFin]	18/NoFin	18/NoFin	18/DNC	18/DNC	72.00	17

Finally, this report would not be complete without mention of the best COVID male haircut ever seen in the Dixie District. After a year in which many of us have traded looks for safety during the pandemic, or simply given up and gone white and/or bald in frustration over the lack of highly ventilated, N95 certified barber shops, Ed Lane has solved this problem as only a Lightning guy could. His long, rich, flowing, vibrant, shoulder length locks were a thing of beauty and the envy of the entire boat park. When asked about it, he simply replied that he realized in March there was time to grow the perfect Halloween hairdo and beard for his 'J. Christ' costume, and he's been at it ever since. While we can't speak for the beard (he was masked all day, of course), it was clear that the people in his neighborhood are going to be very surprised at who shows up for trick or treats come October 31st !

Bill Cabrall
15615
Unofficial scribe for Fleet 329