

Governor's Cup Report from *Shadowfax* by Denis Bessette

We are back from the Governor's Cup Potomac leg and still recovering. The NOAA weather report called for light winds out of the southeast no more than 5-8 knots shifting to NE after midnight. Seem to indicate a long slow race. However the Chesapeake Bay Operation Forecast System (CBOFS) called for winds staying in the southeast and increasing to 15-20 knots near the mouth of the Potomac... What really happened in a four word summary was a WET, WET, WET and WINDY race. It was the wettest race I and any of my crew ever participated in. That feeling was echoed by all the participant we talked to. Before 8:00 PM we had the forecast light showers, but at 8:00 it started raining seriously. It did not let up all night. It rained light and it rained hard but it kept raining, The CBOFS forecast turned out to be right. After passing Ragged Point the winds really picked up and so did the rain. The waves were steep and choppy with many breaking over the bow. Somehow I found myself as the most forward crew position. How did that happen? As skipper and old man I should have been in the cockpit. I sure got outmaneuvered. Wes Marshall was helmsman after Ragged Point and earned iron man honors as the rain was now coming in horizontal. It stung your eyes looking into it. But he kept the boat driving at top speed pounding our way toward MOA "A".

The race started benignly enough in light 5-8 knots SE as predicted. Shadowfax and Rogue, an Ultimate 24 from DISC, were first across the line and we held the lead for a while. The Ultimate slowly pulled ahead and pointed better. After a while though we noted that we were going faster but lower. They tacked first and we and the rest of the fleet kept going on port. Luckily we waited for a new wind line to hit us and tacked. The wind now was at ten knots and provided us with a lift that soon got us in the lead. However some of the bigger faster boats, especially Dark Star, pulled ahead. As darkness fell the wind kept building and we had none of the ideal wind direction and glorious sunset of last year. It was tack after tack, guessing at wind shift and best wind locations.

After turning at MOA "A" we had a very fast beam reach for about six miles to the mouth of the St. Mary's River. With the high wind and the wind direction chances of flying the spinnaker successfully were slim. So we stayed with the Genoa. We saw a couple of Annapolis boats with spinnaker, but I think they were gennakers.

Finally we had the always tricky St Mary's river. We had to tack our way up, fighting off the fast boats out of Annapolis. We finished just after 5:00AM.

We managed to trophy with a third place, behind a couple of tough competitors from DISC – Dark Star and Rogue.

Doug Savage skipper of Darkstar related to me that he shredded his #1 when hit by a gust that took the wind speed from 14 knots to over 30. We fortunately didn't see that. Others reported gusts in the 20s which seems about right. It was hard to tell in the dark and rain.

After the race all boats had the look of laundry day with clothes and equipment being hung on lifelines and booms. Every skipper I talked to said their boats were completely wet. Not a dry compartment anywhere.

Now that I reported all the good stuff, I would encourage other DYC member to participate in the race. It can be challenging but very enjoyable as well. You'll also find a nice family atmosphere to the post race activities. This year we had some entries from Fishing Bay Yacht Club so race interest is growing. Being home port for the start of the race, we should have more local representation. So consider putting it on your calendar for next year.

I'd like to thank Dennis Hannick and his crew for providing another excellent race committee for the start. Our race committee did a great job as usual.