



Doublehanded Team Wins Venona Trophy in 'Round-the-Island Race

EDGARTOWN, MASS. (July 22, 2018) –The most coveted trophy for Edgartown Yacht Club's 80-year-old 'Round-the-Island ('RTI) race was won this year by the doublehanded team of Zachary Lee (Pelham, N.Y/Chilmark, Mass.) and Leif Counter (West Tisbury, Mass.) aboard the Morris 36 *Yankee Girl*. The team joins the prestigious list of Venona Trophy winners, which has been growing since 1938 and traditionally has been the purview of fully-crewed yachts, including legendary names such as *Spookie*, *Sayanora*, *Scheherazade*, *Vesper* and *Sled*.

"I really haven't ever done traditional racing on big boats with full crews," said Lee, who has sailed 10,000 miles on *Yankee Girl* and has won the doublehanded division in the Newport to Bermuda Race twice, most recently in the 2018 edition, with Counter as his crew. "We had picked up our trophy for winning the Doublehanded class this morning at the awards, and then they called us up a second time. We had no idea; it took us by surprise."

The Venona Trophy is presented to the yacht in the 'RTI's spinnaker divisions with the best overall corrected time. For this year's 'RTI, there were 45 boats in six classes, only one of which was non-spinnaker. The 56 nautical-mile 'Round-the-Island race started early yesterday morning, Saturday, July 21 and finished in the late afternoon on the wings of a moderately heavy breeze. It is part of Edgartown Yacht Club's annual Edgartown Race Weekend, which includes two days of 'Round-the-Buoys racing on Thursday and Friday before segueing into Saturday's distance racing that this year also included, for the first time, a shorter 'Round-the-Sound race.

"We were busy keeping track of the other boats in our class," said Lee. "I thought the windier conditions would better suit *Ruse* (a Swan 44), and we had battled against *Iniki* (an Alerion Express 38) in 2015 and 2016 and traded victories with them. After Devil's Bridge near the Gay Head Cliffs, we caught up with *Iniki*, because it was a spinnaker run down the south side of the island, and the Alerion doesn't use a spinnaker. Then upwind, *Iniki* walked away from us, but not enough to correct ahead of us." (*Iniki* finished second, *Ruse* fourth).



Clockwise from left: Venona Trophy and Doublehanded class winner *Yankee Girl* (right), PHRF B winner *Raptor*, Classic winner *Blackfish*, PHRF A winner *Wicked 2.0*, and PHRF C winner *Kanga* at the 2018 'Round-the-Island Race, part of Edgartown Race Weekend (Photos credit Cate Brown)

Lee said it gusted up to 20 knots on the north side of the island, and by the time they'd rounded West Chop to head back to the finish off Edgartown, they were met with wind against the current that they attempted to tame with their 145% genoa. "We were definitely overpowered, but it was better to have more power than less power in the steep chop," he said.

Winning the largest class, PHRF B with 12 boats, was Ed Dailey's (Beverly, Mass.) J/109 *Raptor*. Along with fellow Beverly Yacht Club teams aboard the J/35 *Riva* and the Peterson 34 *Kanga* (which tied for first in PHRF C), he also won the Yacht Club Team Trophy for best corrected time of a three-boat yacht club team with entries in more than one division."

"It was a terrific race," said Dailey, who has competed in the race seven times and has won his class twice now. "It always has so many different conditions, and the Vineyard is a storied place; it's kind of magical."

Douglas Curtiss's J/111 *Wicked 2.0* won PHRF A, while Gus Carlson's Reichel Pugh 66 *Aurora* finished the race in five hours and 55 minutes to take home the Concord Cup for best elapsed time among spinnaker classes.

Chip Hawkins' C&C 41 *Caneel*, which won the PHRF Non-Spinnaker class, posting an elapsed time of five hours and 32 minutes, also won its class in the 'Round-the-Buoy races. With four bullets in as many races, he sailed smartly on both Thursday and Friday, but Thursday was the most difficult, with only 4-5 knots on Vineyard Sound. "Not having wind isn't great, but we have a good crew and the Race Committee did an outstanding job," he said, adding

that Friday the wind picked up for a perfect Vineyard sailing day. “We got the boat going really well and were dialed in.”

Ron Zarrella’s Taylor 49 *Blackfish* was also a winner in both the ‘RTI and ‘RTB races. He sailed in the Classic class.

‘Round-the-Sound

The ‘Round-the-Sound fleet, which started directly after the ‘RTI boats, finished midday on Saturday, sailing a course that took them seven miles toward Hyannis then four miles west and six miles back home. Edgartown Yacht Club’s Commodore Paul Mitchell sailed his Shields *Amusing* to the great pleasure of his crew. The team not only won its class but also had a wonderful time trying something new.



Shields class winner *Amusing* at the 2018 ‘Round-the-Sound race, part of Edgartown Race Weekend.
(Photo credit Cate Brown)

“We would have normally been sailing the Shields summer series on Saturday, and some of them had asked ‘why are we doing this instead?’” said Mitchell. “It was something completely different from around-the-buoys racing; it was just the right length; and all the crew got into plotting the course. We’ll definitely do it again next year and recruit more boats to sail against us.”

(end)