



A Challenging Light-Air Test

EDGARTOWN, MASS., (July 29, 2019) — Light air became a challenge for racers and organizers at this year's Edgartown Race Weekend hosted by Edgartown Yacht Club, but the show went on for all to enjoy on Martha's Vineyard.

The event's most illustrious of three components – a 56-mile 'Round-the-Island (RTI) race that has been a New England racing tradition for 81 years now – started Saturday, July 27 in barely-there breezes that forced the Race Committee to shorten course on the south side of the island for two-thirds of the fleet. Those boats completed a 25-mile course, while another nine boats sailed for 45 miles to finish near West Chop. Only the three largest boats managed the full circumnavigation, and one of those, Brian Cunha's (Newport, R.I.) Ker 55 *Irie 2*, won the coveted Venona Trophy for best overall corrected time among all yachts sailing in the 'RTI's spinnaker divisions.



Irie 2 in the "Round-the-Island Race and the "Round-the-Buoys racing at Edgartown Race Weekend.
(photo credit: Stephen Cloutier)

“We were super fortunate that the tides at all the gates (virtual marks of the course) worked to our advantage,” said *Irie 2*’s tactician Steve Benjamin (Norwalk, Conn./Jamestown, R.I.), “starting with Mutton Shoal, then Squibnocket Point, Devil’s Bridge, West Chop and East Chop. On the backside of the island, we caught a favorable current, and then we were swept up Vineyard Sound in a big flood tide. That was our advantage in being one of the faster boats to go around.”

Irie 2, which also won its Class 7/PHRF A in the ‘RTI, corrected out over Karl Kwok’s (Hong Kong) IRC 52 *Beau Geste*, in Class 8/IRC, by three minutes on elapsed time. The tables were turned, however in the ‘Round-the-Buoy (RTB) races, which took place on Thursday and Friday (July 25-26) and comprised a second component of Edgartown Race Weekend. *Beau Geste* won all of its races to handily win, while *Irie 2* just eked out a second-place finish over Art Santry/Oakcliff Sailing’s (Oyster Bay, N.Y.) Ker 50 *Temptation/Oakcliff*.



Images from Edgartown Race Weekend.
(photo credit: Stephen Cloutier)

According to *Beau Geste*’s helmsman Gavin Brady (Annapolis, Md.), his team still had to “put the hammer down” to maintain its time on its competitors in the ‘RTB races. “The Race Committee was on its game big time, so we got in three races the first day and two the second,” said Brady.

As for the ‘Round-the-Island race, Brady said he didn’t find it to be a light, frustrating race at all. “We never got to a full park like we’ve done sometimes in the past on this race; we were moving the whole time, so the elapsed time was no slower than normal. It was all about finesse and calling the right tactics, and the

best thing is we were still in at the club by 5:30 for our rum punches. After each day of the buoy racing, we were back at the club by 4 each day, so it really gave us time to enjoy Martha's Vineyard."

For this year's 'RTI race, there were 42 boats in eight classes, two of which were non-spinnaker. Twelve boats opted for the 'Round-the-Sound ('RTS) race, the third component of Edgartown Race Weekend and an option for those wanting a shorter course. While last year this fleet's course was 18 miles, this year it was 11.

"We had three courses from which to choose, and that worked out well that we could opt for a shorter one based on the wind conditions," said Race Chairman Bob Hurst. "The 'Round-the-Sound sailors started 15 minutes after the last start of the 'Round-the-Island race on Saturday, and the first boats finished the course in a little over three hours."



Edgartown Yacht Club during Edgartown Race Weekend.
(photo credit: Stephen Cloutier)

Edgartown Race Weekend's 'RTI/'RTS and 'RTB races are scored separately, with top-three prizes awarded in each class. Sailors enjoyed a Mount Gay-sponsored "Jump-Up" party on Friday night (July 26) and awards for the 'RTB on Friday afternoon and the 'RTI and 'RTS on Sunday morning (July 28).

For more information, visit <http://www.rtirace.org>. On Facebook follow [Edgartown Yacht Club Racing](#).

Full Results 'Round-the-Island:

https://www.regattanetwork.com/clubmgmt/applet_regatta_results.php?regatta_id=18208

Full Results 'Round-the-Buoy:

https://www.regattanetwork.com/clubmgmt/applet_regatta_results.php?regatta_id=18207&show_manufacturer=1&show_crew=1

Full Results 'Round-the-Sound:

https://www.regattanetwork.com/clubmgmt/applet_regatta_results.php?regatta_id=18210