

Moving day in Antigua

With twin races for the Division A fleets and a pair of contests for the trio of Division B Performance Cruiser classes, Tuesday, 28 April was 'moving day' for a host of competitors on day four of Antigua Sailing Week.



Credit: Ted Martin / Photofantasy Antigua

On the water action on day four of Antigua Sailing Week. *Biwi Magic* enjoying the conditions. Sailors around the world use the term 'moving day' to describe the midway point of the world's great week-long regattas, events like Antigua Sailing Week, Key West Race Week, Cowes Week, and others.

Moving day is, quite literally, the day to make a move in the overall results and standings, to perhaps shake off a so-so start to the proceedings and stake a claim for a podium finish. The last thing a crew wants to do on moving day is move 'south' down the scoreboard.

But before the day was done, many boats would enjoy, or suffer, a dramatic change in their fortunes on 28 April, day four of Antigua Sailing Week. Some would do so on the strength of their own performances, while others would benefit from the misfortunes of their rivals.

The respective race committees for Division A and Division B congregated just off of Falmouth Harbour on Tuesday, with the former fleets setting out on a pair of modified windward/leewards in a westerly direction. "Perfect conditions for racing," said Division B principal race officer Peter Wykeham-Marting of UK-based GWM Racing, relishing his team's role at Antigua Sailing Week. "It's champagne Caribbean sailing at its finest."

Under GWM's solid direction, the Performance Cruisers headed eastward in two races, the first a modified windward/leeward of nine nautical miles and the second a 16 nautical mile contest with a long windward leg past Willoughby Bay. The regatta's two Cruiser classes, the Cruising Multihulls, Dragons and Bareboats sailed a single Willoughby Bay race over the same course as the Performance Cruisers.

For the fourth consecutive day, a solid easterly breeze swept across the racecourse, testing boats and crews to their limits. "It was windier today," said Damon Guizot, owner of the Swan 53, *Katrina*, in the highly competitive Performance Cruiser 2 class. "Top wind speed was 28 knots. But it was a good day. Nobody got killed."

Though Guizot was joking, it wasn't necessarily a foregone conclusion. A crew member aboard the Oyster 72, *Spirit of Montpelier*, suffered a serious leg injury on a spinnaker drop closing on the finish and the formidable yacht was forced to retire. And the scene on the Division B course, with the Performance Cruisers finishing the first of their races on the downwind leg, while the respective Cruiser classes began the upwind portion of their lone race, was absolutely crazy.

As the boats darted and dodged past one another, there were multiple spinnaker round-ups and round-downs, and many craft teetered just on the edge of control. Had he been on scene, the tongue-in-cheek columnist for the US magazine *Sailing World* who goes by the name of Dr Crash, the recorder and dissector of nautical racing folly, would've been rewarded with many months worth of material.

The biggest move on moving day occurred in Racing 4, the top spot for which was previously the sole domain of Jamie Dobbs and his crew on *Lost Horizon*. Dobbs and the team aboard his quick J/122 were once again in control in the first of the day's races when disaster struck in the form of a broken boom. The gear failure has forced Dobbs to retire from the week's action. Into the breach stepped Dig Van der Slikke's Grand Soleil 43, *Curacao Marine*, which took two firsts to move into first place in Racing 4.

Spirit of Montpelier's DNF also opened the door in the Cruising 1 division, and through it walked Julian Sincok's Swan 51, *Northern Child*, to take the lead in the 13 boat class. But all remained status quo in the Cruising 2 class, where Hugo Bailey retained his lock on the lead with another victory, his third, aboard his First 456, *Hugo B*.

The only thing moving in Racing 1, and man, were they moving, was Charles Dunstone's TP 52, *Rio*, which flashed around the course at mostly double-digit speeds in both Division A contests to earn its fourth and fifth straight victories.

In Performance Cruiser 1, Clive Llewellyn's Grand Soleil 50, *Mad IV*, notched a 1-2 in the day's racing to remain firmly in control of that class. Performance Cruising 2 also had a familiar ring, as Martin Jacobson and Nick Burns's Swan 44, *Crescendo*, recorded two more wins to make it five in a row through Tuesday's competition. But there was significant movement in Performance Cruising 3, where local sailor Geoffrey Bidduck's long, low, lean, and very wet, six metre, *Biwi Magic*, found the strenuous conditions much to its liking, and with two straight wins displaced the Swan 43, *Pavlova II*, from the top of the division's leader board.

In the Dragon class, Antiguan Poul Richard Hoj Jensen's *Compass Point* maintained its perfect scorecard with its fourth straight win in as many outings. In Cruising Multihull, Roger Webb's Seawind 1000XL, *Cover Shot*, was the day's winner and remains class leader.

The Bareboat winners were the Dufour 455, *KH+P Sea You Later* in Bareboat 1, the Moorings 515, *Nifty*, in Bareboat 2, the Moorings 443, *Mauputi*, in Bareboat 3, and the Dufour 40, *Fantasque*, in Bareboat 4.

On Wednesday, 29 April, the Division A fleets will head offshore for the Corum Around Redonda Island Race. The Antigua Ocean Racing Series sailors will take part in a 65 nautical mile race out and around Redonda Island while the Racing 1 and 4 competitors will sail an abbreviated course of 30 nautical miles around a buoy midway to Redonda. The Division B Performance Cruisers will again enjoy two contests, the first a nine nautical mile test starting and ending off Rendezvous Bay. Afterwards, the entire Division B field will sail a point-to-point 16 nautical mile race from Falmouth Harbour to Jolly Harbour, where an evening of music, dancing, food, and parties will once again await.

For complete information, news, photographs, video, entry lists and much more, visit the Antigua Sailing Week website shown below.

Resources: