

SOLO CHALLENGER

The Official Newsletter of the Great Lakes Singlehanded Society



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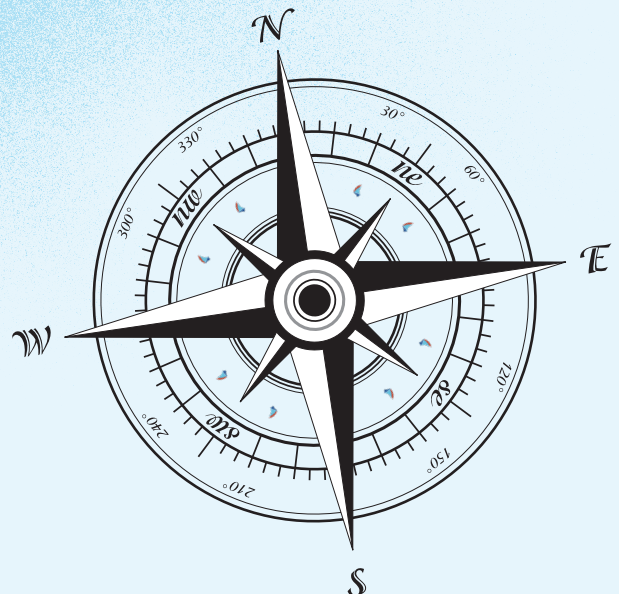
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Post-Season Edition Fall – 2025

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From the Helm

Solo Sailors, Solo Sailors, Solo Sailors,

Looking back at my Spring 'From The Helm' I think that we probably did have our busiest year ever. With four Shakedown, four Solo Day Races, and all Five Challenges, we had great participation with unusually cooperative weather, overall. I will start with one number — 160 registrants — which is the count of sailor-events. More numbers may be presented at the AGM. Probably the most significant change was the use of the YellowBrick Trackers on all of the Challenges. Most of the feedback we heard was positive. While it most certainly is a better and more accurate interface for the sailors and spectators as well, it enhanced the safety aspect and made it simpler to use and less expensive for most participants. For 2026 we plan to use the YB finish time and each skipper's own finish time as confirmation. And of course on behalf of the Board and all of the membership I would like to once again thank our premier sponsor

Bodacious Dream and **Bodacious Racing LLC** for a very generous donation to cover the costs of the YellowBrick Trackers for all of our Challenges in 2025.

Looking forward to the Annual General Meeting — it will be held on January 24, 2026 in Toledo at the Downtown Renaissance Hotel. This is our only meeting of the year for sailors from all of the Lakes to get together for fun, camaraderie, and a little business. It's an important meeting to keep our organization strong and moving positively into the future. See the website for more information and I hope to see all of you there!

I would like to thank Ken Verhaeren for his years of efforts in publishing this important newsletter to the membership and in advance thank Rob Burger for taking over the duties on this edition and for the future. As we are always looking for content, feel free to send pictures, articles,

stories, etc., and with the approval of the Board, we will get them published. Currently, the *Solo Challenger* is a biannual communication but that could change with help from you.

So as we pack away the sails, fold the lines, winterize the engines, and make our lists for improvements and upgrades for next year, think about

The 2026 Annual General Meeting will be held in Toledo, Ohio at the Renaissance Downtown Hotel on Saturday, January 24th. Watch your email for details.

what a great year it was for the GLSS. Remember the people and events that make it so rewarding. And consider how you might help in the future to give back or pay forward as they say, to keep our unique and special organization moving ahead and in the right direction.

Fair Winds and Standing by on 72,

— **Russ Krock, President**

Currents

News and Other Scuttlebutt

The Switch to Yellow Brick Trackers

For 2025, the GLSS board made a bold choice to switch from Kattack tracking software to YellowBrick, or "YB" trackers. YB Tracking was the natural choice given the popularity with most other distance races in the

Great Lakes and internationally. It did help that Kattack was being retired with no replacement service from that vendor.

With fresh discussions and buzz at the AGM, Jeff Urbina offered to sponsor the costs of the tracking platform for 2025. An advertising

"splash screen" was setup for **Bodacious Dream** and **Bodacious Racing LLC** to help our generous sponsor, Thanks Jeff!

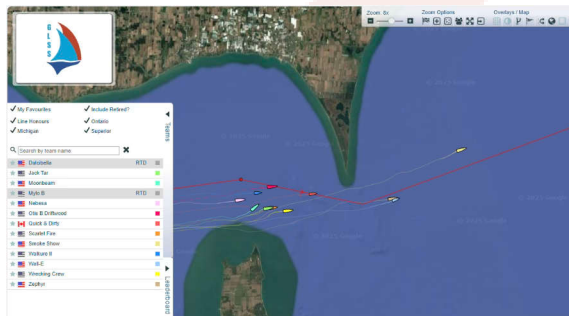
I had used YB in other races and felt that it would be a positive change for our society, so I offered to be the



GLSS representative to interface with YB Tracking. I was impressed with the clear and responsive process to set up each challenge in their system. As races approached, course and fleet data were supplied to YB, and an online management system setup. Tracking units were shipped the week before the event and handed out at Skippers' Meetings.

Anyone can download the YB app and add your challenge at no cost and then follow your race. Data is

reported in 15-minute intervals and one can view an estimated corrected time leaderboard — a function that



was not available on our previous system. While this is a great system

for others to follow your progress, it is also a great tool for racers themselves. Whether racers have intermittent internet access, or have constant access through something like Starlink, the app provides data on the location, direction, and speed of other competitors throughout the race.

The Mackinac Challenge had 934 users tracking the event, while the Erie Solo had 406 users. YB will be a great tool to keep our many fans engaged in our races!

— **Luke Brockman, Primal Scream**

Planning for the Future, Learning from the Past

In 2005 I completed my first Solo Chicago Mackinac Challenge and it really was a challenge for me. I had plenty of experience solo sailing short and long distances with many over night passages. But was I really qualified to do a Solo Challenge? About three years earlier I had talked to some sailors at the Chicago Boat show and one in particular was focused on telling me how difficult it was. His comments were not encouraging and seemed aimed at keeping me from entering. As we all know, our Challenges are not easy. They are not supposed to be, but they are very doable for sailors with the right experiences and equipment. Was I one of those sailors without the right experiences and equipment? No. What I did lack was encouragement and someone who told me I could do it. Since then I've completed 14 of 20 starts. Not the best record but one that I am proud of. Whether completing one or 20, that first one will always be remembered.

So why did I bring up that first

discussion? Because we need to continue to find ways to encourage sailors to experience the accomplishment of completing one of our Solo Challenges. As an organization we have moved beyond the boat show booths where stories are told and hopefully encouragement given to on the water mentorship. I've often been asked if we have meetings that nonmembers can attend and the answer has been only the AGM. We need to think about how we can promote gatherings. The GLSS leadership that started these early Solo Shakedown have presented an event that encourages non-members to

clubs and boat yards. We should encourage doing those again on all five lakes. We must look for ways to reach sailors who are not members of a yacht club. All of us need to take the mystery out of what we do and show fellow sailors that with a plan, good equipment and experience, Solo Challenges are within reach.

We also need to reach out to our fellow members who are no longer active. These people are our history and can still contribute much to our Society. Beyond paying our small dues, they can provide more volunteers and ideas for encouraging others to join us.

"Unlike the Race to Mackinac, ours is a Challenge that wants to get everyone to the finish."

Ken Verhaeren

I have also seen the movement, within our organization, toward a racing mentality. We have many excellent sailors

join us in a fun sail or a qualifier if they want. The St Clair Solo events have been doing this for years late in the season. No pressure, just fun meeting before and after the sail. Covid ended our Safety Seminars that we used to do at local yacht

who take pride in their success in club racing and beyond. However, the GLSS started with a group of sailors who wanted to try sailing solo to Mackinac Island — just to see who could get there. Unlike the Race to Mackinac, ours is a

Challenge that wants to get everyone to the finish. We give advice, encouragement and information to help everyone make it. This is different from any “race” I know of on the Great Lakes. We should never lose that comradeship.

Lastly, I want to thank everyone who helped me with producing the *Solo Challenger* these past years. Your articles enriched our readers with humor and knowledge. Please continue to send articles and ideas to Rob Burger for inclusion into

future *Solo Challengers*. Get involved beyond the sailing and look for ways to enhance and improve the GLSS.

— Ken Verhaeren, KISMET

Great Lakes Water Levels

For a weekly report of water levels on all five Great Lakes, check out this [one-page PDF](#) published by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. For more detail and easy access to historical data, check out NOAA’s [Great Lakes Water Level Dashboard](#).

2025 Challenges Results

Port Huron to Mac Solo

Superior Class			
Relentless	Jeff Daudert	C&C 121	1
Harmony	Joey Baker	Beneteau First 44.7	2
Kailani	Kris Tonn	C&C 121	3
UNCIVILIZED	Russ Krock	Dufour 45	4
Michigan Class			
Mylo B	William Dembek	C&C 39	1
Scarlet Fire	Ben Thorsen	C&C 99	2
TANGO	Bob VanEck	J 40	3
Zephyr	Tom Butler	C&C 115	4
Ontario Class			
WAFI 007	Jim Otton	Hurly 40	1
	Steve Snare	S2 9.1	2
Otis B. Driftwood	Blair Arden	Jenneau 34 Sunrise	3
The Orange Boat	Mark Tomes	C&C Mega 30	4

Racing the Wind: A Solo Dash from Port Huron to Mackinac

There are races you sail to finish — and then there are the rare ones that feel touched by something electric from the start. The 2025 Port Huron to Mackinac Race was one of those.

The forecast called for steady southwest winds, and by the time the fleet cleared the Blue Water Bridge, the lake was alive — whitecaps, spray, and a deep, rolling rhythm that promised speed. For a solo sailor aboard *WAFI*, it was the kind

of setup dreams are made of.

I rounded the Goderich turning mark just shy of 5 p.m. on Saturday following a 10 a.m. start — the boat humming, sails perfectly trimmed, Lake Huron stretching ahead like a long blue runway. From there, it was a full-on reach — fast, exhilarating, relentless. Through the night, *WAFI* carved through the dark past Thunder Bay, the wind holding strong and the moon painting silver

across the waves. There was no time to rest, but I didn’t want to. Nights like that are rare — just you, the hum of the rigging, and the steady rush of water beneath the hull.

By dawn, my instruments told the story — 168 miles in 24 hours. A personal best. I’d made up real time on the leaders, closing the distance with every gust.

Then came the shift. As often

happens on Lake Huron, the wind began to ease near the top of the lake. Boats ahead scattered, hunting for pressure, and a few found themselves parked in windless holes. From behind, I could see it unfold — so I stayed north, up past Reynolds Reef, where a narrow ribbon of breeze still danced across the surface. When I finally tacked over toward the island, WAFI was still moving, making up distance that had looked impossible to bridge

the day before.

The finish came just over 39 hours after leaving Port Huron — my fastest Mackinac yet. My previous best had been just over 40 hours, but this one felt different. Sharper. Cleaner. The kind of race that reminds you why you do it, even when you can't quite explain the reason.

There's no real logic to solo racing. The long hours, the cold nights, the

constant grind — it's not comfortable, and it's rarely easy. I can't say I enjoy it.

But when the sails are full, the boat's flying, and the island finally appears on the horizon — there's nothing else like it.

I don't know why I do it. But damn, I'm glad I did.

— *Jim Otton, WAFI*

Chicago to Mac Solo

Superior Class			
18 Degrees	Joe Turns	Swan 44	1
Silver Wing	Thomas Cooper	C&C 115	2
REJECT	Matthew Rubsam	1D48	3
Yukon	Ralph Krauss	J 105	4
Rocketman	Kim Downing	Henderson 30	DNC
Madcap	John Hoskins	Santa Cruz 52	DNC
Freyja	Michael Tobey	Nelson Marek 40	DNC
Rambler	James Nachtman	J 99	DNC
Gangbusters	Mark Gannon	J 105	DNC
Razzmatazz	Witney Kent	Farr 395	DNC
Michigan Class			
Quick & Dirty	Noel Brockman	Olsen 30	1
Tejas	Aras Karaitis	Hobie 33	2
Lafiya	Jonathan Jacobs	C&C 35 Mark III	3
Joint Venture	Donald Bush	Hunter Legend 37 WK	4
Takedown-2	Ron Otto	J 110	DNC
Lucky	Mark Wild	Tartan 372	DNC
Shenanigans	Scott Swem	Hunter 45 cc	DNC
Tide the Knot	Robert Metzen	Jenneau Sunfast 35	DNC
Ontario Class			
Debia	Mike Kenny	Catalina 380	1
Falcon	Greg Vandenberg	Alberg 37 sloop	2
Touring Machine	Todd Gayley	Catalina 275 sport	3
KISMET	Kenneth Verhaeren	Nonsuch 30	DNC
Minnie	Frank Cobb	C&C Redline 41	DNC
POLARIS	Richard McLaren	Sabre 34-2	DNC
Shadow	Kris Kimmons	Pearson 303	DNF
Eternal Optimist	Eric Shradar	Pearson 303	DNF

28th Solo Chicago Mackinac Challenge June 21st – June 25th, 2025

Once again, I had the privilege of being the Solo Mackinac Challenge Director. There were 26 Chicago Challengers registered but, due to a variety of issues, only 13 started and 11 finished.

And what a start it was. YellowBrick tracking was used for the first time by the GLSS. Many thanks to Luke

Brockman, Matt Rubsam & Ben Thorsen for their help with it. Also, for the first time, to my knowledge, the start lasted from Saturday, June 21 at 0900 CDT to Sunday, June 22 at 0900 CDT. How can that be you ask? Well, despite my very clear request for decent weather conditions, it turns out the Universe, yet again, ignored me. John Hoskins, who

kindly did the weather routing, had multiple contacts with Commanders' Weather in the days leading up to Saturday morning. Unfortunately, the weather went from bad to worse. As a result, some of the skippers were reluctant to head into harm's way with safety being the concern. I had a very sleepless Friday night because of it.

About 0400 Saturday morning I reached the conclusion that the best option for everyone was to allow a prolonged start. While the official start time would remain Saturday, June 21 at 0900 CDT for all Challengers, I would allow any skipper who chose to delay his/her start to do so. But, the skippers not over the start line by Sunday, June 22 at 0900 CDT, would be listed as DID NOT START. This met with approval from the fleet. Six boats started Saturday and the remaining seven boats started Sunday. PHRF

ratings ranged from -33 to +216.

While the course was not quite as bad as predicted, it definitely was raucous for most of the way. Every boat was finished by Wednesday 0100 CDT. And two class records were beat.

Superior elapsed time record of 41:24:39 in 2023 was bested by Matt Rubsam on *Reject* in 39:34:03.

Michigan elapsed time record of 46:26:25 in 2013 was bested by Aras Karaitis on *Tejas* in 39:40:01.

Additionally, Noel Brockman on *Quick & Dirty* finished in 40:45:13 & is the proud recipient of the Five Lakes Award, having completed at least one challenge on all five Great Lakes. The President's Cup for best finish by a 1st time Challenger goes to Aras Karaitis on *Tejas*.

Congratulations to everyone willing to take on the Challenge. I hope to see you again.

— **Elisabeth Reichling, Solo Mac Challenge Director**

All Five at Last

Noel Brockman now has a complete Five-Lake set of Challenges

A LITTLE HISTORY: NOEL TRAVELLED TO CHICAGO IN 2011 TO COMPETE IN THE CHICAGO TO MAC SOLO ONLY TO HAVE A SPREADER FAIL WHILE HE WAS LEADING THE FLEET AS FAR AS FOX ISLAND. SINCE THEN, HE'S OUTFITTED A NEW BOAT (AN OLSON 30 NAMED *QUICK & DIRTY*) AND COMPLETED 21 CHALLENGES ON LAKES ERIE, ONTARIO, SUPERIOR AND HURON. NOEL DEPARTED HIS DOCK AT BELLE RIVER ON JUNE 8TH TO MAKE THE START OFF CHICAGO ON JUNE 21ST. WHAT FOLLOWS ARE EXCERPTS FROM THE ACCOUNT OF HIS JOURNEY TO COMPLETE THIS YEAR'S CHALLENGE ON LAKE MICHIGAN ...

Sun June 8 day 1

Leave Belle River dock 8:15am TWS 10-12 kts @ 51degrees. Nice reach to St. Clair River. Motor sailed in river arrived Port Huron YC 5:25pm. Leg distance 57nm over water 46 nm on GPS. Time 9 hrs motor 7.5hrs.

Report arrival CBP ROAM.

Mon June 9. Day 2

8:15 am Left Port Huron Yacht Club, heading into Lake Huron. Cloudy cool day, not a lot of wind this morning. TWS 5 kts at 175 degrees

12:00
Awesome spin sailing with chicken chute, flat water in hazy, smoky conditions. SOG consistent 6.0-6.5 on

rum line. 36.2 nm to Harbor Beach. Most likely will continue on to Presque Isle with current wind forecast.

7:30 pm Double reef main and 30% RF, winds cranking 20-22 kts @ 220 degrees. Typical Saginaw Bay, small craft advisory in effect all night. Good Olson 30 sailing conditions.



[After some rough weather overnight, *Quick & Dirty* arrived Presque Isle at 10:00 on June 10th.]

24 hr summary at 8:30 am

- Sailed 149 nm
- Motor time 4 hr 45 min
- Spin sailing 4 hrs
- Lots of reefs across sag bay
- Boat stayed dry below

Thursday June 12th Day 5

Left PI just after 7am, cool morning. Decided to beat to Roger's city and enjoy the sail and then head to Mac on Friday. Arrived Roger's city at noon 5 hrs and 26 nm sailed. Nice beat. Ended up helping Dick Lappin all afternoon on his C&C 27 and then dinner with him. Ice cream in the evening.

Friday June 13 Day 6

Left Rogers city by 8 am, Crappy Day, cold raining and strong easterly winds. Great sailing conditions but stayed below the whole day. Stayed warm and dry with Mr. Buddy lots of use. Sailing mostly main only or wing/wing at good speeds. Wind pretty steady 15-20 kts. Boat handled well by itself. Decided to reserve a dock at Beaver Island. Always wanted to go there. At 3:45 pm

sailing fast hitting 10+ knots and steady sevens. About 10 miles to Grays Reef, then another 15 nm to Beaver Island.

7:30 pm Arrived Beaver Island then eventually tied up at industrial dock by 8 pm. Used free bike to check out town pretty interesting place. Shower to end the day. Rain never stopped until I arrived. Dist 81 nm. Time 12 hrs. Motor 10 minutes. GREAT sailing day!

Saturday June 14 day 7

Left town at 12:20 pm after breakfast and groceries and a bike ride uptown. Sailed out of bay tight reaching good speed then for first hour or so great reaching in 10–12 kts wind. Once I set mark to Manitou Passage, wind died, tried spinnaker for half hour but fired up engine at 2:15 pm. Put spin back up around 2:55 pm.

4:40 pm Altered course to Leland since wind isn't good for an all night sail to Ludington.

9:00 pm Arrived Leland, last 10 miles very nice flat water spin sailing. Dist 47 nm. Time 8.5 hrs. 6 hrs spin. 1.25 hrs motoring.

Sun June 15 day 8

Early 6 am start. Dock & Dash, no one at Leland. I'll catch them next time. Arrived Ludington 7:30. Nice Marina. Hot tub very nice. Walked around town for a \$10 ice cream cone. Dist 80 nm. Time 13.5 hrs. Motor 10 hrs.

Monday June 16th day 9

Good sleep and head into town for breakfast at Brenda's cafe (Hell's Kitchen). 30 min hot tub very nice. Great way to start the day!

12:00 pm Leave Ludington, motor only directly into 9 kts wind SOG 5.8. Not a great passage motoring into

headwinds versus sailing. Arrived Lakeshore Yacht Club about 8:15 pm. Rob and Jackie (Tom Cooper's sister & brother-in-law) helped tie. Good shower and sleep. Dist 53.3 nm. Time 8.5. Motor 8.5 hrs.

Tuesday June 17 day 10

Plan to get gas, water and groceries and set up race sails. Near disaster in dingy trying to free grounded sailboat. Skipper kept going full speed ahead and run over the dingy with three of us (me, Tom & Rob) in there eventually flipping the f%*king thing over and luckily the running prop cut the line attached to the boat. Inflatable life jacket inflated and now needs a rearm kit. Fortunately none of us were severely hurt, could have easily been much worse.

Wed June 18 day 11

Finished off jobs on Tom's boat and a trip to West Marine and Torrenson. (Forecast for Sat and Sun still strong southerly's both days. That would be welcome by me, similar to Erie solo without the 60 nm beat back to Erie.)

5:30 pm Depart Lakeshore Yacht Club in the pouring rain along with Tom Cooper on *Silverwing*, a C&C 115, followed by a new entrant Greg Vandenberg on an Alberg 37 called *Falcon*. Light wind, motor sailing but mostly motor. Killed engine at 8:40 pm.

10:40 pm Sailing broad reach in 11 kts air at 320 degrees. SOG 6.7 kts on rum line. Comfortable down below staying warm & dry. 73 nm to Chicago eta 10 am. Wind is consistent 13-15 with rain. Boat is sailing well with 2RM and 50 % roll furl. Fast passage managed to keep Tom & *Falcon* behind me.

Thursday June 19th day 12

Good sail all night as of 8:50 am. I'm still sailing at 4.3 knots final stretch with 7.9 nm to go. No sense motoring just to get there. Tom is also sailing about even to me. Total motor so far is 3 hrs. Arrived at Burnham Harbor 10:45. Distance 103.4 nm. Time 17.25 hrs. Sailed all the way from 8:30 pm to 10:30 am. Motor time 3.25. Shower and major nap. Time for headsail change. Bike ride to grocery store.

Trip summary to Chicago from home: Total distance 584 nm. Total days sailing including rest 12, (2) overnight sails.

Friday June 20 day 13

Good sleep last night but

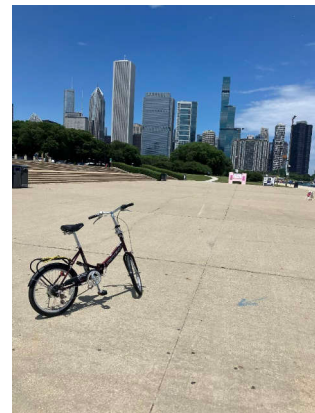
Chicago is a noisy place.

Fireworks, traffic, boat traffic etc. Boat is

ready with #3 installed on furler looks like wind forecast should see #3 used the whole trip. Raining right now, just chilling below passing time. Specialty sandwich for breakfast. Big heat wave coming but so far nice breeze here. Forecast could see us finish early Monday morning which would be nice. Three new entrants from Lakeshore Yacht Club are nervous, a normal feeling as I recall. Skippers meeting later today, I plan to take fold up bike.

5:00 pm

Heading out soon for skipper meeting and dinner. Noisy city. Techno band playing loud shit all afternoon can only imagine hearing it all night. Looking forward to getting out of here in the morning.



Skipper's meeting had a scary wind scenario element in it causing a lot of the fleet to not do it at all or delay up to a day their departure. My own analysis of what I saw on Windy didn't cause me any reservations for my boat and my experience with the boat. 26 entrants currently signed up. Horrible music/ noise plus party animals next to me till 3 am. Packed bike and ready to go on morning.

[And now for the Challenge ...]

Sat June 21 day 14

7:50 am CT Leave Burnam Harbor. Great to get out of there! TWS 10-15 south. Most boats not starting now, race start window opened up to a 24 hour period. Sailing to the start line with 2 reef main, flat water near shore. Looks like only 6-7 boats starting at this point.

9:00 am CT Finally underway, TWS 18-25 kts dead behind. Full mainsail and poled out #3 working well. SOG pretty steady 7-8 kts. Auto pilot working well, first 5 boats sailing pretty evenly. First group of 5 boats are: Tom Cooper on *Silverwing* (C&C 115), Joe Turns on *18 Degrees* (Swan 44), Matthew Rubsam on *Reject* (ID48), Aras Karaitis on *Tejas* (Hobie 33), and Me on *Quick & Dirty* (Olson 30). Two additional boats started within a couple of hours, Kris Kimmons on *Shadow* and Whitney Kent on *Razzmatazz* (Farr 395).

12:00 pm Chicken chute has been up since 10:30 am, TWS 12-16. Autopilot no problems surfing. Waves are starting to build, should be fun and fast. Winds are nowhere near as bad as predicted so far. SOG steady 7-8 kts on rum line. *Reject* still sailing with a storm mainsail and is not keeping up to the Hobie or me at this point. Hobie is within a mile, skipper is a first-time entrant

but a very good sailor. He will be the one to beat from what I see now.

3:00 pm Winds up to 20-24 kts, took spinnaker down and now sailing wing on wind with poled out #3. My plan has been to finish this event, no need to push as hard as I would normally. SOG steady 8-10 kts on rum line. 140 nm to waypoint off Point Betsy.

5:00 pm Still sailing Wing on Wing at fast speeds SOG 7-12 kts. *Silverwing* & *18 degrees* are gybing for better angles to keep their headsails working, both the Hobie & I are pulling away from them and sailing less distance. Just finished hand steering for the last 5 nm just to get a feel of the boat. Feels good!

6:00 pm All OK, finally cooling off from the scorching heat all day. Winds steady 19-25 waves 5-7 feet. Hobie 33 is ahead of me a few miles. Aris is really pushing his boat.

6:15 pm Reef main after knock down, winds 25-28. No damage or issues after knock down and autopilot steered through the ordeal no problems.

8:25 pm Winds down to 16 kts at 190 degrees, shake out reefs in main and full RF for # 3.

9:00 pm Call in time, staying below for some rest. Both later start boats have retired. Only the five of us for the rest of the journey.

11:25 pm Chicken chute back up, TWS down to 13-15 and steady. 78 nm to WP.

Sun June 22 day 15

2:00 am Chicken chute down, winds up 19 kts, no need to be pushing so hard thru the night. Bose headphones have been on for most of race, doesn't seem as crazy out here with them on. Managing a few

good naps with the help of Dramamine taken earlier. 63.7 nm to WP, SOG 7-8 kts.

6:00 am TWS down to 13, still sailing Wing on Wind surfing with speeds 8-10 kts getting lots of rest below, currently 35 nm to WP. Great first night, with Max speed so far 16.2 kts.

9:00 am (24 hr) TWS still 18-20 with speed over ground steady 8-10 on rumline. 12.62 nm to Point Betsy. Waves not bad, 3-5 feet. 24 hour distance covered 172 nm. For reference, last year's Erie 24 hr distance was 184 nm. 114 nm to finish.

10:10 am At Point Betsy, set new waypoint for Manitou Passage exit 27 nm away. Race (challenge) has been awesome so far!

11:00 am TWS 20-25. Fast reaching with #3 and full main speeds 8-11 kts. Hobie 33 is now 6.8 nm ahead. 20.1 nm to exit Manitou passage.

12:15 pm Chicken chute back up, TWS 14-16.

1:10 pm 4.6 nm to next WP. TWS 17 kts at 220 degrees. *Reject* finally passed me with full main and an A kite flying. I won't be seeing him anymore with that sail combination.

2:00 pm Exit Manitou passage, set waypoint to Grays Reef 55 nm away.

3:00 pm TWS 22 kts at 220 degrees, boat is flying 6.9-9.3 knots. Hot and windy conditions. More boats started the challenge this morning, a second group. I think they missed some great sailing conditions by waiting, but I totally understand why they didn't venture out, especially with 7 new first time entrants.

6:30 pm Wind down a bit and lumpy conditions caused some slow movement for a short while. Now back up to speed still wing on wing.

7:45 pm Chicken chute back up nice reach in 13-15 kts TWS.

9:00 pm Still under spinnaker, getting wild but decided to take it down at grays reef mark Now 9.2 nm away. Alter course to cut the passage to the required mark, makes holding the spinnaker easier than going thru the channel. A 15 degree change in direct makes this doable.

10:37 pm Rounded Gray's Reef after a shit show of taking the spin down in the dark and having my Raymarine Axiom crash which it has a tendency to do at the worst time. Re-booted the GPS and set course for the bridge. Wind is crazy, now tight reach heading east with 20-25 kts of wind. The #3 headsail is perfect for this, and after putting a double reef in main, boat is going well at 8-9 kts.

11:00 pm Snotty out there, waves crashing over the boat, a freighter is coming up from behind and shining a spotlight on me. His CPA is only 120 feet, I called him on the VHF and advised him I would head up 10 degrees to increase CPA.

11:50 pm Freighter is taking forever to pass me and I'm confused with the bridge and reflections on the water making me think that there is a parking lot except for the middle span. Finally freight passed me and I took his stern as I went under the bridge only to have a freighter coming up from the other way. Once cleared of all this, set final course to finish about 5 nm away. This change in course

meant that I was sailing pretty deep, good time to shake out the two reefs in the main and go back to pole out the headsail. Boat is flying again while I could see earlier that both *Reject* and the *Hobie* were slow coming into the finish. SOG again in the 7-9 to the finish.

Mon June 23 day 16

Finished at 1:45:13. Corrected out over the *Hobie* by less than 5 minutes, that happened on the last 5 miles of the challenge. Finished 1st in class and 1st overall. Great challenge, no doubt the easiest one that I have completed.

22 challenges now complete and ALL 5 Great Lakes done!

Real nice to have Luke meet me at the dock.

Race Summary:

- > Course length 287 nm
- > My distance travelled (tracker) 289 nm
- > No beating
- > Elapsed time 40 hrs, 45 min
- > Avg speed 7.04 kts
- > 10 hours spinnaker sailing
- > Only 11 out of 26 entrants finished
- > 10 boats DNC
- > 5 boats DNF
- > 2 first time entrants successfully completed the challenge

I congratulated Aras Karaitis on the *Hobie 33*, he sailed a really good race. I hope he continues with future events.

> Turned in paperwork, picked up bottle of rum, shower then nap.

[After a nice stay at Mackinac Island and the awards lunch on Wednesday, Quick & Dirty headed for home accompanied by Uncivilized, Relentless and Scarlet Fire.]

Friday June 27 day 20

At home dock at 4:50 pm. Canada Customs call in complete.

Trip Summary:

Departed June 8, Returned June 27. Completed Chicago solo 1st in class and 1st overall. Completed 'All 5 Great Lakes'. Total distance 1165 nm. 18 nights on trip.

Highlights/pluses:

- Completing and 1st in Chicago Mac
- Having bike to get around
- Great sailing legs:
 - Port Huron to Presque Isle
 - Rogers to Beaver Island
 - Race itself just over 40 hrs (avg 7.04 kts)
- No lost or broken items
- Helping *Ginger Kay* & Tom Cooper
- Stay at Lakeshore Yacht Club
- Cooler on boat

Low points:

- Dingy near disaster & activation of life jacket
- Losing dock line
- Last motor in Lake St Clair into south winds and waves last 6 miles

— **Noel Brockman, Quick & Dirty**

Date/Time	Bat Volt	Wind	Sails	Head	SOG	Accum Dist	Accum Time	Comments
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My routines — "Aside from preparing the boat, I always create a blank log book that I use throughout the challenge to capture what actually happens. It's good reading during the long winter months."

— **Noel Brockman, Quick & Dirty**

Lake Ontario Solo

LO 300			
REVIVAL	James Roscoe	Abbott 33	1
AARROW	David Courtney	Archambault	2
AREION	Brian Mitchell	Quest 33	3
WORTHY PEARL	Mac McKenzie	C&C 37 Mk I	4
SELKIES	Evan Dinsmore	J 99	Retired
TALISMAN LII	Andrew Reddon	Saga 43	Retired
OOPS!	Colin Brown	Quest 33	Retired
JUSTIFIED	Darko Strajan	Bay sails	Retired
LO 600			
REVIVAL	James Roscoe	Abbott 33	1
AREION	Brian Mitchell	Quest 33	2

Lake Ontario 300/600

The weather briefing was grim. High pressure. Hot. Humid. Little breeze. We started Saturday, July 12th. I made the mistake of starting at the shore end of the line and watched the fleet walk away for 45 minutes while I did about five sail changes. The thermal eventually made it those few hundred metres to me. There was to be a (very weak) cold front come through sometime Sunday, but with little effect.

Unexpectedly, the wind veered and built suddenly until we were all beating into 20+ knots to be followed by a fantastic beam reach for 10 miles before we bore off again and headed across the lake.

The wind died again the next day and the flies came out, but at least most of us were well down the lake. Unfortunately, a solo competitor had to pull out due to mechanical issues. In the middle of Sunday night a squall rolled through the fleet. I was lucky enough to have just wind and rain, but the lightning to the west made life too exciting for those ahead.

Getting back to the (first) finish from there was a push through light and dying winds, but mostly not dead. The LO300 was a really tough race and only three boats (two solo, one

doublehanded) of seven registered boats elected to continue on for the second lap to complete the LO600. We spent most of the next two legs going upwind (despite a 150° turn), then turned across the lake with spinnakers up. Just before the next turning mark the wind disappeared again and the two soloists, in sight of one another, fought for inches for



the next 12 hours or so while trying to sleep, eat, and swat flies.

Meanwhile, our doublehanded friends slowly reeled us in. By Wednesday night, the three boats were within a couple of miles of each other and squall #2 hit us like a ton of bricks. Brian Mitchell (*Areion*) called us up on the radio to make

sure we were ok. I'd been having comms issues since Sunday's squall. Brian's responses allowed me to sort them and that gave me a lot of confidence back.

A bit of a break after the squall was the last rest any of us got. 140 nm to go and the forecast for the next day said veering to NW, 20-25 knots. The cold front did pop through mid-day (changing a one-legged beat from port tack to starboard) but the wind far exceeded the forecast. I put in one reef, a second, and a slab reef out of my jib. Then finally I had to fly the storm jib and put the wash boards in. I was able to sail straight to the finish. The other two weren't as lucky — getting pushed around badly by storm-related equipment problems.

Finally, after previous attempts in 2018 (lost forestay), 2020 (cancelled), and 2023 (torn mainsail, unsuccessful repairs), I finished early Friday morning and joined the exclusive group of Lake Ontario 600 finishers.

The other two competitors, both past finishers, completed this year's challenge safely. I think it was especially sweet for *Areion* after a harrowing experience in 2023.

— James Roscoe, *Revival*

Lake Superior Solo

Relentless	Jeff Daudert	C&C 121	1
Ocelot	Lad Strzok	Olson 911SE	2
Uncivilized	Russ Krock	Dufour 45	3
007	Steve Snare	S2 9.1	4
Storm's Harbor	Rob Burger	Beneteau Oceanis 41	5
Knottide	Bob Stach	Jeanneau Sun Odyssey	6
Still Life	Danny Saathoff	Beneteau 393	7
Arch Angel	Noel Gingerich	Cherubini	8
Erewhon	John McCallum	Tartan 37-2 CB	9

RACE RECAP

Congratulations to Jeff Daudert on *Relentless* for his first place finish in the singlehanded class! (See Jeff's article, *Getting There ...*, on the next page.)



After the fleet locked through in the morning, the 2025 edition of the Trans Superior International Yacht Race started off Gros Cap Reefs on Saturday afternoon, August 2nd. The

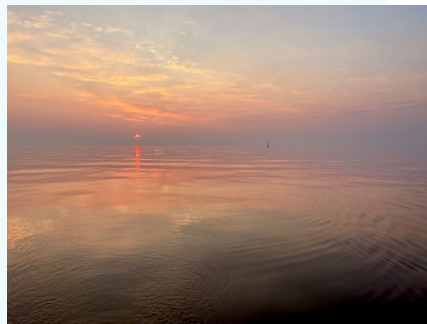
singlehanded class is but one of seven classes that race from Whitefish Bay to Duluth, every other year, on a course that spans 326 nm across the breadth of Lake Superior. Many thanks to the Duluth Yacht Club for sponsoring the event.

The singlehanded class had the benefit of starting first — I suppose to get us out of the way while the crewed boats vied for position on the start line. The conditions were moderately light off the start as we headed toward White Fish Pt. Then the wind picked up into the low to mid teens as the fleet worked its way a bit upwind to go over the top of the Keweenaw Peninsula on Sunday.



The singlehanded fleet started first, with the rest of the fleet waiting behind the line.

Sunday evening brought lighter winds and saw the sun rise on Monday morning in calm conditions that lasted for a number of hours.



special congratulations go out to Lad Strzok (*Ocelot*), Bob Stach (*Knottide*), and Danny Saathoff (*Still Life*) for completing their first solo challenges and thereby becoming lifetime members of the Great Lakes Singlehanded Society!

— Rob Burger, *Storm's Harbor*

Then, slowly but surely, a 15-20 kt breeze filled in from the East and Northeast to push the fleet down to the finish at Duluth in somewhat sporty conditions. *Relentless* crossed the line a little after 0500 on Tuesday,



Ocelot

while *Erewhon* shepherded the rest of the fleet in and finished early afternoon on Wednesday.

All nine of the singlehanded boats that started finished. And



Relentless, sailed to 1st by Jeff Daudert

Getting There Was Half the Battle

— Jeff Daudert, *Relentless*

They say the hardest part of any solo race is just getting to the starting line. For me, this year's Trans Superior Solo Challenge proved that true in more ways than one.

Relentless, my C&C 121, and I left port feeling prepared and optimistic—until the unmistakable sound of trouble broke the calm. Heading across the northern part of Lake Huron, my transmission mount decided to call it quits, leaving me with a disabled engine, no propulsion and a sinking feeling that my race might be over before it began.

would have it, I found a local welder who was willing to tackle the job. A few sparks, a little ingenuity, and one solid weld later, the transmission mount was back in business. All of this possible and thanks to Phil LePage and his awesome shop and Mike at Double M Fabrication!

Back underway, I pointed Relentless north and made it to the skippers' meeting in Sault Ste. Marie on Friday—just in time to swap some sea stories and share a few laughs about the week's "warm-up adventure."

Race day came with light air and a dose of humility. I managed to botch the start, ending up buried under a few boats and struggling to find breeze. Not exactly the commanding start you dream about. But this race is long, and Lake Superior has a way of balancing things out.

Once out in the middle of the lake, the wind filled in—and I finally caught a few lucky shifts that helped me claw my way back into contention. From there, Relentless lived up to her name. Hour by hour, we worked through

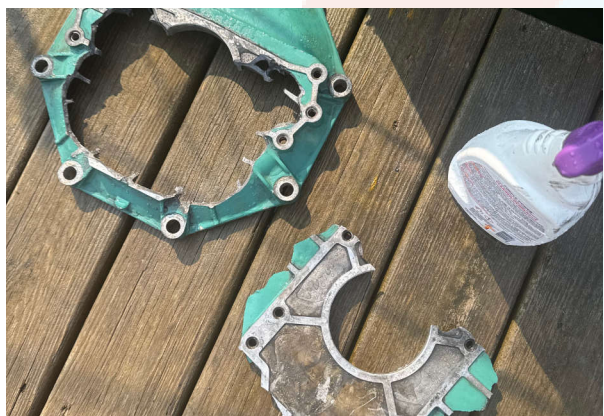
the fleet, and by the time we crossed the finish line, we'd managed to finish first in class.

Looking back, the engine failure, the scramble for repairs, the tough start—all of it just added to the adventure. That's solo sailing in a nutshell: a blend of problem-solving, perseverance, and maybe a touch of stubborn optimism.

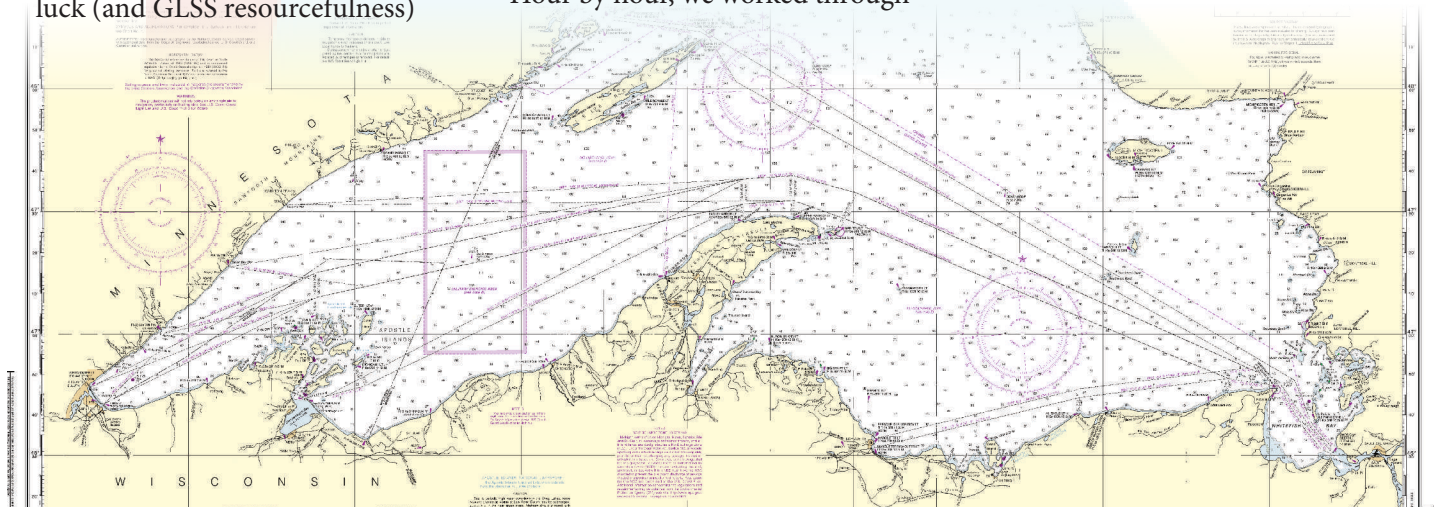


Getting to the starting line felt like a victory on its own—but finishing first after all that? That was just the cherry on top.

Jeff Daudert is a retired naval officer and GLSS member who sails his C&C 121, Relentless, out of North Star Sail Club on Lake St. Clair. He is also the founder of Project Relentless, a veteran-run nonprofit that uses sailing to raise awareness about veteran suicide.



With no choice but to sail into Presque Isle, I dropped anchor and started searching for solutions. As luck (and GLSS resourcefulness)



Lake Erie Solo

Superior Class			
Smoke Show	Jacob Thomas	JPK 10.80	1
Scarlet Fire	Ben Thorsen	C&C 99	2
Wrecking Crew	Duke Mueller	J 105	3
Zephyr	Tom Butler	C&C 115	4
Michigan Class			
Wall-E	Luke Brockman	Olson 30	1
Quick & Dirty	Noel Brockman	Olson 30	2
Jack Tar	Jeff Marshall	Tartan 40	3
Mylo B	William Dembek	C&C 39	DNC
Ontario Class			
Otis B. Driftwood	Blair Arden	Jeanneau	1
Nebesa	Jack Jamison	Olson 911SE	2
Walkure 2	Mark Smith	C&C 30 Mk 1	3
Moonbeam	Allan Belovarac	Catalina 34	4
Dulcibella	John Garhart	Tartan 27-2	DNC

A Bit of Stop-and-Go

The 2025 Lake Erie challenge got off to a fantastic start on Sat., Aug. 9, with a healthy 10–12 kts southerly—perfect for the first leg through Pelee Passage. However, that’s where the first lull surfaced—a sign of what lay ahead—left some of the fleet becalmed for hours, while others slipped by with just enough breeze to pass north of Pelee Island.

Saturday evening was idyllic—a full moon, flat lake, steady south breeze. Peaceful and quiet, with only the soft hush of our hulls gliding through the water. The stuff we solo sailors live for.

By Sunday, the 90°F heat and broad swaths of stubborn calm set the tone. Of course, it wouldn’t be a Lake Erie challenge without changing conditions! Skippers traded cooling tips over VHF—from bucket showers to quick swims.

Despite our best weather-routing strategies, it was stop-and-go for most of the fleet—flat calm, then wind, then flat calm again. In these conditions, every sailor’s psychological mettle is tested: the frustration of being stuck in a lull, the exhilaration when the wind

returns and you’re moving again, only to slip back into another patch of no wind.

Overall, we were blessed: no major storms, and everyone finished safely! Until next year...

— Tom Butler, *Zephyr*

Flies, Flies and More Flies

Being on Lake Erie all my life, you get use to the different bugs, depending on the month and the week. In the Spring it’s the Midges, in June the Mayflies, and mid-July starts the house type flies. Of course, you have those little green midges all summer long that squish on your sails and leave green streaks. But at least on Lake Erie it is those house type flies that are the worst.

Ten years ago, I purchased my current boat, *Jack Tar*. Of all the boats I’ve owned, *Jack Tar* is the first non-white boat. *Jack Tar* is a beautiful green and looks great on the water.

On my first Lake Erie Challenge, while floating off of Monroe, Michigan with four hours of no

wind, I quickly became aware that the flies like the color of *Jack Tar* too. I’m convinced they think it is either reeds or land. I’ve never seen a boat attract so many flies. With one hand on a normal fly swatter and the other on the electric swatter, the cockpit was quickly filling up with dead flies. Of course, those who have dealt with these creatures, know they fly into the boat and head straight for the ankles. Even with heavy socks they just bite right through and boy do they hurt.

Since that race I’ve been looking for a solution. I started with adding dryer sheets that many swear by. The flies were just as happy sitting on the dryer sheets. I soaked my socks in OFF. It made the socks smell better but the flies kept biting.

Two years ago, I tried a reusable fly trap. Mix up the really nasty ingredients and it was supposed to attract flies like a Bag-A-Bug. Wow, what a mistake! It worked perfectly when it attracted more flies than I have ever seen. Of course, these bugs came onboard headed straight for the ankles and then only some went into the capture tube. This contraption was bringing in flies from all over the lake. That lasted about a half hour and I had to empty

the contents and seal the container for the rest of the trip. Back to manual and electric fly swatters.

At this year's Bay Week at Put-in-Bay, fellow sailor Jake Thomas suggested a new item called ThermaCell. He swore by it. He uses it in his boat and doesn't have any bugs to deal with. So ThermaCell was this year's experiment. At the start of the Lake Erie Challenge, I mounted my unit to the bottom of the navigation pedestal and fired it up. Lake Erie had four spots with long periods of no wind. Not a single fly. So happy — I finally found something that works. I told the other sailors in the Lake Erie Solo how great this device worked. I was then informed that no one had flies. Great — experiment failed.

After leaving Erie, PA for home in Vermilion, OH, the wind died and I

was forced to motor home. All the flies I had passed by on the race found *Jack Tar*. Hundreds of them. In fact, so many I had to sit up on the bow for awhile. Out comes the ThermaCell. Within a few moments, the flies in the cockpit were either dead or upside down with their little legs wiggling. Of course, there were those few who had flown into the boat and headed for the socks, but once on board, it really didn't take long to either kill or daze them. ThermaCell didn't repel them, but it sure took care of the problem.

Unfortunately, I had left my companionway open and many flies found their way into the boat. Since ThermaCell comes with two units, I turned on the second one below and closed up the hatches. Within 10 minutes, not only were all the flies dead, so were the all the spiders I

had missed on my trip. Yes, finally something that really works!

So, what is ThermaCell? First there are two kinds. One for mosquitoes and one for "All Bug." You want the All Bug and you can best find it at The Home Depot. It comes with two units. Each one contains a little mini propane tank that you screw into the unit. It will heat the unit for 12 hours. Then there are little pads with chemicals you insert. These get heated and dispense a vapor that repels or kills more than just the flies. It's easy to install the holder with zip ties for quick installation or removal of the unit. It is NOT recommended for interior, but on a boat it only takes a few minutes to clear the interior and it is easy to air out the boat just as quickly.

— Jeff Marshall, *Jack Tar*

2025 Non-Challenge Events Results

Solo Shakedown

Lake St. Clair

There was no Shakedown on Lake St. Clair this Spring, but Ben Thorsen is planning to organize one for next year. Contact Ben at bthorsen@gmail.com if you're interested.

Muskegon, MI

At the start of the 2025 season and for the second year in a row, GLSS has organized a solo sailing event from Muskegon to help local boats get ready for a busy single-handed sailing season. GLSS's Luke Brockman organized last year's event, and Joe Turns came up from Holland to assist. The course sailed

from Muskegon to Sheboygan and back, and it was no surprise that, with brisk winds, Luke's boat, *Primal Scream*, was the first back to the marina.

This year's event was held on 31 May and was organized by GLSS member Tom Cooper, again assisted by Joe Turns from Holland. The course ran from Muskegon pier to the mid-lake buoy (between Holland and Kenosha) and back, with five boats competing:

- *18 Degrees*, Swan 42 - sailed by Joe Turns
- *Caitlyn Christine*, Beneteau 45 - sailed by Clifton Rinkle
- *Shenanigans*, Hunter 45 - sailed by

Scott Swem

- *Silver Wing*, C&C 115 - sailed by Tom Cooper
- *Water Lily*, Hunter 376 - sailed by Jack Wolf



Caitlyn Christine chasing 18 degrees

The Friday morning start at 10:00 a.m. began with a brisk NW 13-15 kt breeze, so that the fleet was making good time straight to the first mark. Two hours into the race, the wind had freshened to 18-20 kts from the NW, and the faster boats started to pull away. All five boats had reached the turn by around 4:00 p.m., with *Caitlyn Christine* in the lead, making this a very fast and exciting run. The first three boats were very closely matched on the first leg, but on the return leg, with lighter winds, it was *18 Degrees* (1st), *Silver Wing* (2nd), and *Caitlyn Christine* (3rd), who arrived first.

A great start to the season and thanks to Luke, Tom and Joe for their efforts to organize this exciting sailing event.

NOTE: *Water Lily* developed what was later determined to be a completely dead starter battery and damaged battery isolator, and while she finished the race, this damage limited her ability to get into the marina during the late night arrival without the diesel. A special outboard dinghy motor bracket carried aboard for emergencies could fit to the stern of *Water Lily* and was used with the dinghy outboard to slowly make way

through the channel and into the marina. Thanks to the skippers of



Caitlyn Christine and *Shenanigans* for standing by and to catch *Water Lily* at the dock making sure that she made it safely into the slip.

— Jack Wolf, *Water Lily*

Erie, PA

The Lake Erie, Erie PA Solo Shakedown started at 10:00 on Saturday, June 7th. There were four boats (another two cancelled before the beginning of the race) with one boat doing a qualifier. That skipper was Richard Fish and his Hobie 33. The other three were Marty Fox (Flicka 20), Brad Enterline (Tartan 3500), and me (Olson 911SE). Marty had auto pilot issues after about three hours into the challenge and had to drop out.

The course was Erie to Dunkirk, NY and return. Approximately 110 miles.

The wind was extremely light. In the late afternoon Saturday, all three of us sat for four hours with zero wind. At dusk, the wind began to increase and we started sailing slowly again. Around 02:00 the wind dropped again. We finished the shakedown around noon on Sunday. Richard completed his 100 mile/24 hour qualifier with Brad and me following behind. That Hobie 33 is fast.

— Jack Jamison

Sandusky, OH

There was no Shakedown out of Sandusky this year, which was scheduled to take place on May 31st, even though there were a dozen or more sailors ready to go. They had a skippers' meeting the Friday night before and met for coffee in the morning, but the group ultimately decided not to go due to strong Northeasterlies stirring up the West end of Lake Erie. Russ Krock will be organizing another Shakedown next Spring, so if you're interested or have questions, email Russ at rKrock@adrinnovation.com.

I-LYA Bay Week Regatta

Smoke Show	Jacob Thomas	JPK 10.80	1
Jack Tar	Jeff Marshall	Tartan 40	2
Yellow Bird	Bryan Burgess	Sun 27	DNC

The first race was a long triangle of about 35 nm on Friday, August 1st, that started between South Bass Island and Rattlesnake Islands. The first leg took the fleet out to West Sister Island where the boats left the island to starboard. The second leg brought the fleet back to the Bass Islands where they rounded north of

North Bass Island. The third leg took the boats east of North Bass and Middle Bass Islands, and between Middle Bass and Ballast Islands before passing between Middle Bass and South Bass Islands for the final leg to the finish line near the starting area. Only *Smoke Show* and *Jack Tar* raced on the first day in Northwest

winds blowing in the low teens.

The second race took place on Saturday and also started in the area between Rattlesnake and South Bass Islands. The course rounded the Bass Islands in a clockwise manner with the finish in the same location as on Friday. The fleet enjoyed a Northeast breeze with winds in the low to mid

teens. *Smoke Show* and *Jack Tar* were joined by *Yellow Bird* for the second race.

The singlehandlers did not race on

Sunday because there wasn't quite enough wind to complete the course before the awards ceremony in the afternoon. In lieu of sailing, Jake, Jeff

and Bryan tried to outdo each other on the putt-putt course instead.

— **Jeff Marshall, Jack Tar**

Sandusky Islands Race

Smoke Show	Jacob Thomas	JPK 10.80	1
Footloose	John Earhart	Beneteau 311	2
Freetime	Jerry Krantz	Ericson 28+	3
UNCIVILIZED	Russ Krock	Dufour 45	DNC

The Sandusky Island Race took place on August 23rd in clear weather, warm weather. The wind was from the WSW and built throughout the day. The singlehanded class was just one of many that sailed about 21 nm counterclockwise around Kelleys Island, with the start just east of the

Sandusky Pierhead Light.

The singlehanded class started at 1020 off the wind toward Kelleys Island Shoal, keeping the green buoy to port. The second leg was a beat across the north side of the island in 20 kts and 2-3 ft waves, then down

the west side of the island to round American Eagle Shoal before heading to the finish off R2 approaching Cedar Point from the north.

All three boats who started, finished and enjoyed a great day on the Lake.

Lake Michigan Solo Scramble

Chicago			
Rambler	James Nachtman	J/99	1
Freyja	Michael Tobey	Nelson Marek SHY 40	2
Bloody Mary	Dan Cooley	Pearson 303	3
Shadow	Kris Kimmons	Pearson 303	4
KISMET	Kenneth Verhaeren	Nonsuch 30	5
Reefer	Brendan Blewett	Catalina 34	DNS
Holland			
18 Degrees	Joe Turns	Swan 44	1
Caitlyn Christine	Clifton Runkle	Beneteau Oceanis 45	2
Water Lily	Jack Wolf	Hunter 376	DNF
Falcon	Greg Vandenberg	Alberg 37	DNF
Racine			
Waco Kid	Lisa Stressler	Jeanneau SunFast 3200	1
Takedown 2	Ron Otto	J 110	2
REJECT	Matthew Rubsam	1D48	DNS

On Friday, August 22, 2025, the annual Solo Scramble on Lake Michigan got underway at 2 p.m. Sailors crossed start lines from three harbors this year beginning from Chicago, IL, Racine, WI, and Holland, MI. Weather conditions in Chicago and Racine were similar, with winds from the southwest at 8-10 knots. Holland had flat calm seas, wind direction of 267 degrees, and a 4-6 knot breeze.

Chicago had one double-handed participant, and five solo sailors. Two solo sailors started from Racine,

while Holland hosted four solo sailors.

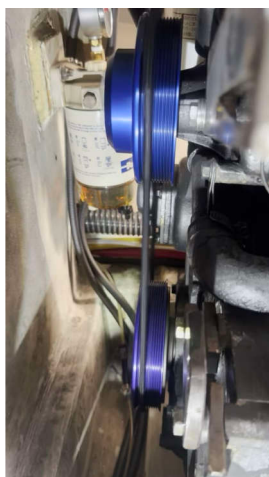
Chicago and Racine had downwind legs to start as racers headed to their designated marks. The Holland fleet beat to the weather buoy #45007 for the first 15 miles of the leg. At this point, the Holland fleet tacked to head north, then received a southerly wind to fetch the mark. Winds were increasing at this point, 12 knots from the south. Sea conditions went from calm to two foot waves.

Racine boats rounded the weather buoy four hours faster than *18 Degrees*, the first Holland boat to round.

Heading south to Michigan City, wave height increased through the night with a 3-5 foot confused sea state and rogue waves of 6 feet or more. Course heading was 177 degrees at this point, wind direction 180 degrees, wind velocity of 18-23 knots true wind gusting to 27 knots. Sea conditions made for a very rough 4-6 hour period of night racing. Ten miles from the finish line

at Michigan City, the waves settled to 3-4 footers from the south. Winds were shifty at the end of the race as they always seem to be at Michigan City. The first boat from Holland, *18 Degrees*, finished at 8:16 a.m. CST.

Matt Rubsam, on *Reject*, had an engine problem as he was heading to



Racine and had to withdraw from the race. Fortunately, he “MacGyvered” an engine serpentine belt with a giant ‘rubber band’ and was able to safely motor back to his home port of Chicago.

A well earned meal was prepared by “Coop” on Saturday afternoon, August 23rd, for all

participants. Hungry sailors feasted on freshly grilled burgers, bratwurst, salads, and guzzled many libations.

Mike Silverthorne, a loving friend and fellow GLSS solo sailor was remembered with a toast honoring his enthusiasm and legacy at Michigan City.

— Joe Turns, *18 Degrees*

Sandusky 45005

Singlehanded A

UNCIVILIZED	Russ Krock	Dufour 45	1
Red Rocket	Jeff Neuhalten	J/29	2
WAFI	Jim Otton	Hurly	3
Storm's Harbor	Rob Burger	Beneteau Oceanis 41	4
Tumbleweed	Phil Montgomery	Beneteau Oceanis 41.1	5
Ventura	Christopher Lentz	Beneteau Oceanis 381	6

Singlehanded B

DEFIANCE	Ryan Kyle	Pearson 31-2	1
Valhalla	Mark Hutchinson	Pearson 33-2	2
Footloose	John Earhart	Beneteau 311	3
Phaedrus	Bryan Burgess	S2 9.2	4
Sea Dog	Jayson Miller	Chaser 29	5
Let's Dance	David Knox	Pacific Seacraft Dana 24	6
Freetime	Jerry Krantz	Ericson 28+	DNF

Named after the yellow NOAA weather buoy “45005” located on the U.S.-Canada border about 12 nm East of the Lake Erie Islands, which is the first mark on the course, the Sandusky 45005 is a 41 nm triangle that starts off of the Sandusky Pierhead Lt., proceeds Northeast to Buoy 45005, then South to the red entrance buoy at Huron, and then back to the Moseley Channel entering Sandusky Harbor for the finish.

This year saw 13 boats on the starting line — largely due to the beautiful early-Fall weather bringing us lots of sunshine and a fresh breeze coming down Lake Erie. All but one boat finished and it was great to see four first-time participants out there,

including Phil Montgomery, Ryan Kyle, Mark Hutchinson, and J.J. Miller.

Russ Krock kindly ran the skippers’ meeting on Friday evening, and the race started promptly at 0800 on Saturday, September 20th. The first leg was upwind with a steady Northeast breeze in the low teens. The wind was close enough to the course line on a starboard tack that most boats were able to make the first mark with only a couple of short tacks on port. Up by the first mark, the wind had increased to the mid-teens and backed some to the North.

The wind built steadily all day until we saw wind speeds well into the 20s toward the end and closer to shore.

The final leg from Huron to the finish was a lumpy, lively beam reach that kept all the sailors on their toes.

With such favorable conditions providing fast sailing, the first boat crossed the line at 1415 while the last boat still made it back in time for dinner and awards.

(A quick shout-out to Phil Montgomery who sailed a boat he had never sailed before, larger than other boats he had sailed on before, with systems he wasn’t familiar with, under pretty sporty conditions; and under those circumstances to have completed the course in respectable fashion. Nice work, Phil!)

— Rob Burger, *Storm's Harbor*

Lower Lake Huron Solo

PHRF 1			
Good Lookin'	Mark DenUyl	J 105	1
Joyride	Christian Jensen	J 105	2
Trader	Dave Kember	Santana 35	3
El Burro	Kyle Griffin	Thomas	4
God Speed	Andrew Patrias Cal	C&C 39	5
TUFTY	Ryan Huybers	Beneteau First 42	6
Mylo B	William Dembek	CYUC 39	7
PHRF 2			
Slickery	William Plummer	Tanzer 31	1
Somerset	Steve Thompson	Tanzer	2
Oxygen	John McKay	Mirage	3
Ptarmigan	Phil Magill	C&C	4
Serenity	Edward Stronach	Sloop CS27	5
Mystic	John Robb	Catalina 34 Mk 2	RET
Lu Sea Blu	David McGinn	Catalina 30T	DNC

2025 Lower Lake Huron Solo Race

The Lower Lake Huron Solo was held on Saturday, September 6th. The Lower Lake Huron Solo is a 43 nm race that starts from a set mark 1.25 nm from the entrance to the Sarnia Yacht Club and proceeds north to the #12 channel buoy, rounds to the east and heads to the V4 buoy off of Kettle Pt. Ontario, and returns to the #2 channel buoy at Sarnia.

The wind was 8 to 20 kts from the west and the sea state ranged from flat to 2 ft. Waves. There were 14 entrants split into two fleets based on PHRF ratings. The slower rated boats started first and then the faster boats started ten minutes later. Jim Bennet and his boat \$\$\$ were the Race Committee and started the fleets. The first leg had the boats on a beam reach heading to the #12 buoy. Most boats set spinnakers off the line and proceeded at full speed to the next mark. The faster boats quickly overtook the the first fleet to the turning mark with *Good Lookin'* and *Joyride*, the two J/105s being the first boats to round #12.

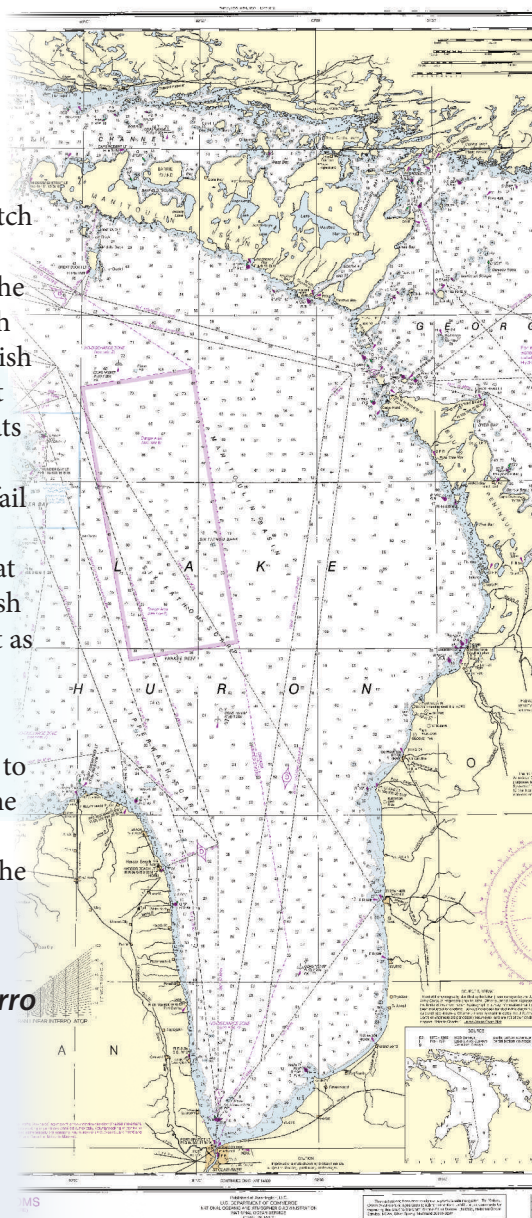
The second leg to Kettle Pt. Was dead down wind with the wind building to 20 kts the closer the fleet got to the turning mark. *Good Lookin'* led the fleet around V4,

followed closely by *Joyride*. *Slicker* was the first boat from PHRF 2 around clearly in the mix with the PHRF 1 boats.

The final leg home was a 20 nm fetch biased on the starboard tack. The wind stayed in the mid-teens for the PHRF 1 boats heading to the finish with *Good Lookin'* crossing the finish at 16:57 and the final PHRF 1 boat crossing at 18:09. The PHRF 2 boats were not quite as lucky with the conditions as the wind started to fail as the evening moved on, with *Slickery* being first across the line at 19:02 and *Serenity* finding the finish at 22:22. There was one retirement as *Mystic* reported having spinnaker issues.

I would like to give special thanks to my wife, Tara, for being Finish Line RC and Jim Bennet for doing the Start Line. I'm also grateful to all the participants for making it another great day of sailing.

— Kyle Griffin, *El Burro*



Lake St. Clair Solo Challenge

JAM A			
Otis B. Driftwood	Blair Arden	Jeanneau	1
Lady Luck	Kenny Parkhurst	Tartan 10	2
Christine	John Johnston	Catalina 36 mk1	3
Sherasa	Rob Fleming	Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 45	DNS
Erewhon	John McCallum	Tartan 37-2 CB	DNC
JAM B			
SunDance	Paul Roth	Beneteau	1
No Name	Tyler Lybolt	S2 - 11.0A	2
Cheers!	Dan Guendelsberger	Pearson 27-2	3
Nice Aft	Terence (Terry) McGran	c34	4
COOKIN'	Christopher Cook	Catalina 27	5
ALACRITY	Derek DeBono	Contessa 26	6
PHRF			
Hardly Tri-ing	Martin Foster	Corsair F31R	1
PHRF A			
UNCIVILIZED	Russ Krock	Dufour 45	1
Kailani	Kris Tonn	C&C 121	2
Harmony	Joey Baker	Beneteau First 44.7	3
Phoenix	Matt Vallus	J/109	4
ELEVATION	Timothy McGuire	J/112e	5
PHRF B			
Mylo B	William Dembek	C&C 39	1
No Rebase	Bruce Richardson	T-10	2
Little Red Rocket	Jeff Neufalfen	J/29	3
Scarlet Fire	Ben Thorsen	C&C 99	4
J Wave	David Evans	J 100	5
Quick & Dirty	Noel Brockman	Olson 30	RET
Cruisers			
Boreas	Donald Maxwell	Nonsuch 30	1
Mary Lou	Kern Smith	Catalina 425	2
Mungo Tiki	Tony Berends	CS36	3
Freetime	Jerry Krantz	Ericson 28+	4

The 2025 St. Clair Solo was another well attended GLSS event. 27 entries sailed on two courses. The St. Clair Solo offers both a JAM course (19 nm) and a PHRF course (39 nm). Weather outlook was for a light air day. Fortunately, this was not the case, as a steady 6 – 10 knots of air got all the boats around the course in good time.

The weekend started off on Friday afternoon with a Bar-B-Que on the patio at Great Lakes YC, followed by the Skippers' Meeting. The first start

was Saturday morning, with the JAM fleet starting first and the PHRF fleet starting second.

With 27 entries, there were two JAM classes and three PHRF classes.

Blair Arden on *Otis B Driftwood* led the JAM boats around the course, while Joey Baker on *Harmony* led the PHRF boats on the long course.

Bill Dembeck on *Mylo B* took overall honors on the PHRF course on corrected time.

Russ Krock took the combined honors for the Sandusky 45005 and St. Clair Solo, combining times from both events.

As always Jeff Golding and his crew served up a fantastic dinner for Big Al's Steak Roast enjoyed by over 40 attendees.

As the final event on the GLSS calendar, the St. Clair Solo continues to see steady and growing participation.

— Jeff Neuhalfen, *Little Red Rocket*

New Members

Congratulations to the following sailors who completed their first Challenge in 2025!

SKIPPER	BOAT NAME	MAKE AND MODEL	LAKE
MARK TOMES*	THE ORANGE BOAT	C&C MEGA 30	HURON
ARAS KARAITAS*	TEJAS	HOBIE 33	MICHIGAN
GREG VANDENBERG	FALCON	ALBERG 37 SLOOP	MICHIGAN
LAD STRZOK*	OCELOT	OLSON 911 SE	SUPERIOR
BOB STACH	KNOTTIDE	JEANNEAU SUN ODYSSEY	SUPERIOR
DANNY SAATHOFF	STILL LIFE	BENETEAU 393	SUPERIOR

*Denotes President's Cup Winner — best placed finisher of first time Challenge entrants — see [Trophies](#) for more details.

Editor's Note

I'd like to thank **Ken Verhaeren** for his many years of valuable service as editor of the *Solo Challenger*. The March 2025 edition recapping the 2025 AGM was his last as editor, but certainly not the last we'll hear from him. Ken's first edition as editor was published in the Spring of 2015. In addition to his work as editor of our newsletter, Ken has done much more for the GLSS over the years in his roles as board member, two-time president, race organizer, Event

Chair, Safety Seminar organizer, Challenge participant, and AGM planner. Ken deservedly received the *Mike Silverthorne Memorial Trophy* this year from a committee of past recipients because he has exemplified the spirit of "Laughing Gull" in his continual assistance of fellow singlehandlers. Ken became a member of the GLSS in 2005 when he completed the first ever Chicago Super Mac and Back Challenge. So far, Ken has completed 14

Challenges with his most recent being the 2024 Chicago to Mackinac Solo Challenge in his Nonsuch 30, *KISMET*.

— **Rob Burger, Editor**

Rob became a member of the GLSS when he completed the 2014 Lake Erie Solo Challenge in his Beneteau Oceanis 41, *Storm's Harbor*. If you have any content, questions, corrections, etc., for the *Solo Challenger*, please email Rob at gr8laksalr@me.com.

WEBSITE SPOTLIGHT

The GLSS keeps track of the number of challenges completed by each member at <https://solosailors.org/challenge-count-by-skipper/>, which has been updated following the 2024 season.