

A recap from onboard Chikanery

4 Years, 4 years!!!! That was the chant heard at the awards banquet at the 2001 Thunderbird Internationals. The people chanting came from a small but enthusiastic group of Boston T-birders who had made the trek to Toronto. Were they serious? Yes, for the first time in the history of the Thunderbird, The Internationals came to Boston. The list of people who were involved in coordinating this event is endless. I could bore you with the details, but I think most people want to here about the action on the water. To the best of my memory (it gets a bit hazy now and then) I will attempt to summarize in a time line format.

Wednesday July 20, 2005:

Blew Bird Arrives with Looney Tunes right behind. Is this a sign of things to come? Blew Bird made the trip up from Maryland. It is owned by former member of Savin Hill YC Bob Larsen who found the Booth built T-bird sitting in North Carolina of all places. Blew Bird is being loaned by International Measurer, and Victoria fleet member Vidas Stukas. Looney Tunes came in from Fleet 10 in Toronto and is owned by International Vice President Wendy Loat and her husband Nick. The Tunes is truly a site to see. In my mind it the prettiest bird I have ever seen. "Is that boat really wood?"

Thursday July 21, 2005:

The visitors were introduced to the South Boston YC crane and the Fleet 5 Gin Pole. They also realize that things have to be scheduled around Boston's ten foot tide cycle. That Damn Thang owned by Diane and Paul Reid arrived from Toronto. It is good to see that all the visiting boats made the drive safely. It is hot and the winds are light. Local sailors Steve Kavanagh and Paul Rosell kindly show the visitors where the mud flats are located at low tide.

Friday July 22, 2005:

That Damn Thang is splashed and all boats are feverishly making tuning adjustments. It is very hot and winds are light again. Some people have been forced to "make adjustments" to brand new sails as a Mainsail and three new Genoas are too big. Note to sailors in 2007, check those sails early.

Saturday July 23, 2005:

More people are getting in a practice sail in a freshening North **and** West wind. As people will find out, there really is not such a thing as a Northwest wind in Boston. It shifts from North to West and back again three times in the course of a minute. This could make racing very interesting considering it is now gusting over 20 knots. All gathered at Squantum YC for a good old New England Lobster Bake over looking Quincy Bay which will serve as the racing venue for the week.

Sunday July 24, 2005:

It is the day of the Practice race. The wind is still from the North **and** West as boats leave the YC for the one hour sail to the starting line. Most are enjoying a practice spinnaker run when the wind decides to instantly change to a sea breeze. The sea breeze in these parts comes in from the ESE. It is nice and steady. A 5 degree shift is almost unheard of. The practice race was held in a picture perfect 10 knot breeze. The boats are looking to pace themselves with the competition, but are some boats holding back? Chikanery is not even part of any practice starts as we are trying to sort out the trim on newly installed inboard sheeting genoa cars. We are almost at the windward mark when we finally notice what is going on. Boats are in sequence again and the practice race is underway. On

board Chikanery we are 4 boat lengths on the wrong side of the line wing on wing at the start. So much for practice starts! Blew Bird and Looney Tunes make their way to the front of the fleet and engage in a tacking duel on the windward finish course. The two boats had a ten boat length lead at the start of the tacking duel. On board Chikanery we have been sailing by ourselves all race and are surprised to see that we have caught the two leading boats. The Tunes extended on their duel and approached the finish line slightly ahead of Chikanery. I have been told that winning the practice race is bad luck and was not surprised when The Tunes slipped around the committee boat. Since in my mind The Tunes really won the race, we crossed the line the correct way and took the bullet. Looney Tunes “really” won the race.

Back at the club we proceeded with opening ceremonies. It is being emceed by local celebrity John Carlson. He is the former radio voice for the Super Bowl Champion New England Patriots. Greetings are extended to all the visiting racers. Kevin Battye made the longest journey coming in from fleet 15 in Geelong, Australia. Kevin was a part of the 1995 International crew aboard the Champion *Predator*. He is loaning local boat Sea Wisp. Kyle Henehan traveled from San Diego where he owns the winning boat *Compound X* from the 1977 regatta. He is sailing aboard *Thunderation*. Doug Carroll from San Francisco and owner of *Crazy Jane* is aboard Draco. Vidas Stukas from Victoria is aboard Blew Bird. Toronto is represented by Looney Tunes and That Damn Thang. Wendy and Diane are making their second appearance in Mass Bay. They both did a trial run two years ago when they visited for the 2003 NOOD regatta in Marblehead. It is a small fleet but certainly loaded with talent from across the globe. Let the racing begin!!!

Monday July 25, 2005:

I think everyone prayed a bit too hard for wind. At 930 am the wind was out of the Southwest at 30+ knots. We were worried that we would be floating every day from 11-1 waiting for a breeze. Not today! At 1230 the RC made the call to cancel for the day as the wind had not decreased. So much for the lay day on Wednesday.

Tuesday July 26, 2005

Sunny skies and HOT!! Twelve boats leave for the course with absolutely no wind. At the race course at 10:45 a southwesterly comes in as if on cue. The wind built up to 10-15 immediately and the racing began. The Tunes grabbed a bullet in race one with Blew Bird right on her tail. I think a rivalry was brewing. So much for local knowledge as the visitors looked good in the first race. The local boats Chikanery, Mysterious Ways, and Thang from Toronto rounded up the top 5. Race two was Blew Bird's turn to grab the gun. They were fortunate that The Tunes was forced to do circles ten boat lengths from the finish and slipped from second to fourth. Chikanery second, Flying Gull third and Mysterious Ways fifth rounded out the top five. The last race was changed up to have a windward finish. I highly recommend that this is done in all future regattas. It really can add excitement. Just like a prize fighter on the ropes. The Tunes came back strong and grabbed their second bullet of the day. It wasn't hard to see what was taking place at the top of the fleet. Two heavyweights had come to battle. Blew bird came in second and held a one point lead after day one. Chikanery finished third and stayed consistent with their third top three finish of the day. Thunderation and Sea Wisp looked to be improving as the day wore on. Will things stay the same for day 2? Without the lay day on Wednesday the sailors scrapped the pub crawl tonight.

Wednesday July 27, 2005:

Sunny skies and HOT!! The wind was forecast to be Southwest 5-10 increasing to 10-15 in the afternoon. At 930 am it was already 12+. So much for the weatherman. Race one went to Blew Bird as a pattern had developed. Chikanery managed to put up a second just two seconds ahead of Looney Tunes. Positions 2-5 actually all finished within 12 seconds for the closest finish of the regatta. The wind continued to build for race two. Looney Tunes continued the pattern of swapping first place finishes with Blew Bird. This time The Tunes was helped by Flying Gull who pushed Blew Bird down to third. It was Blew Bird's first finish outside the top two. Kudos goes out to the crew of That Damn Thang who grabbed fourth while sailing with a crew of three. The winds were now gusting over 20+ knots. Unfortunately for Mysterious Ways their boom was only rated for 19 knots as it snapped in half. The crew deserves praise as they managed to finish the race under just the headsail. The last race saw a few boats change to the blade. The wind was blowing at a consistent 20 with gusts a bit higher. This race featured the second most exciting finish of the regatta. Blew Bird, Looney Tunes, and Chikanery distanced themselves from the pack and enjoyed a great series of tacks and crossings with the lead changing every minute. Approaching the finish it looked like Blew bird would easily take the win and Chikanery would take second. On Blew Bird's last tack they put a perfect cover on Chikanery. It was so perfect that it slowed Chikanery down enough that Looney Tunes was just able to come in on port and tack under Chikanery at the pin. After two days and six races Blew Bird still had the one point lead. Everyone enjoyed pizza and a complimentary keg of beer courtesy of Budweiser.

Thursday July 28, 2005:

Sunny skies and NOT HOT!! The winds have switched to the North East at 10-15 knots. They are predicted to drop to 5-10 in the afternoon. We did not see a drop and enjoyed 12-16 knots all day. With the new wind direction all strategy from the first two days proved pointless. That didn't stop Blew bird. They went out and pulled off their 4th bullet in 7 races. Looney kept it close by grabbing second. These boats have been either tied or a point apart all week. Can anyone guess who won race 8? It was The Tunes!! Chikanery pushed Blew Bird back to third and it looked like we could be a spoiler... After eight races, the same two boats had 4 bullets and a total of 11 points after their discard. And the race nine winner is...Chikanery!! Chikanery led all the way around the course with Looney Tunes and Blew Bird sitting in second and third with a beat to the finish. A tacking duel started and Looney Tunes comfortably kept their lead going up the left side of the course. Unfortunately for them there was a 20 degree wind shift to the right. We looked back and saw Flying Gull and Thunderation situated perfectly for the shift. A very close finish saw Flying Gull take second, Thunderation third, Looney Tunes fourth, and Blew Bird fifth. Through the higher powers of math, Looney Tunes entered the race tied with Blew Bird and beat them. When factoring the new discard, they came out behind by a point. There should be a new position on the boat just to figure out the possibilities. All sailors and guests enjoyed a great feast at the South Boston YC.

Friday July 29, 2005:

The table is set for a classic showdown. Blew Bird had 14 points, Looney Tunes had 15 and the spoiler (oops I mean Chikanery) had 20. The crew of The Tunes stayed up all night to figure out some way to make up the point by finishing **behind** Blew Bird. If Blew Bird could do it in race 9, the powers of math must be able to work for them too. The temperature was pleasant and the wind was in a new direction. It was North **and** West. Remember that there is no such thing as a Northwesterly in these waters. Race one saw Blew Bird sail flawlessly and took the gun. Looney Tunes stayed

right behind with a second. Meanwhile on Chikanery we discovered that a bad start and a shifty breeze can lead to desperation. Everything we tried lead to nowhere and we limped across the finish in eighth

It was still up for grabs. If The Tunes scored a bullet and Blew Bird a third, Looney would win on a tie breaker. Funky math could not help them. They hoped for any boat to come forward and push Blew Bird back. The trusty weatherman had predicted a sea breeze to come in. We assumed that today would be just like the practice race with a shift at any moment. While setting up for race two the wind continued to build from the North **and** West. With gusts now over 20 knots we were confident that the prediction was wrong again. The RC put up course number 5 which meant a 5 leg windward leeward with a finish to windward. Anything could happen. Half the fleet was now sailing with the blade. It was quickly discovered that it did not matter which sail you had up. Boats were headed and lifted 30-40 degrees while on the same tack. The shifts were paramount. Draco owned by Jonathan Lee lead the first lap. Chikanery was close behind and Blew Bird and Looney Tunes together in third and fourth. The second beat saw Blew Bird gain a one boat length lead on Chikanery with The Tunes following. At the leeward mark rounding Blew Bird rounded the right gate with Chikanery behind and The Tunes went to the left gate. Three boats went through the gate all within 10 seconds of each other. Blew Bird tacked to cover and the choice of the other gate had already paid huge dividends for Looney Tunes. They were now ahead of Blew Bird. On board Chikanery we rolled the dice that we could only catch up by sailing our own race and not following. We started up the left side of the course. Looney Tunes led Blew Bird up the right side. The right side had been advantaged the last to beats. When we consolidated in the middle half way up the leg, we realized that we were dead even with Blew Bird and Looney had us by four boat lengths. This was getting interesting. Blew Bird had to hold off Chikanery to win the regatta. About 200 yards from the finish it was evident that Blew Bird could not cross Chikanery. Looney Tunes had a four boat length lead and was directly in front of Chikanery on starboard tack. Blew Bird was now rooting for a miracle. They needed Chikanery to win. While on that starboard tack a Northerly shift came in and Chikanery was lifted 30 degrees. No more that 100 feet away Looney was on the back side of the shift, and the lift never reached them. The Tunes tried to tack to port and get to the favored side but it was too late. They could not cross, and they were forced to tack back. Chikanery now had them pinned and forced them to the port lay line. The Tunes had run out of options and followed Chikanery in six seconds behind. The day's results kept the spread at one point after 11 grueling races. I would like to thank all the competitors that made the journey to Boston. It was the most intense racing that fleet 5 has ever seen. As for Chikanery, next time we will not take the gun in the practice race.

A grand time was had by all at the awards banquet.

Congratulations to Vidas and Hilary Stukas, Mike Brewis, and Bob Larsen, the team on Blew Bird.

I hope you enjoyed the racing recap.

Fair winds,

Sean Kane

Chikanery #154