

Recap The 2019 Dam Distance Race

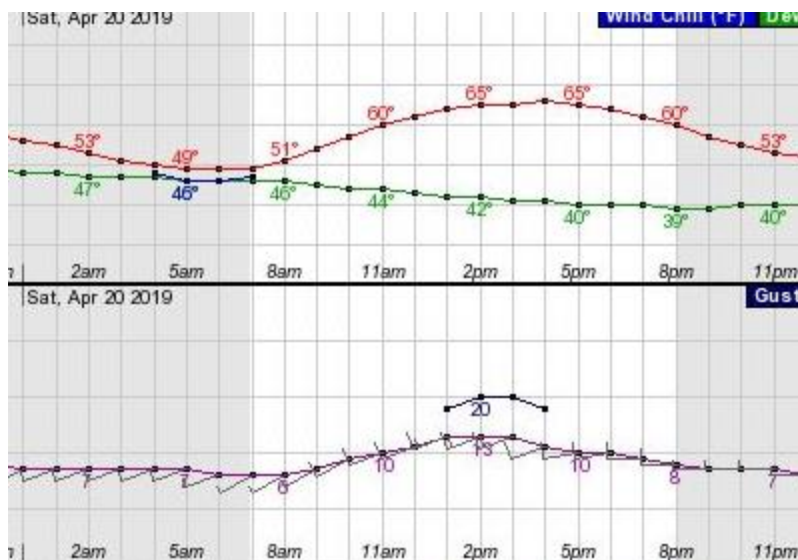


"The wind on Lake Hartwell averages about 14; you get either 0 or 28."

The 6th edition of the 'new and improved' Dam Distance Race was held Saturday. This event happened to fall on Easter weekend again. This weekend was chosen not for the Easter holiday, but rather for the hope of being late enough to avoid late cold fronts, but early enough to avoid excessive heat with NO wind. Well, like the old song says, "...One out of two ain't bad...".

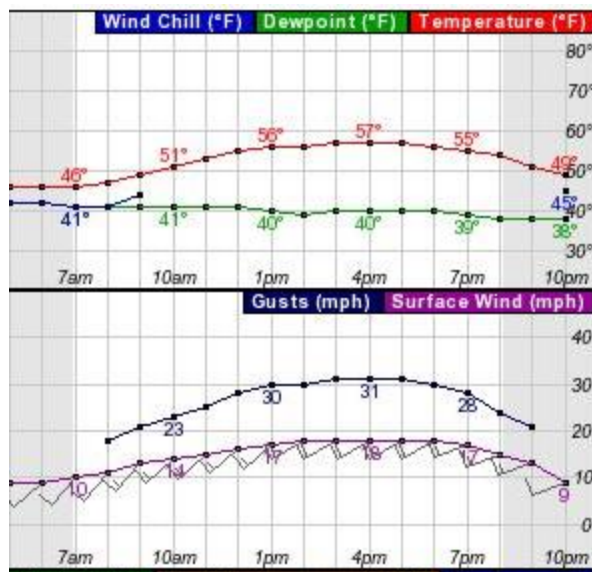
From the organizer's perspective, too much weather was the concern. We watched the weather graph for the approaching date with anxiety. The forecast on Monday looked good, with 9 to 13 with gusts to 20. The racers and most of the cruisers would love it, and even the more cautious sailors could handle it. Temperatures in the mid 60's. Nice!

Forecast on Monday

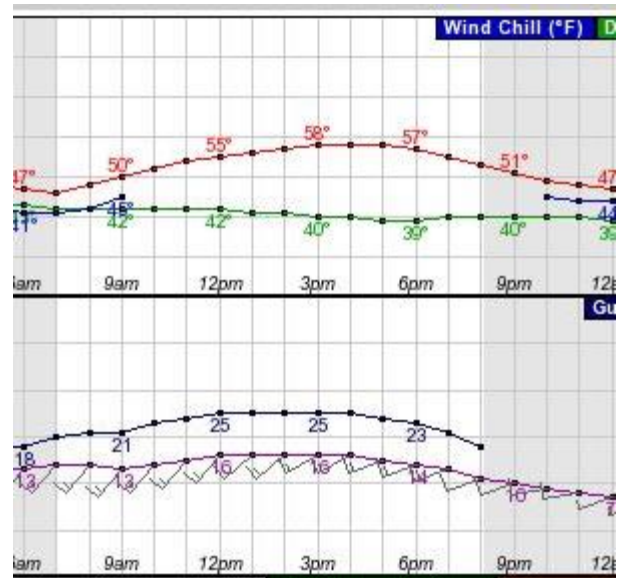


But by Thursday, the forecast for race day had changed. We began to be concerned, that this 'new' wind might be too much of a good thing. Certainly, many of our sailors could handle it; some would even embrace it. But we had concern for those who did not have experience in these conditions. (and for some of us who did have experience but didn't like it). The forecast on Friday was a little better, but gusts of 25 were going to be difficult. And the temperature wasn't going to get out of the 50's. What the heck, another Frostbite?

Forecast on Thursday

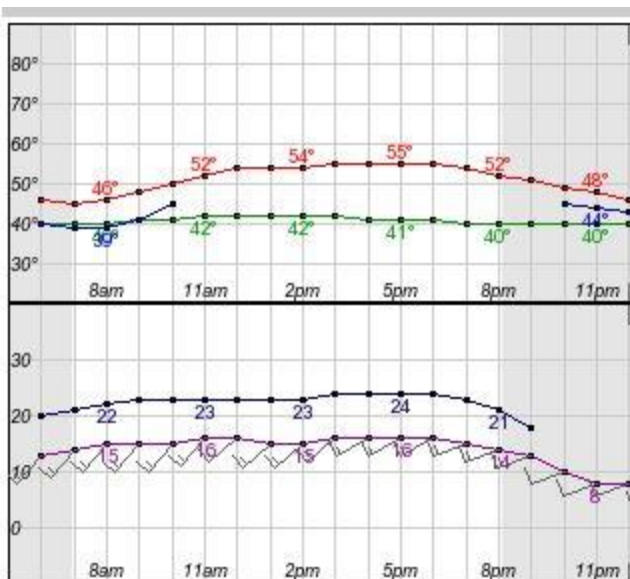


Forecast on Friday



Well, it's not so much how you start the race, it's how you finish. The forecast is just that, a forecast. The weather that would present on Saturday is what mattered. With no little amount of angst, we viewed the NWS forecast on race morning.

Forecast on Saturday



It looked like the final forecast was mid-teens with gusts to the mid 20's. More than some (like ME) enjoy, but maybe not too much for most of the fleet.

At that point, we had 22 boats registered for the event. At skipper's meeting, we had 19 skippers in attendance. This is about the time people decided how much fun they could stand (15 to 25, 55 degrees and 50% chance of rain), as only 15 boats left the harbor. To continue the process, 13 boats started the race and 11 boats completed the race.

On the bright side of all this weather stuff, the wind direction and strength

allowed race organizers to post a longer course than usual; the 2019 event raced to buoy 14 in the Big Water area of the lake, for a course distance of 12.2 miles. (Is this when I should mention the rain?)

This edition of the Dam Race is the first (in the last 6 years) that allowed the participation of dinghies. We were able to secure 2 volunteers (thanks Terhune and Dave) to man a safety boat. Unfortunately, only 2 dinghies registered, and one did not race (citing no crew and too much breeze for single handing). The one dinghy that did race still isn't sure if it was a good idea.

The delay clock (that's a pursuit-start thing) started about 11:15, and there were only a couple issues with starting too early. The race course was a beat from S 15 to S 10, and a beat to 26A TS. From there, to 21 was a close reach. The leg to 18 was a deeper reach, and the final (outbound) leg to 21 was a close reach. The return legs were a mixture of power reaches to dead downwind. Many boats sailed at (or above) hull speed. The first boat finished with a sailing time of 1 hour, 55 min. and 46 sec. The last boat to finished had a sailing time of 3 hours, 22 min, and 33 sec. Most commented that they had a good workout.

OK, now to the other part of the event: the After Party. All the while the racers were out doing battle with nature and their fellow competitors, the true heroes of this story (Ronnie and Jason) were grilling chicken, sausage appetizers, and baking the best EVER baked beans. We returned to a fire in the fireplace, Ronnie's music on the Club PA system, and that wonderful aroma of the grill. As the racers trickled in from putting their boats away (what's the expression-"Rode hard and put away wet"), cocktails began to appear and the story-telling began. "...Sail # 5336, you are over early... by a considerable margin". "I'm so glad the spin was in the bag when that cloud line dropped that BIG gust". "I'm not sure how fast I was going, I had my eyes closed".

Awards were, well, awarded about 17:45. Dinner was served immediately afterward. Rock and Roll (60's-70's) went on 'till about 20:00.

By all accounts, the 2019 Dam Distance Race went well-good attendance, plenty (ugh, yea) wind, terrific food, and lots of comradery sharing a great sailing experience. We hope to see you next year.

Dam Distance Race 2019				
Place Completed Course	Skipper	Boat Name	Design * indicates US Sailing Mean Rating	Distance Race PHRF
				base 260
Overall Fleet				
1	Fontenot, Rick	Anakin	Weta	179
2	Barnard, John	woof	J 22	177
3	Gibson, Ben	Ariel	Cal 9.2	175
4	Sanga, Ron	Wind Horse	Cape Dory 30	225
dnp	Rubenstein, Curt	Hang On Sloopy	Catalina 30	191
5	Vantleven, Hugh	Pir-A-Sea	Hunter 25.5	226
6	Guerin, Cyril	Jus' Chillin'	Capri 30 *	117

7	Hill, Tom	Sunshine	Santana 20	221
8	Crane, Tim	Pearl	Columbia 8.7	229
9	Brutosky, Kirk	Windlass	Hunter 27 *	236
dnf	Smutzer, Chris	Lucinda	O'Day 26 *	253
dnf	Marett, Dan	Dream Weaver	S2 27	192
dnf	Gamble, Trent	Illuminanti	O'Day 272	253
dns	Mann, James	Columbine	Catalina 25 *	249
dns	Mathews, Spencer	Happy Camper	Precision 23	248
dns	Seymour, Eric	Heckled n Jibed	Flying Scott	208
dns	Ruark, Steve	Escape Plan	Catalina 310 *	188
dns	Johnson, Dick	Big Easy	Catalina 30	181
dns	Hopp, Patrick	Camelot	C & C 29 *	180
dns	Hippensteal, Alan	Tartanic	Tartan P270	135
dns	Masson, George	E'alu'	Ultimate 24	113
dns	Freese, Brent	Sea Squirrel	Catalina 22	253
ocs	Lehmann, Werner	Seawolf	Hunter 31 *	185

Cruiser Fleet

1	Gibson, Ben	Ariel	Cal 9.2	175
2	Sanga, Ron	Wind Horse	Cape Dory 30	225
3	Rubenstein, Curt	Hang On Sloopy	Catalina 30	191
4	Vantleven, Hugh	Pir-A-Sea	Hunter 25.5	226
5	Guerin, Cyril	Jus' Chillin'	Capri 30 *	117
6	Hill, Tom	Sunshine	Santana 20	221
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dns	Hippensteal, Alan	Tartanic	Tartan P270	135
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Racer Fleet

1	Fontenot, Rick	Anakin	Weta	179
2	Barnard, John	woof	J 22	177
dns	Mathews, Spencer	Happy Camper	Precision 23	248
dns	Seymour, Eric	Heckled n Jibed	Flying Scott	208

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