

SAFETY HARBOR BOAT CLUB BIKINI CUP 2009

April 11 was the day of the big race, the Safety Harbor Boat Club all women Bikini Cup sailboat race. Many club members and others had toiled hard, burning evening and weekend lamp oil, planning and organizing for five months. The race was planned in great detail along with a fine post-race awards party at the Safety Harbor Veteran's Park pavilion. Finally, race day arrived. Race officials laid out a challenging race course which had its first leg upwind in a 15 knot wind. Eight sailboats tacked back and forth behind the start line jockeying for the right heading in the right place at the right time waiting for the starting horn to be sounded.

A long blast from the starting horn and the race was on. Three boats made a good start and set off on a close hauled STBD tack with rails dipping perilously to leeward. Incentive filled in not far behind the two lead boats Amelia and Shibumi. Other boats had difficulties crossing the start line with one reported minor collision and several other delaying incidences. The next boats crossing the line were Wild Irish Rose which had a decent start in fourth place followed by Incommunicado, Empire, Journey and Pretty Girl bringing up the rear.

The lead boats rounded the first mark and headed downwind to the second mark. Several boats attempted a wing and wing sail set with some success. The course required the boats to sail two loops around the first and second marks, spaced about a mile apart, and almost directly on a line with the wind flow. Thus, the course layout required a lot of upwind close hauled sailing with a minimum of two tacks on the upwind legs. After rounding the second mark on the second loop, the next mark was on a close hauled port tack sailed with masts laid over to provide an exciting ride. It was an enviable course layout challenging all points of sail in the 15 knot wind. White caps were in abundance. It was a really grand and exciting race for all entrants.

The third and fourth mark locations led the boats upwind again with one short beam reach leg. The committee boat placed the finish line such that it was not easily crossed with at least two more tacks required.

The boat overall finishes were:

1 st place: Incommunicado	5 th place: Wild Irish Rose
2 nd place: Shibumi	6 th place: Empire
3 rd place: Amelia	7 th place: Journey
4 th place: Incentive	8 th place: Pretty Girl

It was a race the Safety Harbor Boat Club can be proud of with a grand post-race ceremony and party afterwards. Congratulations to the race organizers for a job well done.