

The Officers, Directors and Members of
US SAILING
are pleased to present the
ARTHUR B. HANSON RESCUE MEDAL
to

SCOTT NIXON

for the rescue as follows:

On October 2, 2003 during the 2003 Rolex International Women's Keelboat Championship at Annapolis Yacht Club in Maryland, Gorilla Girls was going downwind in 4th place to the finish line in 30 knots of wind on their J/22 with the spinnaker flying in the cool 55-degree air. A gust broached the boat dumping three crew overboard and pinning the skipper on the low side. The spinnaker sheet, guy and halyard had gone out to the blocks and with the chute filled far out from the boat (like a kiteboard), with the boat staying pinned down.

Scott Nixon aboard his coach boat saw Gorilla Girls get knocked down and stay down with three going overboard. The first was picked up by a Peter Pirate, a competitor, and then Nixon saw the two sailors get separated from their boat, so he pulled them out of the water, and went to assist in the final rescue beginning to take place aboard Gorilla Girls.

Greg Fisher meanwhile, had approached the boat and saw that all lines (mainsheet, halyards and chute sheets were released, with the chute way out away from the boat full of air. The skipper was pinned on the leeward side, and the chute would dump from time to time bringing her up for air. On his Boston Whaler, he moved in from the leeward side when the chute re-filled and the boat sailed down on him and he leaped aboard. Fisher started releasing lines while Nixon came to assist by cutting some of the lines combining with Fisher's work allowing the boat to get back on its feet. Fisher then was able to pull the skipper out of the water.

Congratulations to Scott Nixon for rescuing several competitors in hypothermic and challenging conditions. US SAILING is pleased to present the Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal in recognition of this event.

Ronald C. Trossbach
Chairman, Safety at Sea Committee
By Direction

The Arthur B. Hanson Rescue medal was presented at Annapolis Yacht Club's annual meeting February 5, 2005. Annapolis Yacht Club Commodore Mark Myers made the presentation on behalf of US SAILING.



From left to right, Ted Kazmarski (on left, accepting for Scott Nixon), Annapolis Yacht Club Commodore Mark Myers, and Greg Fisher. Chip Thayer, photographer.

DETAILS:

Dear Anna:

Out of curiosity, did Peter Pirate consider seeking redress for rescuing the victim, to help gain back the points lost while off the course (this is not a rescue medal related question)?

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Glenn

Dear Glenn,

The other two members of the boat that fell overboard were picked up by coach/rescue boats hanging out by the finish line. These two members fell off further down the course and were spotted by the coaches. Peter Pirate was granted redress for her lost positions in the race.

Hope this can help

Anna

Dear Anna:

Using my fingers, I think that leaves one on board Gorilla Girls, "and their boat was refusing to right itself in the strong winds." What happened to the sole sailor left on Gorilla Girls? Did she get the boat back up, get the sails down and get things back under control?

Thanks.

Sincerely,

Glenn

Glenn -

I don't exactly know what happened on Gorilla Girls, after seeing the video on shore, they looked like they were kiteboarding downwind with their kite flying off the top of the mast pounding them into the water. I believe Greg Fisher, North Sails rep, climbed aboard and cut the spinnaker lines to right the boat. After that I do not know what happened. I believe one of the girls went to the hospital for an x-ray on her ribs, but I'm not sure which girl it was.

Anna

Dear

Greg Fisher reports –

He saw GG in 5th or 6th place get knocked down and stay down with three going overboard. All lines (mainsheet, halyards and chute sheets were released, with the chute way out away from the boat full of air. The skipper was pinned on the leeward side, and the chute would dump from time to time bringing her up for air. On his Boston Whaler, he moved in from the leeward side when the chute re-filled and the boat sailed down on him and he leaped aboard. Greg started releasing lines while another coach boat came a cut some of the lines allowing the boat to get back on its feet and Greg pulled the skipper out of the water.

Gorilla Girls:

Prop was getting close to skipper, when boat tipped over again entrapping the powerboat inside the rigging. They killed the engine and pushed themselves out of the rigging.

Dear Greg:

Do you have any idea what coach boat pulled the other two crew out of the water? If not, do you know someone who might know the name(s) of the people on that coach boat?

Thanks.

Sincerely,
Glenn

Hi Glenn

There are no lifelines on a J/22 so she was holding onto the cockpit edge. When the sheet was finally cut free, the spin halyard dropped and the main dropped, the boat stood up and I simply helped drag her in over the side...not a big deal. I don't know if she gulped water.

Scott Nixon was the guy who picked up the crew (I think) and he eventually cut the sheet free which initiated the chain of events that led to the eventual rescue. Like I said it was a team effort...on my whaler Matt Beck and Vic Snyder helped drive the boat once I got on Terry's boat and Matt tried to cut the sheet when we approached the spinnaker.

Terry Shertz may be the best to talk to as well as she was the one in the water and it was her boat. She would know more about the boat who picked up her crew mates.

Hope that helps...again there were lots of people who were involved....and all contributed.

Greg

Scott Nixon picked up the other two.

Using the Quantum Avon inflatable 15' they saw the two girls get separated from their boat, so Scott grabbed two of them out of the water. Eventually putting them back on board Gorilla Girls. Then Scott removed Greg Fisher. Girls were wearing PFDs

In J/22s in the 2003 Rolex International Women's Keelboat Championship, the wind had picked up to 30 knots, with a big sea. A boat named Gorilla Girls went over in a serious wipeout and lost three of its crewmembers overboard. A competing crew saved one of the swimmers with difficulty on the third pass. (This crew has been awarded a Hanson medal.) With Gorilla Girls' spinnaker out of control and sheets and halyards well eased, the boat refused to right itself. The skipper was pinned on the leeward side, sometimes under water as the boat rolled.

In a coach's boat, Greg Fisher moved in from the leeward side and leaped aboard. He released sheets and halyards while Scott Nixon, in another coach's boat, cut some of the lines. When the sails were doused and the boat finally came upright, Fisher pulled the skipper out of the water and Nixon pulled the two remaining sailors into his boat.

Here is Fisher's description

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Nominators Name: Anna Tunnicliffe
Event Name: Rolex Women's Keelboat Championships
Sponsoring Yacht Club: Annapolis YC
Date of Event: September 2003
Event City: Annapolis
Event State: MD
Body of Water: Chesapeake bay
First Boat Name: Gorilla Girls
First Boat Length: 22'
First Boat Make Model: J/22
Rescuing Skipper: Corrie Clement
Rescuing Boat Make Model: J/22
Rescuing Boat Name: Peter Pirate
Rescuing Boat Length: 22'
What was the nature of this incident: Man over board
Did a Mayday call go out: no
Who responded: Corrie, Anna, Ali, and Nataliegh
Was any injury sustained by the victim: n
Was a PFD worn: y
What type: inflatable horseshoe
What position was the victim working before they went in: bow
Was this day or night: day
Wind speed: 30+kts
Wave height: 5+
Air temperature: 55ish
How much time did the victim spend in the water: 5-10 mins
What recovery method was used: figure 8
Was electronic MOB function used to locate the victim: n
Was a rescue swimmer put in the water: n
What color clothes were visible above the water: yellow
Was the victim able to help in the recovery: kind of
Was a Lifesling aboard: n
Rescuing Crews Names: Anna Tunnicliffe, Ali Sharpe, Nataleigh Vann.

How did victim help himself back onboard: Held on for dear life once Anna and Ali had gotten a hold of her, but it was too wavy for her to swim to the boat.
How did the victim get hoisted onto the deck: Anna and Ali pulled her up