

The Officers, Directors and Members of
US SAILING
are pleased to present the
ARTHUR B. HANSON RESCUE MEDAL
to
The Rescuing Crew on Mosquito
for the rescue as follows:

While sailing into the Manitou Channel on the afternoon of July 17, 2011, in a strong southwest wind gusting to 40 knots and 4 to 6 foot waves, Mosquito was running at high speed under an asymmetrical spinnaker when the boat was knocked over while jibing. Mosquito was knocked over so far that the spreader tips were touching water. Co-skipper Dave Radtke immediately took notice of co-skipper Steve Laughlin in the boat's wake. Radtke recalled thinking to himself, "I hope everybody remembers their job."



Radtke would not be disappointed in his crew. After shouting "man overboard," Radtke moved to the stern and deployed the boat's Lifesling as crewmember Bob King served as spotter, pointing at Laughlin and waving to him to assure him that he was not out of sight. At the helm, Peter Gibbons-Neff brought the boat's bow into the wind and the crew got to work dousing the spinnaker, which was a demanding job in these conditions. One crewmember suffered a third-degree rope burn on his hand during this process.

By the time the spinnaker was below, crewmember Geet Sharma had pushed the MOB (man over board) button on the boat's chart plotter and Radtke made a mayday call over the boat's radio. After the crew checked for lines in the water, the engine (which was running to charge batteries) was put into gear and the boat headed towards Laughlin in the direction King was pointing. Laughlin occasionally dipped out of sight in the trough of a wave, but his bright orange inflated life jacket was a visible target. Mosquito dragged the Lifesling into Laughlin's hands and he was pulled to the boat, where he climbed up the stern swim ladder. Radtke assured the Coast Guard that all hands were on deck. After the boat was cleaned up and a dressing was applied to the injured crew member's hand, the crew hoisted a spinnaker and resumed racing.

Craig Warner, who nominated Mosquito for the Hanson Rescue Medal, reported that the crew had three valuable takeaways:

1 - Preparation and Practice Are Key: Mosquito's sailors bring their own safety kits, including their preferred inflatable life jacket/safety harness, tether, and personal strobe light, as well as recharge kits for the inflatables. They practiced man overboard drills periodically during the season and discussed the procedure in detail during a mandatory team meeting before the start of the Chicago-Mackinac Race.

All of this preparation became necessary. "The incident occurred in a heartbeat. Laughlin went over the side so quickly that he had no time to worry about falling overboard," said Warner. "His first recollection of the incident is being under water and seeing the hull of the boat spinning over him from below the surface."

2 – Inflatable Life Jacket Lesson:

A second lesson learned is that a crotch strap is a good thing to have on an inflatable life jacket. Mr. Laughlin was not using one and the life jacket slipped up his torso and over his neck, making his maneuverability and swimming difficult.

3 – Importance of Sail Handling:

The boat's initial trouble occurred because the crew was attempting an inside jibe, with the asymmetrical spinnaker's clew between the sail and the headstay. This is a demanding, split-second task. "When sailing a sprit boat downwind in heavy air, you should rig the spinnaker for an outside jibe," Warner said in his nomination form. "The kite could have been allowed to 'flag' off of the bow until the main had been safely jibed and then trimmed in."

Mosquito Crew:

Dave Radtke - co-owner/skipper
Steve Laughlin - co-owner/skipper
Amelia Radtke - owner's daughter
Jim Hall
Art Macaw
Mark Keast
Peter Gibbons-Neff
Robert King
Geet Sharma
James O'Sullivan

US Sailing has awarded an Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal to the crew of Mosquito, a Farr 395, for rescuing the life of a fellow crewmember who fell overboard during the 2011 Chicago Yacht Club Race to Mackinac.

Dr. Gino Bottino, MD
Chairman, Safety at Sea Committee
By Direction

NOMINATION

Date 10/11/2011 5:43:17 PM

Date of Incident Sunday, July 17, 2011

What was the nature of this Incident? Man Overboard

What happened? "I would like to take this opportunity to nominate the crew of the Farr 395 ""Mosquito"" for the Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal for the following reason:

On the afternoon of July 17th 2011, Mosquito was racing in the 103rd Chicago Yacht Club Race to Mackinac. Racing conditions had been ideal throughout the afternoon with a south southwest breeze building steadily from the teens through the twenty's and then thirty with gusts as high as forty knots near Sleeping Bear Dunes.

Mosquito was flying a spinnaker and seeing boat speeds consistently in the mid-teens with a top speed of 17.6 knots. At approximately 1600 Mosquito entered the Manitou Passage. In the somewhat more restricted waterway she found it necessary to jibe frequently.

At about 1700 the crew of Mosquito set up to jibe from port onto starboard. The wind strength was approximately thirty knots. As the boat squared away the spinnaker sheet was eased and the clew brought forward of the forestay and then to its new trim position to port. The spinnaker filled to port but the main was still filled with the boom well out to starboard as the main trimmers had difficulty bringing the boom toward the center line in the heavy breeze. With the spinnaker filled in the heavy air the boat rolled hard to port causing the boom to slam violently across from starboard to port. The boat was knocked down such that the port spreader tips were in the water.

At this point James O'Sullivan was standing at the port shrouds, Art Macaw, Geet Sharma, and Mark Keast were near the starboard rail, Jim Hall was in the pit position, Dave Radtke was in the companionway tending the vang, Bob King was at the starboard main sheet winch, Peter Gibbons-Neff was at the helm, Steve Laughlin was tending the port main sheet winch and Amelia Radtke was off watch below.

As the boat rolled to port Mr. Radtke looked forward to see Mr. O'Sullivan hanging onto the port shrouds in water up to his chest. Seeing that O'Sullivan had a tight grip in spite of the fact that his PFD had inflated, Mr. Radtke looked aft to see Mr. Laughlin's feet disappearing into the water. As the boat struggled to come upright Radtke called ""man overboard"" and moved aft to deploy the Lifesling. Bob King was designated spotter and did nothing but keep his eyes on Mr. Laughlin and keep a finger pointed in his direction. At some point he waved to Mr. Laughlin to assure him that he was not out of sight. Mr. Laughlin acknowledged by waving back. Once some degree of control had been regained Mr. Gibbons-Neff brought the boat head to wind and the team got to work on dousing the spinnaker. At some point Mr. Sharma had pushed the MOB button on the chart plotter. Mr. Hall took the pit position, easing the tack and then starting to release the halyard while the foredeck team struggled to douse the kite in the stiff breeze. Mr. Radtke stepped below to issue a brief mayday call and his daughter, Amelia Radtke moved from her quarter berth to the forepeak to help draw the spinnaker through the forward hatch. As he eased the halyard Mr. Hall realized that the line was running from the clutch to behind his right knee and then down into the cabin. As the halyard ran it caused a severe rope burn to the back of his leg. He closed the clutch, untangled himself and resumed the douse. With the spinnaker finally in the forepeak Mr. Gibbons-Neff asked the team to inspect for lines in the water and confirming that all

lines were clear put the engine in gear (the engine had been running to charge the batteries) and headed in the direction that Mr. King was pointing.

Visibility was excellent and the sea state was a bit more settled as Mosquito was somewhat in the lee of North Manitou Island. Waves were probably running about four feet. Mr. Laughlin occasionally dipped out of sight in a trough, but because he was wearing a bright orange inflatable PFD and because Mr. King kept a sharp lookout the team never lost track of his position. Mosquito approached keeping Mr. Laughlin to port and in the lee of the waves. Mr. Laughlin grabbed the Lifesling line and indicated that he was in a fine state and started to make light of his situation. The team offered to bring him aboard using the sling and a halyard but he assured them that he could use the swim ladder. With the assistance of the Lifesling line Mr. Laughlin was brought to the stern of the boat, the ladder was deployed and many hands grabbed him and would not let him go. He climbed up under his own power over the transom and, as is his manner, started to joke about the situation. At his point Mr. Radtke responded to the call from the Coast Guard in reply to his mayday call to assure them that all hands were on deck and the emergency cancelled.

The team took some time to regroup, a dressing was applied to Mr. Halls burn, the mess was sorted out, the boat rigged, a spinnaker hoisted and racing resumed.

Key takeaways:

The incident occurred in a heartbeat.

Mr. Laughlin went over the side so quickly that he had no time to worry about falling overboard; indeed his first recollection of the incident is being under water and seeing the hull of the boat spinning over him from below the surface.

The team was not using tethers at that time as visibility was very good. Had Mr. Laughlin been wearing a tether it's conceivable that he could have been injured or drowned as he was pulled through the water as the crew worked to regain control of the boat. The team was wearing tethers when severe storms swept over the fleet at about midnight later that night.

The team concluded that crotch straps are an essential component of an inflatable pfd. As was customary, Mr. Laughlin was not using a crotch strap and while his PFD kept him on the surface it did side up his torso and over his neck making maneuverability difficult. The Spinlock leg straps are somewhat awkward and consequently often go unused. Something as simple as a sail tie run from the front and between the legs would be much better than nothing.

The team practiced man overboard drills periodically during the season and discussed the detail the procedure during the mandatory team meeting before the start of the race. At no time was there confusion or hesitation after Mr. Laughlin went over the side.

When sailing a sprit boat downwind in heavy air you should rig the spinnaker for an outside jibe. Had this been done there would have been no urgency to get the clew onto the new board to avoid wrapping the spinnaker around the forestay. The kite could have been allowed to "flag" off of the bow until the main had been safely jibed and then trimmed in.

On board Mosquito, team members bring their own safety kit including PFD, strobe and tether. It is also wise to bring extra recharge kits as several PFDs accidentally deployed and could not be recharged.

Because of their exemplary seamanship in rescuing a team mate I wish once again to nominate the crew of Mosquito for the Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal.

Respectfully submitted: Craig Warner

Event Name 2011 Chicago Yacht Club Race to Mackinac

Sponsoring Yacht Club Chicago Yacht Club

Event City Chicago

Event State IL

Body of Water Lake Michigan

Day or Night? Day

Air Temperature 88

Water Temperature 70

Wind Speed 30

Wave Height 4

Name and Home Town (City, State) Steve Laughlin

Boat Name Mosquito

Boat Length 39.5

Boat Make & Model Farr 395

What position(s) was/were the victim working before they went in? Trimming main

Was a PFD worn by the victim(s)? Yes

What Type (Victim 1)? Spinlock Deck Vest auto inflate

Skipper's Name Dave Radtke and Steve Laughlin

Boat Make & Model Farr 395

Crew's Names and function each performed in the rescue: "Art Macaw..foredeck dousing spinnaker Mark Keast..foredeck dousing spinnaker, Geet Sharma..pushed MOB button and foredeck dousing spinnaker, James O'Sullivan..foredeck dousing spinnaker, Jim Hall..pit position releasing tack and easing halyard, Amelia Radtke..sewer position in forepeak assisting in bringing spinnaker through hatch and into forepeak, Peter Gibbons-Neff..helmsman, Bob King..spotter, Dave Radtke..Co Skipper with Mr. Laughlin. Called ""man overboard"" deployed Lifesling, issued mayday call and helped coordinate efforts, Steve Laughlin..Co-Skipper with Mr. Laughlin. Maintained his composure throughout the incident. His sense of humor and willingness to make lite of the situation after returning on board put the team at ease and allowed them to resume racing quickly."

Boat Name Mosquito

Boat Length 39.5

What recovery method was used (Quickstop, Reach Method, Figure 8, etc)? Quickstop

Did the victim's boat lose sight of the victim? No

What search pattern was used? No

Was GPS or other electronic MOB function used to track or help locate the victim? No

Was a rescue swimmer put in the water Y/N? No

Did the victim have a strobe light, a light or whistle? Yes

What color clothes were visible above the water? Orange

Was the victim able to help in the recovery? Yes

In what way? Climbed up the swim ladder.

How did the victim get hoisted from the water level up onto the deck? Climbed up the swim ladder with assistance from the team.

Was any injury sustained by the victim? Yes

Was a Lifesling aboard? Yes

What type (hypothermia included)? Bruises sustained while being knocked overboard.

Was it used? Yes

How much time did the victim spend in the water? 12 minutes + or-

Did a Mayday call go out? Yes

Who responded? USCG

Nominator's Name Craig Warner

Do you give permission to have this story published? Yes

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