

Hanson Medal Awarded to David Branson

The officers, directors and member of US Sailing presented the Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal to David Branson for his effort in the rescue of a fellow sailor at the Bay Week Regatta on Put In Bay, Ohio.

On July 30, 2021, the annual Bay Week Regatta was underway on Put In Bay, Ohio. The Regatta is a large, with multiple courses and fleets, including Melges 24's and the International Hobie Wave Catamaran Regatta.

Branson, skipper/owner of Melges 24 *Bullett*, was participating in the regatta with his crew of 4. That morning, at about 11:00 AM, they were sailing out to the racecourse when another vessel called their attention to a Hobie Wave about 100 yards to their starboard. The skipper of that single-handed catamaran was slumped over his tiller and appeared to be in distress. Branson is a medical professional and sailed over to investigate. As they approached, they confirmed that the Hobie skipper was in medical distress.

The race that morning had been postponed due to high winds, and at this time the wind was approximately 15 knots. The crew of *Bullett* quickly discussed the best course of action, and agreed that with his medical skills, Dave was the best person to provide assistance. They sailed alongside the catamaran which was sailing on its own downwind about 7-8 knots. Dave jumped aboard. He performed an initial medical assessment of the victim and removed his lifejacket and moved him to the hard surface of a hull to be able to effectively perform CPR. Meanwhile, the crew on *Bullett* called for assistance both on the VHF radio and 911 on their cell phones.

The Race Committee boat responded to the distress call and came to tow the catamaran to shore. Dave had to steer the Hobie with his feet while continuing chest compressions as the boat was being towed. Rescue personnel met them ashore and performed a helicopter evacuation.

Unfortunately, despite their combined efforts, the skipper of the Hobie did not survive.

For coming to the medical aid of a fellow sailor in distress on the water, US Sailing is pleased to award the Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal to David Branson.

Richard W. York
Chairman, Safety at Sea Committee
By Direction