

Doc Gilbert Potomac Cup
Potomac River Sailing Association – Fleet 50
Washington DC
May 3–4, 2014

Pos	Sail#	Crew	From	Total	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6
1	15240	Steve Constants, Mike Constants & Lisbet Kugler	SSA	11	(6)	4	2	1	3	1
2	15336	Trevor Prior, Barb Hil & Gary Hoffer	SYC	11	1	2	(4)	3	2	3
3	15257	Joan Hurban, Gary Hurban & Tony Ireland	SSA Fleet 329	21	4	5	9	(11)	1	2
4	14036	Justin Coplan, Danielle Prior & Amy	Fleet 253	23	2	3	1	2	15	(17\DNF)
5	15142	Nabeel Alsalam, Jess Harrington & Stefano deLeo	PRSA-Fleet 50	24	3	1	3	7	10	(17\DNF)
6	15016	Jamie Brickell, Susie Brickell & Alex Johnson	SSA Fleet 329	26	7	(8)	6	4	4	5
7	7603	Bob Astrove, Brian Burk, Jonathan Karpatkin & Laurie Duncan	PRSA	29	5	6	7	(12)	7	4
8	15084	Joe Buczkowski, Wayne Knibloe & Larry Ricafort	Hampton YC, Fleet 509	31	8	7	5	5	6	(17\DNF)
9	14376	Alex Thomson, Will Phillippe & Laura Lake	PRSA / Fleet 50	44	9	9	11	9	(12)	6
10	14525	John Bates	SYC	47	13	(13)	10	6	11	7
11	14566	Frank Gallagher, Mladen Karcic & Dave Beckett		47	10	10	8	10	9	(17\DNF)
12	14969	Chandler Owen, Bruce Heida & Susie Acevedo	PRSA fleet 50, HIYC Fleet	54	12	12	12	13	5	(17\DNF)
13	14100	David Fehrle, Susan Humphrey & Red Fehrle	PRSA Fleet 50	63	14	14	13	8	14	(17\DNS)
14	15311	Jim Dillard, Gordon Kellog & Christy Chen	Poquoson Fleet 581	64	11	11	17\DNS	17\DNS	8	(17\DNS)
15	14221	Lindsay Bach, Esther Yong, Kim Bubet & Piercarlo Brunino	PRSA- Lightning Fleet 50	79	16	16	17\DNS	17\DNS	13	(17\DNF)
16	14165	Lisa-Marie Lane, Jim Lane & Catherine Calvin	Fleet 50	81	15	15	17\DNS	17\DNS	17\DNS	(17\DNF)

R.C.Chair: Bruce Bingman
4 May, '14, 20:54

2014 Doc Gilbert Potomac Cup Recap

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We were thrilled to welcome 16 Lightnings to Leesylvania State Park for the 30th Annual Doc Gilbert Potomac Cup on May 3-4, 2014. With great weather over the weekend we were able to complete 6 races in a range of conditions and also enjoy a fantastic weekend of camping and celebrating at the park. One of the highlights of the weekend was Fleet 50's recognition of Jim Dillard with an Honorary Life Membership in Fleet 50 for all of the work that he has done in supporting the Fleet, the Lightning Class, and especially the Potomac Cup Regatta.

Congratulations to Steve Constants, Mike Constants, and Lisbet Kugler on *Brown Eyed Girl* for their win in the regatta. It was a tight race for the trophies, as the 1st place spot was decided on a tiebreaker!

- [Day 1 photos from the pin boat](#), courtesy of Mike Heinsdorf (thanks Mike!)
- [Award Ceremony photos](#), courtesy of Jim Lane (thanks Jim!)

I was on the signal boat for the regatta, and thanks to Dave from [Tim's Rivershore Restaurant & Crab House](#) we had a great view of the action from *Propwash*, a 1925 Oyster boat. Keep reading for a race-by-race recap of what we saw on *Propwash*!

I arrived at Leesylvania State Park mid-afternoon on Friday, set up my tent, and grabbed a frosty beverage to enjoy the afternoon. Ron Buchanan, Chandler Owen, Jim Dillard, Lindsay Bach, and Jamie Brickell arrived not long after I did, so we all helped each other set up boats as we traded stories about past regattas and our sailing plans for the year. Our Fleet 50 volunteers had done a great job in bringing down the RC skiffs earlier in the day, so Chandler, Ron, and I dropped the 16’ skiff in the water and motored over to Tim’s for a relaxed dinner. I was the only one who camped in the park on Friday night, and despite the lack of company it was a fantastic night — cool and quiet, save for the frisky deer in the treeline behind my tent!

Saturday dawned warm and quiet. The forecast was for wind to fill in over the course of the day, but the river was like glass as I woke up and as competitors started to arrive at the park. Thanks to Lisa-Marie and Lindsay, we had all of our food organized such that breakfast & coffee were ready at 8am and Joe was ready to go at the registration station. It was a liesurly morning for most folks as we rigged boats, had a bite to eat, and caught up with each other. PRO Bruce Bingman gave us the essential info at our competitors’ right on time, and we all hit the water. On *Propwash* we motored out east towards the channel and anchored, anticipating a WSW breeze. And then we waited...and waited...watching as the sailors struggled against the strong current and tidal outflow in their attempts to reach the course in very, very light wind. We were about to start organizing a tow when the wind filled in and boats started making their own way to the starting area.

Race 1: It took a bit for the breeze to fill in, but we finally kicked things off with a warning signal around 2:00 on Saturday. With a SW breeze and a stiff current sweeping downriver, we were prepared for lots of OCS calls on the signal boat. I saw some boats pointing their bow downwind at about 20-degrees relative to the line and still being swept across onto the course side as they tried to get below the line! Most boats lined up towards the pin end — presumably to head left into the channel and take advantage of the current that would speed them towards the windward mark — but a slight righty hit just in the last minute before the starting sequence, making the boat a bit favored. On the signal boat, we were amazed that there was on only 1 OCS call! Nabeel was one of the first boats to round the windward mark, and we watched as Team *Shadowfax* (sailing with Jess & Stefano) favored the middle working downwind. Much of the pack split towards the right side of the course (looking upwind) but didn’t gain much doing so. Nabeel and the next few boats split at the gate, with the boats who headed right (inshore) coming out ahead in the end. At the finish it was Trevor Prior and Justin Copelan finishing just ahead of Nabeel.

Race 2: This time there was a slight left shift in the middle of the starting sequence. Once again boats favored the pin, and this time it was an easy “all clear” as the gun sounded. Lindsay Bach poked out to an early lead down toward the pin end, and it was great to see him have a great start in this race! Once again the fleet split pretty evenly. One half headed left towards the channel for current. The pack that went right found more pressure, though, and from our perspective on the signal boat it seemed that the middle-right paid the most dividends going upwind. Justin lead the pack around the top mark, followed by Trevor, Nabeel, and Steve. We watched Nabeel head left (facing downwind, or to the right side of the course facing upwind) as he headed downhill while the rest of the pack went to the right side (VA shore, or away from the channel). There was pressure on both edges, but not in the middle of the course at this point. Nabeel jibed to cross the entire pack as he came across to the center, and as we watched the pack converge on the leeward gate area we noticed a *HUGE* log drifting downriver, perpendicular to the course, and square into the gate area! We radioed the pin boat and Mike & Mark did a great job of lassoing the pole (quite literally tying it to the side of the 19’ skiff) and dragging it out of the way. Those guys have some log wrangling skills! At the finish it was Nabeel edging out Trevor in a very close finish, followed by Justin and Steve.

Race 3: The wind started to pipe up a bit, and a few boats retired going into this race. We had a pretty big gust and a big right shift right at the start of the race, but the pack was still well off the line even as they crowded down at the pin. Some boats split left, but by this time the current/tidal flow was a bit less a factor. Finding pressure was more important, and the lead pack found this pressure on the left side of the course (going right downwind), meaning that they came out ahead even as the fought a marginally stronger current/tidal flow on the channel side of the course. After some snotty gusts the wind lightened in the middle of the race and suddenly leeward hiking was the order of the day. Justin and Steve led the pack at the leeward gate, and both opted for the left gate (facing downwind), heading upwind on the right side of the course. They were closely followed by Nabeel, Jamie, and the Hurbans. Most boats favored the right side of the course on the second upwind leg given the fact that most puffs seemed to be filling in from that side of the course. Justin and Steve separated from the pack on the final run, with Justin taking the bullet followed by Steve and then Nabeel.

Race 4: it was late in the day by the time race 3 finished, but we had breeze...and we had a foreboding forecast for big wind on Sunday, so the RC was determined to get us 4 races on Saturday. PRO Bruce Bingman made a wise choice in sending the fleet off on a 3-leg race this time around. The pin was favored at the start and we had a couple of OCS boats, but all restarted without problem. We were a bit busy on the signal boat cleaning up gear and then getting ferried to shore on the skiff so that we could ice down the beer and spark the grills, so I don’t have much in the way of a firsthand account for this race. The biggest highlight, though, was the fact that David Fehrle — at 16 years old! — took 8th in the race! He had some fine mid-fleet showings in prior races as well, and we were all thrilled to see a young skipper competing with the best of them in the regatta!

Party! After the racing we all enjoyed the traditional steak & salmon BBQ. Once again, Fleet 50 skipper and *Chef du Cuisine* Lindsay Bach, assisted by Bruce Heida on the salmon grill, did a *fantastic* job with not just the BBQ, but also a range of homemade side salads and condiments. We also had a little fun with a wayward duckling that found its way up to the park pavilion. We tried to get Marianne Gallagher to take the duck for her grandkids (she was NOT interested), and then Anne (Jim Dillard’s daughter) was going to take it if it was still wandering around on Sunday. Watching a bunch of sailors (many of them a bit buzzed on *Yuengling*, and none experts in animal control) try to corral a duck was a hoot. Eventually, Rowan Lane talked David Ferhle into “baby-sitting ” until morning. We put the duck in a box with food and a towel in the heated men’s room at the mark. Ultimately, though, Ranger Trey came back to “rescue” the the baby duck and find it a good home! With a truckload of beer (literally!) from *Yuengling* and great company all around, we had a wonderful celebration and more than enough food and drink to send us off into our tents ready for a good night’s sleep.

Day 2 dawned warm and sunny, with a bit of breeze already at daybreak. I slept in just a bit, but emerged from my tent at 7:30 to find that a whole crew had brought propane stoves, pans, and eggs to spice up our leftover steaks. Thanks to Red, Sue, Joe, Trevor, and many others for a fantastic breakfast scramble! Already at breakfast the discussion was all about the wind since a low pressure trough was forecast to come through the area by mid-afternoon and gusts past 30 kts were predicted. There were small craft advisories for portions of the Potomac and Chesapeake as we headed out to the racecourse, though the breeze was just about 8-10 in Leeslyvania at that time. We all knew that the breeze was going to build, though, so the goal was to get our remaining two races in before noon.

Race 5: The breeze built a bit in the pre-start sequence for race 4, such that we had about 12 knots as the gun sounded. Justin won the pin end and Chandler had a great boat end start. There was a *tremendous* mid-line sag, such that the middle boats were easily one boat-length off the line at the gun! At least we didn’t have to use the x-ray flag! The breeze was oscillating by a pretty big swing (about 15-20 degrees from median) in fairly regular 5-minute patterns, so it was tough to tell who was really ahead as the fleet once again split sides of the course. At the top mark the Hurbans led the pack, followed by Justin, Bobby, Trevor, and...*Jim Dillard* having a great race! The Hurbans led the fleet into the left gate mark — amidst a *nasty* puff — and headed back out to the right side of the course going upwind as the breeze started to build. The wind moved right and settled in from the SW on this leg as it continued to build. We watched some more nasty puff/shift combos come down over the hills near the windward mark, and one boat (Justin & crew) got caught by a wicked auto-tack puff and capsized. They did a great job in quickly recovering their boat, and thought it cost them in terms of finishing place it was a pretty quick “down & up” for them. The finish was quite exciting for us on *Propwash* as we watched the Hurbans battle Trevor at full speed under spinnaker for the pin end of the line. It was quite literally neck-and-neck up to the last second, but Joan, Gary, and Tony Ireland surged out ahead with about a boat-length to go to take the bullet!

Race 6: It was starting to snort a bit as we re-set the course for the right shift that came in during Race 5. The windward mark was now right out in front of Tim’s; as it turns out this location for the mark would not only provide the lunch crowd there, but would also prove important later in the racing. Both Steve and Trevor got *great* boat-end starts in this race, nailing the line just after the gun sounded. Given that the two teams were tied on scores at this point, I’m sure that both teams knew that this was the start and the race for the regatta! The breeze built a bit on the first windward leg, but we never saw anything more than a consistent 12-15 kts on the signal boat. The bigger problem was the puffs, though. As we watched the racing (and heard radio reports from the windward mark boat) we heard that some pretty massive gusts were touching down and shifting up to 30-40 degrees away from the median wind direction. From the signal boat we saw that play out as a couple of boats got slammed with a puff on the first downhill leg, capsizing without any time to adjust. The mark boat was quickly on the scene to assist the first two (Nabeel and Chandler, I think), but it took some...and two more (Joe and Justin, I think) got hit with the same nastiness as they turned downhill on the second run. At this point a couple of the first boats were just righted and started to bail, but on the signal boat we were more than a bit concerned for all of the folks in the cold water and the limits of our RC skiffs. We had started stopwatches as the boats started to capsize, and we sent the pin boat up to the windward mark after the last of the pack was safely around the leeward gate. To the credit of Tim’s, they saw the capsizes and sent out a pontoon boat to the area to give assistance as well while maintaining radio contact with us on the signal boat (huge thank you to Tim’s!). Eventually Joe and Justin were back upright and headed home, and everybody arrived at the dock safe and sound.

Back on shore we had a great awards celebration. Thanks to the preparedness of the sailors and the great work by our RC crew on the skiffs (Mike, Scott, Doug, Jeff, and John), everybody recovered from their capsizes safe and sound, and with minimal damage (though I understand that Nabeel had to fashion a makeshift tiller to make it back to shore). We awarded most of our APS gift certificates to the newly inducted “Potomac River Swim Club” (the four teams who took a dip on day 2), much to their chagrin. Everybody was a good sport about this and, thankfully, we could all be good sports about it because we were prepared for capsizes and because each team handled themselves well in the situation. Our top APS gift certificate went to the youngest skipper in the pack. At 16, David Fehrle did a fantastic job driving 14100 for the entire weekend (including great finishes on day 1 and flying the bag in the nasty winds of race 5!). David’s award is well deserved, and serves as a warning to us all-this guy will be one to reckon with on the racecourse!

Once again, I want to give a *huge thank you* to the great team of volunteers from Fleet 50 and beyond that made the regatta possible. Hosting a “home” regatta off-site, at a location with no refrigeration, is a logistical challenge, but a challenge that all of us in Fleet 50 have been able to master over the 30 years that the Doc Gilbert Potomac Cup has been held. Thank you once again to our regatta volunteers and to all of the competitors that made the trip for the racing!