

LONG BEACH HARBOR INVITATIONAL SERIES
BEAT THE HEAT RACE
AUGUST 20, 2011

The start seemed to be two separate battles for position between Dos Amigos Dos & Renegade and closer to the committee boat between Old Guys Rule & Bilbo Baggins. Dos & Renegade both got clean starts at the gun. Dos was a few feet to windward. Being bigger and faster, Dos started to slowly pull ahead and blanket Renegade. Renegade tacked at the first chance to get to clean air. After we were on port tack, I was able to see Bilbo just getting started. I don't know what happened, but apparently Old Guys really slowed them down in their start sequence.

It wasn't long before Old Guys pulled ahead, followed by Dos and Renegade with Bilbo trailing. It stayed like this with the two faster boats slowly pulling away from Renegade & Bilbo. But the course called for us to round mark 35 to starboard, then mark 2 to starboard. Only problem was no one could find mark 2. With the lead boats looking for mark 2, the rear boats were able to close the gap and gain on the lead boats. Everyone finally realized that mark 2 was gone and made a break for mark 39. Old Guys & Dos went to the leeward of Island White. Renegade & Bilbo went to the windward. Didn't seem to make much difference. The order remained the same. Everyone rounded 39 and headed for mark 37.

This time all four boats stayed to the windward of Island White, but only the three lead boats went to the leeward of Island Freeman. Bilbo went windward. Once again, we rounded 37 in the same order and headed for 32. The course to 32 was a downwind run and Bilbo took great pleasure in trying to steal Renegade's wind. Renegade managed to hold Bilbo off and we all rounded 32 in the same order.

Next stop the finish! Old Guys and Dos were ahead of us and had no effect on the race between Renegade and Bilbo. We rounded 32 onto a port tack headed towards Island Chaffee. Both Renegade and Bilbo tacked onto starboard fairly quickly. Both wanting to avoid any island shadow and get over towards the finish. Bilbo always seems to be able to out point Renegade. She continued to close the gap and gain ground to windward. Renegade went onto a port tack early and was able cross Bilbo, but still couldn't make the finish line. Bilbo waited until she could make the finish before tacking onto a port tack. Finally, Renegade could make the pin, but Bilbo was closing fast. Renegade tacked over to a starboard tack, made the pin, and closed the door on Bilbo. This forced Bilbo to dip Renegade before she could finish.

The finish was so close that we knew Bilbo would correct over us (ended up being 23 seconds), but we were bound and determined to beat him across the line. After two hours of racing, Renegade & Bilbo finished within 10 seconds of each other. Bilbo earned a well deserved 1st, Renegade 2nd, Old Guys Rule 3rd, and Dos Amigos Dos 4th. The time separating 1st place from 4th place in PHRF A was 46 seconds. This was, by far, the most competitive race of the year!

Ben Smith
Skipper of Renegade
Beneteau 38S5