

High Speed Folding an F-31

(Don't try this at home)

The adventures of the Cheekee Monkee at Round the County 2004



Round the County 2004 - A memorable experience for the Crew of the Cheekee Monkee!

Saturday was a light wind day with a down wind start. Three starts, 10 minutes apart, slow boats first, fast boats in the second start and big boats and the multi-hulls in the last start. Sailing south from Lydia Shoal, we sailed through the fleet and by the time we got to James Island, we were holding off Jonathan McKee in Dark Star, his Riptide 44. We were first boat to Davidson Rock for the right hand turn around the bottom of the San Juan Islands, Slowly building our lead, we crossed the half way point at Salmon Bank with Dark Star 2 minutes behind and Neptune's Car hot on her heels only a couple of more minutes behind. The light to drifting conditions for the first half of the race caused most of the fleet to DNF for the first day of racing, only 9 boats made it to the finish line, in our class, only the Cheekee Monkee managed to finish in the Multi-hull. Although we led the entire fleet most of the way around the course, Neptune's car finally passed us in a light breeze to windward in Haro Strait off the Lime Kiln Lighthouse, shortly thereafter, Dark Star got a huge lift and we got a big knock and they managed to squeak past us to take 2nd for the day. It certainly seemed like Neptune's car took the wind with them as they crossed the line, lucky for them, just before the ebb really started to flow against us all, we really slogged away to be the 3rd boat across the line against a dying breeze and a building current.

Sunday proved to be a very different day, BIG BIG WIND! We started at 09:20 on port tack with the spinnaker and full main. We sailed right into the middle of our fleet (Class 0

and the Multi's started together) as the fleet crossed the line and then we gybed onto starboard and took off through the fleet romping down wind. By the time we arrived at Turn Point on Stuart Island, we had our jib up as well. Dropping the spinnaker and turning right at turn point we went from a spinnaker run to a tight reach up Boundary Pass. Here we could really feel the effects of the wind; it was very windy, gusting to well over 30 knots with a nasty chop (Wind against current). Over powered, we dropped the jib and put a reef in the main and shot off into the lead at 17 - 18 knots, under reefed main only, no jib. As we approached Patos, the 1/2 way point, the wind just kept getting lighter and lighter. Up went the jib, then we tried to shake the reef from the main, but a batten tensioner got caught on the spinnaker halyard and the #3 from the top batten started to come out of the main sail. We dropped the sail to the deck and secured the batten and then raised it back up, meanwhile, Cassiopeia was reeling us in. As they came abeam, we got back in the race and took off for Patos. Cheekee Monkee once again was the first boat to the 1/2 way mark. Now we had a long beat up the channel into Rosario Strait and a right hand turn at Lawrence Point with a dash to the finish line at Lydia Shoal. Working our way upwind, the wind was variable and we didn't make the best choices to max the wind and current in our favor. Both Cassiopeia and Neptune's Car had sailed past us by the time we got to Lawrence Point. Cassiopeia was well over near Sinclair Island well upwind and looked to be in a hole, standing up straight. Neptune's Car rounded Lawrence Point with a good breeze and it looked to be the way to go until they stood up straight as well, which way should we go? The great circle to the left after Cassiopeia, or the straight shot to the line that Neptune's Car was trying? Neptune's Car was in a hole and all of a sudden Cassiopeia leans right over!

We charge off to the left, close hauled with full main and Screecher, flying on one hull at 12 - 14 knots. We sail past Neptune's Car and start reeling in Cassiopeia. The wind is building and we are moving fast. Now we are only 2 miles from the finish line and the wind starts to really blow, we have cracked off and the are over powered with the Screecher and full main, we are shooting up out of the water on the new "Extra Strong" foil in the starboard AMA. We have been sailing very fast and flying two hulls most of the time upwind, the boat is handling like a dream.



We flog the main, we occasionally have to blow off the screecher, only 1 1/2 mile s to go and as the Cheekee Monkee lifts (well more like shoots) forward and up out of the water, when

we come back down, we hear a loud crack. We think the foil has broken for a third time. No problem, we are almost there, we keep pushing. Morgan stands up to see what we have done and reports that the foil has broken no problem we say. Then he says "no it's the AMA", no problem we say, it has water tight bulkheads, we will deal with it when we get across the line. Then he says, no, it's the AKA's they have broken, we say "OH #\$\$%&", we blow off the sheets and furl the screecher, Morgan raises the foil and both Mike and Morgan grab lines to lash the AMA to the AKAs so we don't lose the hull or the rig. Now we have it lashed and we are still limping toward the line while Mike busies himself lashing spare halyards to the AKAs so the rig won't fall over to windward. While he is doing that, the hull creaks and groans and finally parts from the AKAs fore and aft, only the broken carbon A Cat mast is holding the AMA to the net, the hull is now bobbing freely and not providing any floatation, down come the main and we resign ourselves to a DNF, on goes the motor and the wind still builds, with just the mast up, Mike on the lee side tying off halyards and Morgan on the bow and I am in the cockpit, when a mighty gust starts to lay the Cheekee Monkee on her beam ends.....the crew runs to the weather net to stop us from an apparent capsizing. (We won't really know if it would have been stopped by the AMA that was lashed to the AKA's to leeward or not, as our weight flattened the boat right out before we got to the point of apparent no return.)



So close to a finish, but not today, we slowly motored into Peavine Pass under power and put in at Blakely Island Marina. We took a break, tidied up the boat, completed detaching the AMA from the net tube and lifting the detached AMA up onto the port net just like in the photos on the website. Then with everything secure, we motored back the 9 miles to West Sound Marina, where the Cheekee Monkee sits right now waiting for us to go on back over there with the trailer to tow her back home overland.

What an exciting race, what an exciting adventure it has been modifying the Cheekee Monkee and pressing the limits of the boat in search of speed and performance. I asked to

foil designer to build me stronger foils as I had broken the Starboard one twice. He warned me that I could break the boat, I said, let me worry about that, just build me a strong foil. Well I guess I got what I asked for.....The boat wasn't designed for foils so I am really pushing the limits but there are other contributing factors at play here.

In 1997 I hit Ragtime, a Santana 35 hard on the beam with the bow of the starboard AMA, the result was several thousand dollars of damage to the Cheekee Monkee as we stove in the bow, (no damage to Ragtime). In 2002 we hit a 16 - 18" low floating log in the Around Bowen Race at 12 - 14 knots with the bow of the starboard AMA and we stopped dead and promptly filled up with water as we split the bow right open, this repair was very expensive. This year at the Semiahmoo Regatta, my outboard engine jammed in gear and I hit the cement dock at Blaine Harbor with the bow of the Starboard AMA. The very last thing we did to the boat just 4 weeks ago was to remove the "decorative ring" at the hull deck joint between the AKAs and AMAs. Perhaps this decorative ring was providing some additional strength, perhaps not, but the boat is coming up on 10 years of age and those joints have taken a beating over the years so the failure is not that unreasonable given the boat's history.

I am so happy that it has happened at the end of the season. It gives us time to get the boat repaired and back in the running for 2005, see you on the water at Southern Straits!



Please click on the link below to see the latest pictures of the Cheekee Monkee. We didn't quite survive the Round the County Race on Sunday.

http://www.cheekeemonkee.com/cheekeePictures.php?spgmGal=Round_the_County

For full results from Round the County 2004

http://www.oicy.org/race_book/RoundTheCounty/RNDCNTYresults2004.htm