



The Swiftsure International Yacht Race is known by many as a race of confidence and determination. In yacht clubs across the continent, casual conversation of northwest racing often leads to talk of Swiftsure. Many have heard the lore of racing within the Strait of Juan de Fuca with conditions that can vary from heavy wind and waves to slatting, becalmed for hours or days while surrounded in drizzle and fog. Many sailors have, at one time or another, wanted to participate in the Swiftsure race. Those who have made it to Victoria, British Columbia for the race, leave with an experience never to be forgotten.

Every major maritime region of North America has its own "Great Race." Historically, the Royal Victoria Yacht Club's (RVYC) Swiftsure International Yacht Race is the Pacific

Above: Swiftsure veteran, Doug Fryer's Perry 42, "Night Runner," passes the iconic Race Rocks Lighthouse.

Below: Peter Salusbury's Riptide 35MkII, "Longboard" captures first in the Swiftsure Lightship Classic (PHRF).

Photos by Jan Anderson.

Northwest's "Great Race." Southern California has the Islands Race or the Newport to Ensanada. Chicago has the Race to Mackinac Island. On par, Swiftsure has attracted international sailors from as far as Russia and New Zealand to race 138.2 miles to the Swiftsure Bank. Once the location of the Swiftsure Lightship, the Swiftsure Bank has proven for over 62 years to be the ultimate Pacific Northwest challenge of strategy and perseverance.

This year, the 2014 Swiftsure had a fleet of 186 boats racing either PHRF or IRC in one of five distinct distance races along the waters of the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The longest running of the races, The Lightship Classic to Swiftsure Bank, had 29 boats ranging from Paul LaMarche's Santa Cruz 70 *Neptune's Car* to the Royal



Canadian Navy's Owens 102, the HMCS *Oriole*. The most popular course, the Cape Flattery Race to Neah Bay, at 101.9 miles, hosted the fast boats, multihulls, double-handed boats and the third start with the largest fleet of 69 boats. With 37 boats, the 78.7 mile Juan De Fuca Race to Clallam Bay has been the second longest running race of Swiftsure. The fifth event was the 21 mile Inshore Classic to Albert Head and Discovery Island. At 51 boats, the fleet of flying and non-flying sail monohulls as well as a small class of multihulls, would race a one day inshore regatta for the event.

On the Friday prior to race day, the energy level in Victoria's Inner Harbour was exuberant. The day was filled with last minute boat preparation and jovial stories of past races. Battle flag adorned boats encompassed the Inner Harbour docks. Victoria residents and mainland visitors walked the docks taking in the spectacle of boats and racers with the Parliament Building and the Fairmont Empress Hotel set as the backdrop.

Saturday morning's forecast of strong currents and building breeze had the fleet abuzz with activity. Everyone was eager to cast off and get out to the starting area. The boats set off forming a long parade that stretched from the Inner Harbour to the starting area off of Clover Point. We all arrived to light breeze and the starting line set with a crowd amassed along the shore to watch the starts. The breeze, lighter than expected, didn't diminish our anticipation of the race to come.

As canon fire rang from the Royal Canadian Naval Vessel at the pin end, the fleets started in five waves. Each wave of boats was met by an ever building breeze. With increasing breeze and flooding current each boat made their way southwest toward Race Rocks. On the approach to Race Rocks, in adverse current, it is often tactical to play the many geographical eddies along Perry and Pedder Bays, for current relief. The breeze held steady carrying us along the Canadian shore side waters to pass at Race Rocks. The Inshore Classic competitors would sail a seven leg race short of Race Rocks in sunshine and plentiful breeze. Michael Hoffman racing his J/40, *Malolo*, commented that "the race was fast and fun with a great finish at Cadboro Bay



With increasing breeze and flooding current, Vince Depillis' Corsair 31R, "Freda Mae" and John Mortimer's Beneteau 47.7, "String Theory" made their way southwest toward Race Rocks. Photo by Jan Anderson.

where we enjoyed an equally fun BBQ hosted by the RVYC."

Race Rocks is considered by many to be the "unofficial" start of the Swiftsure race. The narrow passage of "Race Rocks Passage," framed by the picturesque Race Rocks Lighthouse and the rugged Canadian shoreline, channels the massive tidal flows from the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Making it through the "Rocks" before maximum current, offers the greatest tactical advantage over your fleet. Once

through the "Rocks" the hardest tactical decision is to beat northwest along the Canada shore or head south toward the Washington coastline. Where will the wind be strongest? Where will the current be least? Choosing wisely can very well win the race.

Jim Geros, racing his J/105 *Last Tango*, recalled that "among the four J/105s racing; Jerry Diercks' *Delirium* and *Last Tango*, went through Race Rocks together and match raced most of the outbound leg to Cape Flattery

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Photo by Jan Anderson.



44, *Wasabi*, chose the Canadian shore and found current relief close to shore. After an afternoon beating to weather along the majestic emerald shores of the Strait we each rounded the mark at Neah Bay.

It is often a challenging approach and rounding at the Cape Flattery mark set in Neah Bay. The Royal Canadian

Division	PI Div	PI Class	PI Race	Sail#	Yacht	Make	Skipper	2	8	15	28	89			
Swiftsure Lightship Classic (PHRF)															
1	1	-	1	74445	Longboard	Riptide35 MkII	Peter Salusbury	3	1	14	23	18678	Allegro Vivace	J/105	Migliorini & Summers
1	2	-	2	59902	Terremoto	Riptide 35	Bill Weinstein	3	2	16	30	18683	Free Bowl of Soup	J/105	Doug Schenk
1	3	-	3	50039	Raven	CM1200	Ian Lloyd	3	3	19	39	87383	Ragtime	Santana 35	Paul Watson
Finished Short Course															
2	1	-	-	25064	Korina-Korina	Jeanneau	Jon Knudson	1	1	3	7	46960	Mischief	Santana	Scott Patterson
2	2	-	-	74359	Clara Allegro	Bene First 36.7	Carl Richardson	1	2	5	13	52033	Interim	Ross 930	John Schnellback
2	3	-	-	79117	Family Affair	Beneteau	Thomas Buus	1	3	6	14	470			
2	4	-	-	4501	Alegria X	Dufour 45e	Colin Jackson	1	4	7	16	69577			
2	5	-	-	52804	Different Drummer	WauqCent 40s	Charles Hill	1	5	8	17	74271			
2	6	-	-	59494	Night Runner	Perry 42	Doug Fryer	1	6	9	22	34950			
2	7	-	-	74373	Kinetic	Benet First 47.7	David Sutcliffe	1	7	11	25	28642			
2	8	-	-	74456	String Theory	Beneteau	John Mortimer	1	8	12	26	74257			
2	9	-	-	50	Tiger Lily 1	Bene First 50	Dan Boyko	2	1	1	5	74408			
2	10	-	-	74454	Turnagain	Benet 50	Travis McGregor	2	2	2	6	34956			
2	11	-	-	74400	Kerkyra	Hanse 40	Owen Thistle	2	3	4	10	220			
3	1	-	-	226	Martha	Staysail Schooner	Robert d'Arcy	2	4	10	24	79058			
3	2	-	-	59246	Freedom X	Tartan Ten	Alex Wigley	2	5	13	27	7240			
3	3	-	-	107	Cariad	Valiant	Alexander Weinert	2	6	14	29	12			
Swiftsure Lightship Classic (IRC)															
1	1	-	1	88008	Glory	TP52	Andrew Koch	2	7	16	34	134			
1	2	-	2	18997	Westerly	Santa Cruz 70	Stuart Dahlgren	2	8	17	35	16			
1	3	-	3	69189	Icon	Perry 66	Kevin Welch	2	9	18	36	79052			
1	4	-	4	60667	Neptune's Car	SC 70	Paul LaMarrige	2	10	20	38	47724			
1	5	-	5	4601L	New Haven	KER 46	John Kerrigan	3	1	15	31	1660			
Cape Flattery Unlimited Race (PHRF)															
1	1	-	1	67776	LawnDart	Santa Cruz 50	Bill Allan	3	2	19	37	141			
1	2	-	2	52529	Constellation	J/133	Ron Holbrook	1	1	1	1	25365			
1	3	-	3	35019	The Shadow	Carroll Marine 1D35	Peter McCarthy	1	2	2	3	31			
1	4	-	4	79167	Tabu	Offshore Logic	Jim Leonard	1	3	3	4	287			
1	5	-	5	52567	Bonni Jean	Beneteau 44.7	Irv Alpert	1	4	4	5	18310			
Cape Flattery Unlimited Race (IRC)															
1	1	-	1	48006	Flash	OD 48	Steve Travis	1	5	5	6	51946			
1	2	-	2	55544	Wasabi	Kernan 44	Greg Slyngstad	1	6	6	7	112			
1	3	-	3	28909	Ocelot	Fox 44	kevin flanigan	1	7	7	8	5934			
1	4	-	4	3696	Jedi	J/145	John Tenneson	1	8	8	9	18324			
Cape Flattery Multihull Race															
1	1	-	1	49401	Bad Kitty	One-off Uthoff	Tomas & Davis	1	9	9	10	55			
1	2	-	2	17271	Dragonfly	Formula 40 Cat	Richard Akrill	1	10	10	15	69307			
1	3	-	3	83	Sauterelle	Farrier F9AX Tri	John Green	1	11	12	22	67807			
1	4	-	4	79030	Freda Mae	Corsair 31R	Vince Depillis	2	1	11	16	49507			
Cape Flattery Race Light															
1															

was second in his fleet to round the Cape Flattery mark and as Jim recalls "sometime during the night we got around *Delirium*, but couldn't get around the very well sailed and named C&C 115 *Elusive*, skippered by Jeff Whitney."

As the sun began to set over the Pacific Ocean, Kevin Welch's *Icon*, Paul LaMarche's *Neptune's Car* and Stuart Dahlgren's *Westerly*, vanished off into the horizon as they made for the "Bank." Of the 29 boats that attempted the Lightship Classic, only a handful were able to complete the



Top: Marda Phelps' Santa Cruz 52, "Marda Gras" and Kevin Flanigan's Fox 44, "Ocelot" heading out towards Race Rocks.

Left: Richard Akrill's Formula 40 Cat, "Dragonfly" takes line honors.

Photos by Jan Anderson.

race as the wind would wane and die off into the night. In the IRC big boat fleet the TP52, *Glory*, skippered by Andrew Koch, would diligently hold their lead throughout the race. Little did they know that they had lost their prop after striking a log in night.

As evening settled on many of us, it was time to focus on the night



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race and sailing the boat downwind at max speed by playing favorable shifts in the wind. As the vacuum of night's darkness limits most external information, it is critical to get into a crew rhythm and direct your attention to boat performance. As fatigue takes hold in the dark of the night, maintaining crew moral is critical. Sitting for long hours on the rail; warm food and drinks, good stories and bad jokes, are the best remedy.

With continuous breeze in the twenties and the spinnaker full, each competitor headed for Race Rocks ready for the variability that the "Rocks" would offer in the darkness. Aboard *Wasabi*, Alex Krawarik recounted that the downwind run to Race Rocks was one of the more enjoyable twilight sails the crew has had. "Passing through the current and shifty breeze of Race Rocks Passage, we caught our first glimpse of



Mike Woodward's Flying Tiger "My-Tai," Jim Prentice's J/109, "Diva" and Jerry Diercks' J/105 "Delirium" tacking up the picturesque Canadian shoreline. Photo by Jan Anderson.

Victoria and the finish." Aboard *Flash* we started making bets on whether we would make last call at the Bard & Banker. Past the "Rocks," it was a full on sprint to the finish, boat for boat, in an ever shifting breeze.

Approaching the finish at Ogden Point is always a test, as the breeze

often shifts leading to a spinnaker reach to the finish. Aboard *Flash* we sailed hot under spinnaker to the finish with the jib ready, just in case the reach turned to a beat. Mikki Pieruccioni, racing her third Swiftsure aboard Lance Staughton's Farr 30, *Bat Out Of Hell*, was ecstatic to have completed her first Swiftsure. *Bat Out Of Hell*, and many of the Juan de Fuca race competitors, completed their race in record time. Line honors for the 2014 Swiftsure would go to *Dragonfly*, helmed by Richard Akrill of the Royal Victoria Yacht Club. With an elapsed time of 10 hours 53

minutes and 34 seconds, the crew on *Dragonfly* had the quickest and most thrilling ride of all. At the inspection dock each finisher was greeted with a free bowl of soup. Enjoying our soup, it was unanimous that Swiftsure is always a challenge, no matter how good the wind and weather conditions.

by Joshua May

Div	PI	Sail#	Boat	Skipper	Type	FS-3	26	16	Liming	Paul Agate	Yamaha 33
Inshore Flying Sails						FS-4	27	57205	Lightcure	Alex Brydon	C&C MK3
FS-3	1	38	Sugar Glider	Robert Warren	Beneteau 32s5	FS-4	28	PY26	Blueskys	Fred Poustie	Paceship 26
FS-4	2	19466	Zephyr	Dennis Woodward	C29	FS-2	29	109	Electra	Roger Kibble	Aphrodite 101
FS-2	3	264	SW	Kevin Reath	J/80	FS-4	30	97193	Peak Time	Roger Bragg	C&C Mk 5
FS-4	4	63	Lifestyle	Mike Byrnes	Paceship	FS-2	31	39137	Dark Star	Neil Porter	Crown 34
FS-2	5	8	Exodus IV	Ralph Lapp	Catalina 470	FS-1	32	14	Powerplay	Stephen Hill	Beneteau First 10 R
FS-4	6	34989	Ducati	Antony Zegers	Kirby 25	FS-1	33	46008	Malolo	Michael Hoffman	J/40
FS-2	7	34990	Obsession	Hugh Owen	Hotfoot 31	FS-2	34	23	Angela's Grace	Paul Crober	Hunter 380
FS-1	8	74374	Surt	Ed Life	Jeanneau	FS-2	35	19531	Griffon	MC Griffon	Viking 33
FS-2	9	81	Sparkle	Guy Hupy / Brian McGinn	'47 Sloop	FS-3	36	29860	Cheetah	Brian Arthurs	Islander 36
FS-1	10	34	Corvo	Tom Kerr	J/33	FS-2	37	77777	Pixie	don pearl	Peterson 35
FS-1	11	79081	Kali	Cleveland Molsberry	C&C 110	Inshore Multihulls					
FS-3	12	257	White Noise	Kirk Westergaard	Martin 242	M-1	1	74426	Geneva	Eric Pesty	F-24
FS-3	13	215	Min of Mine	Tara Smith	Martin 242	M-1	2	11	Flying Kiwi	Wayne Carlson	Banks 35
FS-3	14	11	Crantini	Liane Kern	Martin 242	M-1	3	266	Dream Chaser	Cam McCannel	Farrier
FS-3	15	83	Wild Rumpus	Stephanie Schwenk	Santa Cruz 27	Inshore Non-Flying Sails					
FS-4	16	44194	Mephisto	David Mills	C&C 29-1	NFS-1	1	1	Annie	Judy Nasmith	Nordic 44
FS-4	17	26	Kaysaren	Edis Ozker	Beneteau First285	NFS-1	2	39616	Ignitor	Ron Ernst	Martin 29
FS-1	18	18927	Anomaly	Bill Elmer	Santa Cruz 50	NFS-1	3	2029	Nootka	Chris Daley	Catalina
FS-3	19	79005	Osprey	Stephen A Hulsizer	Annapolis 44	NFS-1	4	79152	Journey	Andrew Damis	Catalina
FS-4	20	29809	Compromise	Glen Shippam	Newport 27	NFS-1	5	3	Windshear	Don Thain	Elite
FS-3	21	29725	Jaguar	Clay Mills	Hotfoot 27	NFS-1	6	1713	Tenaya	Julian Elliott	Catalina 34
FS-4	22	158	Zig Zag	Adrian Betanzo	Thunderbird	NFS-1	7	24	Triumph	Benjamin Hempstead	Mason 43
FS-4	23.5	1649	Meerkat	Jim Cowan	Catalina 34	NFS-1	8	69414	Destiny	Cliff Brown	Hunter
FS-4	23.5	2	Querencia	Tom Hudson	Custm Sparkman	NFS-1	9	9678	White Squall	Roger Deitz	XCAL 40
FS-2	25	27	Freedom	Garry Zulauf	Catalina 38	NFS-1	10	19	Fragile Habitat	Norris Palmer	CaboRicoNE400

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