

Texas District Championship
Rush Creek Yacht Club - Fleet 435
Heath, Texas
June 13-14, 2009

Pos	Skipper	Crew	Crew	Sail#	R1	R2	R3	R 4	R5	Total
1	Larry Frost, Jr	Chance Miller	Robert Grandstaff	USA 15211	1	2	3	1	1	8
2	Clarke Newman	Deanna Newman	Kelson Elam	USA 15360	3	1	1	2	2	9
3	Bill Baxter, III	Rich Hall	Crawford Milling	USA 14488	6	3	6	4	5	24
4	Aroldo de Rienzo	Luis Gerard	Pablo Guzman	MEX 14975	2	6	4	12/OCS	3	27
5	Peter Doncaster	Ann Ramsey	Rod Favela	USA 13703	7	4	7	5	4	27
6	Crit Currie, Jr.	Tim Ryan	Batton Kaenon	USA14666	4	5	5	6	8	28
7	John Womble	Ginger Armstrong	Amy Anderson	USA 14817	5	7	2	12/OCS	7	33
8	Jeff Camiel	Ralph Bilnowski	Denise Earnst	USA 13806	9	10	8	3	9	39
9	Ian Edwards	Lindy Edwards	Kelvin Cates	AUS 15362	10	8	9	7	6	40
10	Bill Biermann	Justin Austin	Tim Warren	USA 14964	8	9	10	12/OCS	12/DNS	51
11	Beth Richard	Teresa Richard	Caroline Woodbury	USA 10275	11	11	11	8	10	51

Last year, we had the promise of ten boats and ended up with six. So, we knew we had gained on it when we had ten confirmed with the possibility of seventeen boats. We ended up having eleven boats attend this year’s Texas District Championships. Four of the boats were from out of town. If you count the team from Mexico that is based at our club, we had five out of town boats.

We did what we had to do to get Jeff Camiel on the line after his boat fell of the hoist at a regatta three weeks ago and was seriously damaged. Jeff ended up sailing my Dad’s boat. We had a hoped another crew from Houston might come up and use it, but we were glad we had a boat for Jeff to use.

Among the out of town crews was Larry Frost, Jr. from New Orleans. As always, he had Chance Miller up front. However, his normal middle crew was not available. So, Robert Grandstaff filled in. Crit Currie and Bill Baxter came down from Memphis. Ian Edwards, with his wife, Lindy, and Kelvin Cates came up from Houston.

This regatta was the third of six stops on the new Southwestern Circuit. The first stop was the Southern District Championships and the second was the Hernando de Soto Regatta in Memphis.

The regatta started on a sunny, very hot day. We had plenty of wind, but it was still hot and humid. The first race got under way cleanly, with the leaders working up just left of the rhumb. At the windward mark, Frost was first followed closely by Aroldo de Rienzo and Team Newman, which consisted of myself, my sister, Deanna, and Kelson Elam.

Some good downwind work got us in front by the leeward mark. We battled up the middle on the second beat, rounded about a boat length in front of Frost, who, in turn was a length in front of de Rienzo. Sensing the wind clocking towards the end of the second beat, we decided to gybe set, which broke us free by several boat lengths. Unfortunately, about a minute later, Kelson called out to see if I had the starboard tackler going up wind. I said, “No!” Kelson said, “Hard Up!!” I turned, but not enough (I still had no idea where they were.). The end of my boom hit their forestay, and the mainsheet wrapped around their bow. I’m here to tell you that that slows you down in a hurry.

By the time we got the chute down, cleared the mainsheet, which somehow got wrapped around my tiller, and did our circle, we were in third place. I was pretty mad at myself because I hit a boat in the first race while in front last year. I couldn’t believe I had made the same stupid mistake again, and it would come back to haunt us.

The morning race was finished in a quickly dying breeze. Frost was first, de Rienzo was second, we were third, and Crit Currie was fourth. On a very hot Texas summer day, a dying breeze usually spells trouble, but the breeze picked back up to 10-15 in the afternoon.

The second race began with Frost getting away pretty good. We were deeply buried after I let my starting hole close up. We broke away right while the fleet went left. As soon as we had some pressure to work our way back left, we bailed out. At that point, we were dead last. Working a few small righties up the middle, we climbed back to fourth by the first windward mark. Frost was first followed by Baxter, Currie, and Peter Doncaster, who didn’t seem too traumatized from our collision.

We worked deep down the middle of the first run, and rounded third behind Frost and Baxter, both of whom went right. We tacked immediately, and started working some increased pressure up the left side. At the second windward mark, we were second about three boat lengths behind Larry. Shadowing Larry’s breeze the whole way down, we worked to within about a boat length. Again, we immediately tacked to starboard. Frost tacked about ten seconds later, but that made the difference.

We started the third race really well, which kept me from going nuts. We worked the pressure and the shifts and got away for a wire-to-wire win. John Womble had worked well up the left on both the second and third beats to take second with Frost third and de Rienzo finishing fourth.

At the end of the first day, we were a point in front of Frost with de Rienzo seven points back. It was shaping up to be a battle between Larry and myself. We had a great dinner and live entertainment. There was free rum, courtesy of our regatta sponsor, Don Q. They also gave us tee-shirts to give away. What a bargain for \$25!

Sunday dawned with stronger, more even breezes. It was definitely shiftier that it had been the day before. Saturday was all about working through the significant differences in pressure across the course. Sunday, was about staying on the lifted tack.

Again, my start was less than stellar, but we got away cleanly in the middle. Larry nailed the start a bit closer to the pin. He worked left of the middle and we worked right of the middle. Both of us were working close to the rhumb line and getting out from the fleet. At the windward mark, we were about forty feet in front of Frost and the rest of the world about ten lengths back. We battled in our own little world the rest of the race.

We had worked out on Larry a bit in our tacking duel up the last beat, and I thought we had things well in hand. At the finish, Larry was coming across on port and we were clear on starboard. A big patch of pressure to the right sucked us into tack right in front of Larry instead of crossing. A lefty came in before we got to that right pressure, and Larry got it before we did, and lifted up inside of us. Holy cow! If we had just gone another boat length before we tacked, we would be ahead by two points with the tie breaker in hand. Instead, we were tied going into the last race. Three boats were OCS at the start, and that really jumbled up the finishes. Jeff Camiel finished third followed Bill Baxter.

The last race again saw us get away from the fleet almost immediately. We battled back and forth with us leading most of the way. Down the last run, Chance told Larry to gybe away about a third of the way down. We did not go with them because it seemed to hurt them significantly. We were working out on them pretty well. However, in the last quarter of the leg, Frost got some pressure and angle that just made it impossible for us to get back to the inside. We rounded the last leeward mark inches off the stern of Frost. This time, we just could not work around them. Larry finished first for the well-deserved win, we were second, de Rienzo was third, and Doncaster was fourth.

The OCS’s in the fourth race factored heavily in the final results. Bill Baxter, with his crew of Rich Hall and Crawford Miller, quietly sailed their way to a third place finish. Larry, Chance, and Robert sailed very well. They didn’t make the mistakes we made. We lead every race and only won two of them. If I had avoided Peter in the first race, the whole regatta would have had a different complexion, but I didn’t. I have to quit making the big mistakes that cost us regattas.

Everyone had a great time, though. The races were well-run by our PRO Brian Morgan, who was constantly moving marks to keep the racing fair. I think we saw Code Flag “C” six times in five races. This regatta was our first to host since we moved back to Rush Creek. I think I speak for everyone who attended when I say that this regatta was vastly superior to last year’s. We had more boats, better facilities, and real racing on a big body of water.

This District Championship was the first I have sailed since I started sailing again in 2006 that had the feel of district regattas we had when I was a kid. I want to thank everyone for the work that they did. Bill Biermann, John Womble, and Ann Ramsey worked especially hard to make the event the great regatta that it was. I also want to thank all of the out of town boats. Larry had not been to RCYC since he was a kid; and I think he was impressed. We hope that we can build on this great regatta next year and get us up to around twenty boats. We hope to see as many boats as possible show up for the fourth leg of the Southwestern Championships in Jackson, MS in October. See you there!

Clarke Newman

