

War Canoe, John Dane III, 1st in Fleet, 1st to Finish - 2023

SOUTHERN YACHT CLUB
Timothy Molony
Commodore

GULFPORT YACHT CLUB
Brian Sullivan
Commodore

PENSACOLA YACHT CLUB
James Simkins
Commodore

Sanctioned By:

GULF YACHTING ASSOCIATION
Randy Fitzpatrick-Wainwright, FYC
Commodore

HISTORY OF THE GULFPORT TO PENSACOLA RACE

This year we are celebrating the 75th running of the Annual Gulfport to Pensacola Race. Here is a bit of history relating to the Race:

The first recorded Gulfport to Pensacola Race was in 1949. The annual race was the brainchild of Southern Yacht Club member Bache Whitlock who served as the initial Race Chair and continued to serve in that capacity for the next 10 years.

For the first few years the races started and ended in Gulfport, with competitors sailing to the Pensacola Sea Buoy--and back. Gulfport Yacht Club began the tradition of hosting both a shrimp boil the night before the annual event, as well as the trophy presentation after the finish.

By 1960 Pensacola Yacht Club got into the act, offering its facilities so that competitors could finish in Pensacola and enjoy a less strenuous journey, as well as a venue to socialize under that Club's magnificent oaks. By then the racecourse had become a sea buoy challenge - after a start outside of the Gulfport Harbor, the fleet would round the Gulfport Sea Buoy to port, thence to the Mobile Sea Buoy, rounding it to port, and finishing at the Pensacola Sea Buoy. This is the course that is sailed to this day.

Due to the continuing efforts of founder Bache Whitlock, in 1960 the Race became sanctioned by the Gulf Yachting Association and was officially co-sponsored by Southern Yacht Club, Gulfport Yacht Club and Pensacola Yacht Club, as it is today. The Race has been conducted every year since 1949 except for 2010 when the Mississippi Sound and central Gulf of Mexico was off limits due to the BP Oil Spill.

In 1960 Bill Caine assumed the reins as Race Chair, although Bache continued to serve as Honorary Chair for several more years. SYC member Warren "Buck" Nolan took over for Bill, and he was followed by SYC Commodores Richard "Dick" Spangenberg, Temple Brown and Maurice "Bubby" Hartson.

Perhaps the most significant event in the Race's history came in the late 1970's when Stewart "Tootie" Barnett took over as Principal Race Officer.

Tootie continued in that role for 37 of the next 38 years, missing the race in 1994 due to his son's induction as commander of a military base in the Mediterranean. Ironically, that year, the long-standing record for elapsed time was broken by *Saga*, sailed by Pass Christian Yacht Club Commodore Gene Walet. During his tenure, Tootie was ably assisted by his First (and only) Mate, Joel.

Not long after he took over, Tootie began the tradition of starting and finishing the race from SYC's Committee Boat, *Patrol II*. That continued for most years (*Patrol II* was undergoing extensive renovations in 2003) until 2015 when PYC graciously offered to resume the practice of providing the finish boat. For the past few years PYC member Mike Thomas' *Miss Jody* has been on station for the finish at the Pensacola Sea Buoy.

In its heyday the Race had over 100 boats of varying lengths and types participating. Unfortunately, handicap fleets have been depleted due to a series of hurricanes which occurred in the first decade of the 21st century. That and other circumstances have reduced the racing fleet to 30 to 34 boats over the past few years. Despite this, there remains stiff competition among the fleet. In fact, the multi-hull fleet has shattered the record for elapsed time for the 100-mile race. The record is held by Randy Smythe in *YO!* which finished the 2018 race in 6 hours, 44 minutes. That same year Pass Christian Yacht Club Commodore John Dane's *WAR CANOE* broke the monohull record by finishing in 8 hours, 23 minutes.

Over the years the fleets have faced every conceivable condition. Needless to say, stories of battling the conditions abound, from interminable calms off Mobile Bay to vicious squalls in the Gulf, with the occasional grounding where boats are not allowed to go.

Undoubtedly, there will be new tales to tell about this year's historic 75th Race. The Race Committee and host Clubs are busy making special arrangements in celebration of the event. We hope you will be able to participate!

A SAMPLING OF WINNERS OVER THE YEARS



WHISPERING WIND – 1st in Fleet 1958, 1959; 1st to Finish – 1960-61, 1963, 1965



GAUNTLET – 1st in Fleet 1983-86, 1st to Finish 1983-86



SAGA – 1st in Fleet 1991-92; 1st to Finish 1987-95, 1997



WAR CANOE – 1st in Fleet 2011, 2023; 1st to Finish 2009, 2011, 2016-17, 2023; Record for lowest elapsed time for Monohull Fleet 2018



ROULETTE – 1st in Fleet – 1960, 1963



TIARE – 1st in Fleet 2003-04, 2006-07, 2014; 1st to Finish 1967, 1969-70



CHULA – 1st in Fleet 1950, 1952, 1964



HEARTBEAT – 1st in Fleet, 1st to Finish 1998



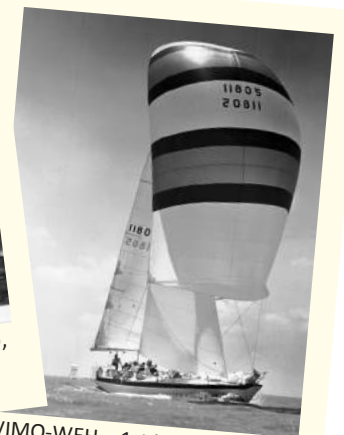
DECISION – 1st in Fleet 2005; 1st to Finish 2001-05



SOUTH TYGER – 1st in Fleet – 1980



1st in Fleet, 1st Class E, FREE SPIRIT, Tom Stokes
FREE SPIRIT – 1st in Fleet – 1999, 2001, 2017



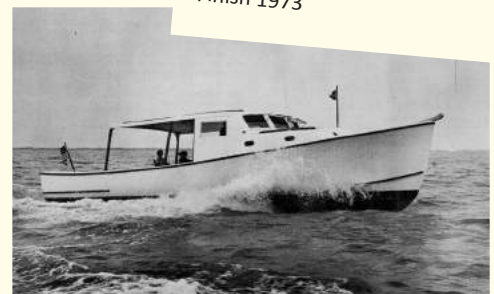
WIMO-WEH – 1st in Fleet, 1st to Finish 1973



HALLOWEENY – 1st in Fleet 1977



Tootie Barnett



PATROL II – SYC Race Committee Boat

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

THURSDAY, JUNE 27 @ 1830
SKIPPER'S MEETING
GULFPORT YACHT CLUB

FRIDAY, JUNE 28 @ 1155
FIRST WARNING SIGNAL

SATURDAY, JUNE 29 @ 1800
AWARDS CEREMONY
PENSACOLA YACHT CLUB



2024 RACE COMMITTEE

BILL WRIGHT, REGATTA CHAIR
NATHAN ADAMS, PRINCIPAL RACE OFFICER
TOM AND LYNN LONG, OWNERS OF IDYLL, START BOAT
MIKE THOMAS, OWNER OF MISS JODY, FINISH BOAT
SEAN HICKEY
JOJO BARNETT