

International 14's in Hawai'i – April 2008

By Dave Bradly (Sorta)

Let me start off by saying that I LOVE sailing, particularly fast boats, but this has been the BEST regatta and sailing that I have ever attended (and I have been around a while and covered a few regatta miles).

Now, running off to Hawaii in mid-April when there is still snow and ice around here in Ottawa to go race I-14's in clear, blue warm waters doesn't take much convincing.

But I am getting ahead of myself here. Should start back in December last year, when I headed on a very snow bound Highway #7 to Toronto for an "innocent" 49'er & skiff prize giving and dinner. Should have known that NOTHING with Haywire & Lakota involved could possibly remain innocent for very long. By the time we got to RCYC city side club, we were around 25 people, likely 75 Orange Whips and more than a boat load of enthusiasm for ANY sailing stories in the depths of an Ontarian winter. I think it was started by Crew Slut, but Haywire was quick to take it up. Lakota had enough rummers on board to go with the increasing flow, and Puppet Fluffer and I had already said we were in, so FOUR boats confirmed for Hawaii in a few months.

Shortly after Christmas, we all realized that this was very real as requests for large chunks of cash came in – shipping dinghies around all over the world, it turns out, is not a cheap process. Who knew? Then the million and one logistics to get sorted. Where to stay, how to get around, what to wear, who to sleep with. Luckily ALL these questions were pre-answered for me.

Fluffer and I headed to Object2's shop in Toronto to pack up the boats – triple boat trailer and one on the roof. Of a Jeep Liberty – yea, I hope the leasing company are not reading this! Anyway, after a very sober Friday night chez Norm, we slowly and poorly packed the boats up. Turned out Fluffer had broken his thumb sticking it up his arse, or playing hockey or something, so was a little gimpy with the straps and ropes (another story altogether). Got it done, loaded my new I-14 behind the car for the return to Ottawa and the big load departed the very next day.

All questions answered or at least beyond bottling out! The only thing that wasn't, was who the hell was going to drive for me?? On the very next day, Fluffer went for some sort of check up where the Doctor told him he needed surgery and it was gonna be in a day or two with NO MORE CHANCE of sailing or (right handed) masturbation, although comments about it feeling like someone else seemed to abound. Boat gone, crew ready (me), flights and accommodation booked. OK – Hail Mary to the whole uncivilized skiff world and I managed to secure the services of Dirty Boy as the driver. Phew. He could get there for next to nothing on Dirty Boy Airlines (DBA) and take Fluffer's accommodation spot too. All good. Oh yea, he had sailed the Shocker once or twice with Haywire as his regular crew for a couple of years.

Fast forward a few more weeks and we are all packed and heading south west for the middle of the Pacific. We land early in the same day that we left after a REALLY crap flight. Now we know where all the rubbish planes go to die – United Airlines gets most of them, and the worst of that lot end up on the tourist routes. Ho-hum. When we got to the car rental place, it was very “island” – they did not have the car we had booked, so just on the point of going a little public with this, I was taken aback when the girl said I could take any car on the lot. Seriously. No upgrade needed. Cool – went straight for the white Mustang convertible sperm mobile. Fabulous. Head east across the Island to our residence.

Got there – nobody home, so called some number or other and this weird hippy turned up claiming to run the place, but more concerned with telling us all about her foot surgery and the ins and outs of the pin she had just had removed. Yuck. So to settle the bill for myself, Undies, YumYum and Haywire, I had a wad of \$20's and went to hippy's apartment to settle up. She had something like 5 cats in her apartment (yes, I am allergic). When she didn't have change for my money she paid me back in PEANUT BUTTER. I was so amazed that I just took it and I even think I was grateful. Three jars in all, but none of them new – all opened and half gone. Hence forth she was known as the Scary Cat Lady (but not in a good way like Bondage Barbie).

Up to the balcony to look straight out over the front garden, which was immaculate, to the ocean and the race course. Relax. Exhale. Drink Orange Whips.

A few hours later went to collect Haywire and YumYum from the airport in Sperm Mobile. They were suitably impressed (and drunk of course), also very relaxed having just visited 300 other Islands over the last 2 days (or something). We didn't get lost on the way back to the apartment, despite me driving. Clearly I had nothing to do with the directions (where the fuck is the windward mark anyway??!). After about 45 seconds of getting back to the apartment, Scary Cat Lady came up in an even more scary fluffy long (thank God) night dress to tell us that the chairs were scraping too loudly. I gave them a severe talking to and she buggered off with what she likely thought was a stern look on her face. Looked more like constipation to me, but hey, what ever works.

Practice Day :

Dirty Boy made it in to town with Martha (needs nickname REALLY soon) and we congregated around the Shocker to put her in fighting shape. This took very little time due to me not really caring or interfering and Dirty knowing what he was doing. We found that the main halyard lock was missing – likely somewhere between Toronto and San Diego. That, or up Kite Boy's arse. Don't know and not going looking for it, we thought it would be OK to tie it to the spin halyard block lashing. What could go wrong. Well, nothing (hah). We went for a short sail in the dieing wind and the imminent rain. Everything seemed to work OK. Back home in time for buns and Orange Whips. With a rip-roaring yeee-har we went in to another evening of celebration. No idea what, but we did it with typical commitment.

Other arrivals from the Canadian contingent included : Lakota (plus Terri and Nick – wife & son), BeeDub, Gripper, Lumber & CS (collectively known as the Smashing Jumpers), Norm, Head, Six Seconds, Kite Boy. All present and likely not so correct.

Race Day #1 :

Just before we get in to the racing thing, let me say how bloody civilized the whole “no race will start till 1pm” thing is. Why can’t all regattas be made this way? A fantastic sight greeted us this morning with nearly 30 International 14’s gathered on the well manicured lawn in front of the Kaneohe Yacht Club. They even turned the sprinklers off for us too. Picture if you will, a large swimming pool, an outdoor restaurant and bar, grassy area covered in I-14’s and the volcanic mountains and US Airbase in the background. We were all warned at this point that the bay in which we were due to have the racing and inevitable swimming was actually the spawning and/or nursing ground for many Hammerhead sharks. Bloody hell. Hope I’m not having a heavy period or anything. I am sure I can swim faster than Dirty. Not sure which is worse ; being eaten by a hungry Hammerhead or shagged senseless by a really horny one. Hope to never find out. Off we toddle to the race course in next to no wind, but the water is warm, with slightly overcast skies.

RC sets a simple windward leeward with a variable number of laps and possible windward or leeward mid-gate finish. Seemed simple enough to us. So it seemed. They get us going without a hitch and we manage to stay out of trouble and more or less upright for the first race. Goal #1 achieved. Remember – we had never sailed together, it was over a year since I had crewed and maybe 4 years since Dirty had helmed one of these things. And we weren’t DFL. Someone else who definitely wasn’t DFL, was Lakota and Gripper – they pulled a 3rd out of this race and it has to be noted it was their first EVER sail on an I-14, and with Lakota being injured and all (more of this later). Well done guys – great start to a long and happy I-14 affair I hope.

Next race more of the same, but the “pretzel” approach to getting your crew to fit in an I-14 when there is bugger all wind really got old. Then....BANG.....

No, not the first boat home gun, nor a collision, but that wonderful tie up job I had done on the main had broken and the main was now starting to fall down. Also the spinnaker block had exploded and melted to the halyard, and cut a nice long notch in the mast. Fluffer, if you are reading this, obviously this is only for artistic license and meaningless over exaggeration and descriptive impact. Right.

So, as we had no interest in swimming with horny hungry sharks, we headed for the harbour again to get another piece of string and re-tie. Missed race #2, but managed to get out just in time for race #3. We started almost a full 5 MINUTES after everyone else. Then to our combined amazement, the whole Shocker effect kicked in big time. We just pointed higher and went faster than anyone else on the pitch. We ended up a truly Shocking top 10, even with the 5 minute penalty. Time to celebrate. Celebrate we did. Of course we should have gone in and addressed the whole main halyard problem, but didn’t bother when presented with Orange Whips and pitchers of beer from Undies and Martha – who could say no. Did spend some time fixing Lakota’s broken spreader, just enjoying wearing a dress while wielding a hairdryer (see photo below). Don’t know who won, how they did it or what we should have done different (other than stop the main from falling down) to try to beat them. Sorry – no tech tips here ☺

Race Day #2 :

A little more wind this day and I decided to also stitch the mainsheet back together. This is a very tedious story and no dramatic end, so suffice to say that it held together, if getting uglier by the day. Much the same as the crew of Shocker. Races were longer in part and RC decided to confuse the hell out of us at least by having a down wind gated finish. Of course we had the best kite run of our lives when we should have actually doused and two sail reached in to the finish. Still didn't regret it and it didn't cost us too much either. Main came off again, and this time I voted Dirty in to the shark infested waters as I pulled seniority (or at least senility) on him. This was re-tied again after we rounded the windward mark and the next leeward mark in THIRD. BUGGER. Even had to get Moderately Evil Brad to sail around us as we couldn't head up at the leeward mark, which he did without any signs of evilness at all – someone mention DIET COKE of evil??

Well done must go to BeeDub for getting her way on to a winning boat today too – previous crew killed and discarded, she bravely stepped up. Made it to the end of the day with the requisite number of bruises and stories. Big grinny stuff though.

Should note at this point that Haywire & Norm in their new boat, puzzlingly named K FED, were not having a super happy time. I think the boat was all about the impregnation of early teen film stars, so what's not to love, right? Anyway, they had spent Race Day #1 & #2 chasing round Haywire's old boat – that would be us in the Shocker. Wish we could tell you how we did this, but hey, it was good fun (love you guys – mean it!). This evening the fleet had an awesome buffet dinner laid on and mucho drinkies were had by all. Of course we did nothing to fix the still dysfunctional main halyard lock and focused rather on getting ourselves a little dysfunctional. Sunset, whip, rinse, repeat, sleep (in some cases), sunrise.....back on the scratch.

Race Day #3 :

MUCH more wind. Let it be said at this point, that particular heroic mention in dispatches needs to go to Lakota (and perhaps Gripper for sailing with him) as he had broken his foot not two weeks before the regatta playing hockey. Silly bugger. Decided to come anyway, and had a special Object 2 (Lawn Boy) created prosthetic limb. He had a carbon fibre clear coat bootie made that was taped to his busted foot every day before heading for the water. Then after racing putting it all back together in a full length leg plastic cast. Not enough Lakota in the world is all I can say. Felt a slight pang of guilt thinking of Fluffer and his broken thumb missing all this on his own boat and all. I did say slight, right? Let me make clear something Grandad then explained to me – he had broken his thumb ONE week before a big I-14 regatta and went to see his doctor. Now, this doctor was also a sailor, so Grandad told him to do what he needed to get out on the water as he wasn't going to stop him. Doc was sensible and actually put the cast on Grandad's hand so there was a ROPE GROOVE in the palm allowing him to still grip the mainsheet with his fingers. In addition to this, there was a flat spot on the cast allowing Grandad to get on the trap using the puck handle. This is nothing short of FANTASTIC and I am sure not at all embroidered over years of telling the story. Well done Grandad. Has to be said then (and was mentioned by aforementioned aged super-hero) that Fluffer is a bit of a homo for missing this regatta. Oh well. Had a FANTASTIC sail. Has to be

said. Some of the best kite runs I have ever had in my life. Having YumYum and Undies cheering all the Canadian boats as we rounded the windward mark for the hoists definitely helped me along at least. We were steadily improving too. Right up until Dirty saw a shark. It was right alongside us as we were on the wire going up wind. It paced us for a bit and I just hoped that Dirty could stay focused on keeping us upright. Already swam with sharks – didn't like it. Great day of yachting with lots of thrills and more than a few spills. Biggest spill of the day was when Smashing Jumpers (CS & Lumber) decided to get REALLY up close and personal with local Bieker 1 being driven by local girlie Elise. Great name for a car that too. Result was a gaping hole in the bottom of aforementioned Bieker that was plugged with a rash-guard, duct taped and sailed to shore. I then spent a couple of hours with many helping hands fixing that hole and also a busted bow sprit. There is officially NOTHING you cannot do without carbon, epoxy, willing hands and a barrel full of Mai Tai!!

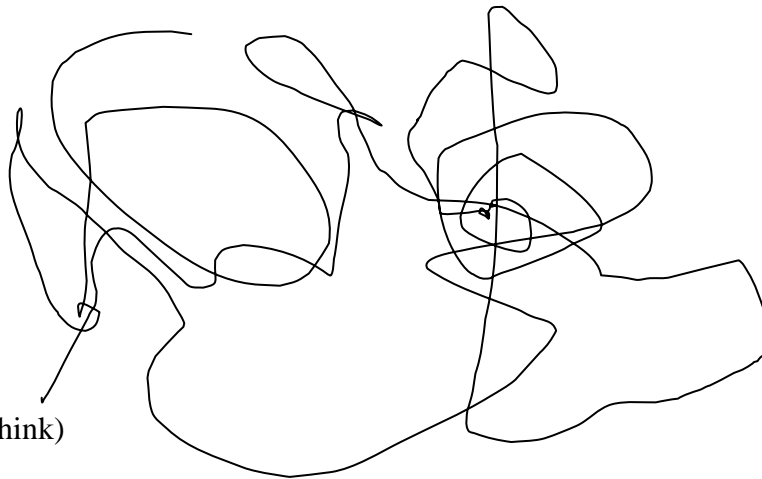
Return to the Yacht Club for a prize giving, pizza and some strange fire dancing. Lots of great eye candy for the girls as local members of the hibiscus jock strap club licked their flames and posed for rippling muscle shots. Not to be out done, the male contingent of our party voted Norm to counter with the grass skirt / coconut jubbies outfit and another very provocative little dance. Actually, come to think of it, Norm pretty much voted himself up on stage. Anyway, needless to say, Norm did an incredible job of frightening away any nasty spirits lurking in the dinghy park and we could continue to drink safely.

Race Day #4 : The Hawaii State Championships (long distance race).

Oh yes, and it was my birthday too – bless Martha's little heart for showing up at 9am with an ice cold bottle of Mount Gay and in a mix-free zone too. GREAT way to start the windiest day of the regatta. Yikes!

This race was to start a little earlier than the other days, but with a different start minute for each boat. There was some kind of thing that governed who got to start when...no idea where the numbers came from, but Master Bates seemed to read them out with sufficient authority that all us hung-over fourteeners just nodded and went looking for a chart. The course was like this :

Start somewhere here :



Finish (I think)

With many warnings (shallows, reefs, stakes, markers, voodoo shit etc.) all over the place and folk lore level stories about the rollers out in the ocean. In fact, Granddad had made last year's 14 calendar crashing through these waves. His advice at the briefing was "don't go there". So, it was settled where Dirty and I were headed (along with the rest of the fleet). The Le Mans style dock start was funny with Master Bates running around in full referee mode with a whistle and slip board sending people off to their almost certain deaths. What fun. We started somewhere in the middle. We were advised not to fly chute in the harbour, so of course didn't as we always do what we are told. Truth be known, we were just a little stunned from the night before and without the extra couple of hours a 1pm start time had given us, we were a little sketchy to say the least. Making your way out to the course through the south channel, dead down wind with gusts and shifts coming up and down the shore like a whore's drawers was not relaxing. About 200 yards in, there were 3-4 boats checking weeds on their daggerboards and due to a last minute change in plans, we joined them. Bugger. We were second momentarily. Watched as Haywire and several others creamed by us. Flip-flopped the first recovery, not sure if this counted to the "three capsizes and you are out" rule. Got the Shocker up, which is always a good thing. More wind. Blowing about 22 knots solid and I am guessing the odd puffs with lumps in to higher twenties. Take my hat off to Dirty (and everyone else out there that day) – it was tough to keep it together, but we did, and when we got to the first kite hoist, it was by the airbase. It seemed like all the C130's in the world had lined up in just the right angle to direct their engines to help us along at that point and so we hoisted kite. "Take off" doesn't really cover it. Not much of anything in the water any more other than bottom of the daggerboard and the horizontals on the t-foil. What a fabulous and long kite run. More carnage at the gybe mark where we were to sail at full throttle in to a channel just deep enough for an I-14 IF you got down the middle. This is OK in a wide channel, but it felt like you would have to push to get a bloody cigarette paper either side of you to the channel markers. Freaky shit. Really. Made it through. Hardened up and headed for the breakers and the ocean. Yikes. At this point, I have to write slowly (can you tell) as I had the worst sailing accident of my entire life. I have been thrown from trap lines at 20 knots, landed on the rig of the 18, California rolled, hit reefs, bloodied the head, had stitches, dislocated shoulders, and all that pales in to insignificance. Sit down (if you are male). Rollers are about 10 feet or so, little waves are maybe 2 feet on that, I am on the wire maybe 3 feet from centerline. Most importantly, my right testicle is about 6 feet from the sharp front end of the rack when boat goes down, I lose my front footing, spin round, boat comes back up, and I land. Right on the bollock. Bollocks. That hurt. A lot. I think I puked a little and didn't stop inhaling for about 45 seconds. Couldn't speak for another 5 minutes. We didn't capsize though – thanks Dirty, as I would have definitely drowned, although didn't care at the time. Anyway, got to the top mark and managed to hoist kite again with a sketchy turn down. To tell the truth, I was really glad just to stand up and give things a chance to settle out. Yuck. Kite up and surf was too. This was just plain old fun – not too scary and we pulled off a gybe and everything. Doused kite, fetch all the way home and we were FORTH. Holy Shit. What a great race and we pulled something good out too. Definite highlight of the week for us. Back in to pack the

containers (many thanks due to the west coast US guys for doing all the heavy lifting on this at both ends), more beers, pizza, quick prize giving and that was that.

Filled the rest of the holiday with really cool stuff like seeing giant sea turtles feeding in the wild, taking a glider ride off the north west shore in 30 knots of breeze, snorkeling in a reef infested with lovely and large fish and eating some of the best sea food I have ever had.

What ever you do in your fourdeening life, make sure you do this one. Undies and I will be back in 2010 for sure, probably on the way back from Sydney, hopefully in my own boat this time, and maybe even being the knob on the stick.

Cheers,
Sorta

Pictures (left in high res intentionally) :



Shocker headed out in to the ocean on Race Day #4 (shortly before Blue Nut incident).



Bloke in a dress with hairdryer and sketchy cocktail



Dirty Boy's head up Sorta's ass



Kaneohe Yacht Club, somewhat invaded by I-14's (team Smashing Jumpers with main up)



Shocker in shocking 2nd place !! Didn't last for long when the main lock went AGAIN.



AIR CANADA – 5 out of the top 6 boats are Canadian(ish). Good effort considering there were only 4 Canadian boats.....)



Shocker with a bit on....



Shocking take-off



Smashing Jumpers' handy work on Elise's boat



Rounding near the front being cheered on by Canadian Groupies (Undies, YumYum, Martha, Nat etc.)



Shocker in lead (yea, right) going up wind



YumYum, BeeDub & Undies enjoying a nourishing adult beverage



Dirty Boy after Shocking news of 4th place in Hawaii State Championships.



Another bloke in a dress – Norm frightening the spirits (and me, to be honest)



Team Shocker Win (well, 4th actually)



Not the white sperm mobile Mustang.



Is it

- a) fast than a speeding I-14
- b) as fast as a speeding I-14
- c) slower than a speeding I-14??