
Highlights of an Ocean Race



The most recent addition to the ocean racing circuit is the San Francisco to Kauai race which was run for the first time this summer. Interest was high with 43 boats, from 29' to 67' entered and 40 actually starting. Many of the entrants were new to ocean racing. Most were from the Bay area which has not hosted a sailboat race to the Hawaiian Islands since 1939.

The smallest of the contestants, a Ranger 29, *Pro Tanto*, was from the Seattle area. She completed the course in 17 days, 5 hours, 12 minutes and 11 seconds which placed her first in her division and 6th overall on corrected time. We talked with Bob Stange, her owner and skipper who gave us the following highlights:

We had wanted to sail in the Victoria/Maui race, but

Pro Tanto was too small to qualify. They limit the number of entries in that race, probably because of the small harbor in Lahaina.

This was our first ocean race. My crew consisted of my son Bill, and two of his college friends. Before leaving Seattle, we made some minor changes in the boat which, I feel, really made a big difference. Most importantly, we replaced all glass with 3/8" plexiglass, through bolted. Shortly after the start of the race, we ran into three days of gale with winds of 35+ knots and big seas. We were on a beam reach with triple reefed main, and it was a wild ride. We took lots of water over and filled the cockpit three times. I doubt that the original glass ports would have taken that sort of punishment. Some would

surely have broken, forcing us to withdraw from the race.

We also strengthened the rigging by replacing the backstay with a heavier one, added stiffeners in the forepeak and a bearing and better support for the rudder. As it turned out, three boats did not finish because of broken rudders.

According to the race rules, we had to carry 15 gallons of water per person. That is a lot of water and a lot of weight for a 29 foot boat. We installed some temporary tanks and took along a good deal of dehydrated food that in itself was light and would let us use up our water. It was important to keep *Pro Tanto* on her lines as much as possible. We also removed our three burner stove with oven and replaced it with a single burner Sea Swing. That

limited our cooking ability. In the mornings we ate breakfast bars, for lunch Japanese noodles and then had a more substantial dinner. The boys complained about my curry - too hot!

One reason we did well in the race is that by the time we had sailed from Seattle to San Francisco we had solved some of the little problems, gotten our sea legs and could function as a crew. Many of the local boats were still scrambling to finish this or that up to the start of the race.

Another reason was my son's navigation which was excellent. We always knew exactly where we were and could adjust our course accordingly. Only one time were we unsure of our position. Every morning at 0900, all boats reported in giving their positions. One day we

sighted a boat that had reported its location some 100 miles from ours. We knew they were using loran and assumed their position had to be correct and our navigator was not as great as we had thought. In chatting with the other vessel later on the radio, we found the error was theirs and our faith in our navigator was restored.

We made our best time in the trades. One day we had a run of 180 miles. Sometimes we flew a spinnaker, and other times twin headsails. You do lose some speed that way but you gain control which lets you steer a better course. It's also easier on the crew when they feel the boat is well under control.

We ran into some tricky squalls, particularly at night. Sometimes they contained a lot of wind, other times just drenching rain. Since we wanted to do well, we were reluctant to reduce sail until we absolutely had to. This resulted in some wild activity on the foredeck at times.

I don't think we took any big chances in order to do well. If we had not been racing, we probably would have

picked a more comfortable course those first three days of gale winds and perhaps we would have reduced sail sooner when we spotted an approaching squall, but fortunately all went well.

We did nearly blow the race just before the finish. We wanted to cross the line flying some color, ended up overpowering the boat and nearly did not finish at all. But we did finish and were pleased with the boat and our overall performance.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the many people at the Ballena Bay Yacht Club for putting on an excellent race. They worked hard to put on pre-race programs to inform crews about some of the problems of ocean racing, provided us with weather maps in instructions on how to utilize the information and updated it daily via SSB during the entire race. They provided us with an excellent communications system and we feel, contributed greatly to our enjoyment of the race. This was the first time they hosted an ocean race, and I am sure it will not be the last.



Crew of the "Pro Tanto".

L. to R., Tom Foulds, Bill Stange, Bob Stange, Bob Foulds

