

**J**  
**105**

# ***In The Wind***

**J / 1 0 5   C l a s s   A s s o c i a t i o n**

## **Don Wilson Triumphs at J/105 North American Championship**



Photo courtesy of: Scott Diamond, Layline Photography

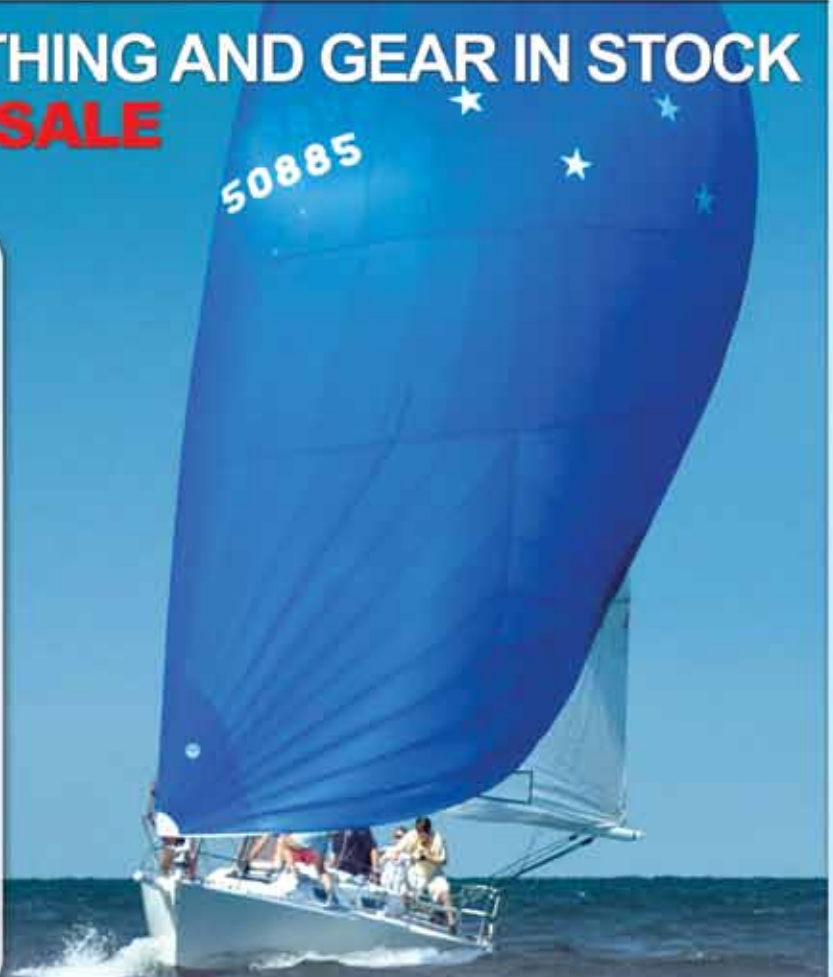
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A warm welcome to Vic Forsyth as the new Vice President of the Class. Vic has been an active member of the J/105 community as Fleet 17 Captain/Measurer/Treasurer, racing "Aftershock" hull #393. He has agreed to present himself for re-election this fall, as have all the officers. The Class is lucky to have such a group of dedicated volunteers.

The new Rules Proposals for 2011 have been posted on the website. They will be on the website for 60 days for discussion. At the Annual Meeting on October 22, we will ask the Executive Committee and all the Fleet Captains to vote on whether to post them as the official proposals for 2011. All fleets will then be asked for a final vote after their annual meeting but no later than January 15, 2011. The approved new rules will take effect in February 2011. This laborious process provides plenty of opportunity for discussion and protects the long-term interests of the Class.

As we near the end of the sailing season, most fleets are holding their annual championship and high-profile events. Fleet 5 hosted the North American Championship in Chicago, Fleet 1 Big Boat Series, Fleet 3 the Chesapeake Bay Championship and Fleet 6 the Long Island Sound Championship. These events are well attended, typically with 20+ boats on the line despite the difficult economic conditions. Next year, Fleet 2 and the Eastern YC will be holding the 2011 North Americans in Marblehead from August 10-14. And in 2012, the North Americans will go back to the West Coast with Fleet 8 and the San Diego YC hosting the event.

The July edition of Sailing magazine included a wonderful article about the J/105. It recites the many qualities that we have all come to appreciate... "It's just a flat-out sweet sailing boat." Like all of us, I have been looking for my next boat from the day I bought my current boat. That was 10 years ago. I am still looking—there is nothing out there to match a 105. The soft economy has caused some erosion in racing participation, particularly in events requiring travel and we are no exception, but our numbers are about the same proportionately. As people cut back on discretionary spending, it is not surprising that used boat prices have softened somewhat. But it augurs well for the Class. The boats are well built with many of the earliest boats still racing very competitively. I believe that in the next few years, we will attract many new owners who will come to enjoy this competitive and user-friendly boat at a reasonable price. Our responsibility as members of this Class is to continue to make small improvements each year to keep the boat fun and competitive.

Bernie Girod, J/105 Class President



## Don Wilson Triumphs at J/105 North American Championship



Photo courtesy of: Scott Diamond, Layline Photography

Don Wilson on Convexity never gave up his hold on first place through four days and eight races at the J/105 North American Championship. Sailing with Nate Hollerbach (main trim and tactician), Milosz Mogilnicki (offside trim), Hans Pusch (mast), Mory Mitias (bow) and Tod Reynolds (primary trim) at the Chicago Yacht Club, Wilson concluded the event with five bullets, two second-place finishes, and a ninth for a total score of 18 points. Following Convexity in the overall standings are David Wagner on Gigi (26 points) and Jim Rathbun on Hey Jude (35 points). Twenty boats competed.

“Every team member on the boat is a member of the Chicago Match Race Center (CMRC),” Wilson noted. “As a result, the boat operated like a well oiled machine.” Convexity also had assistance from John Ponsetto on boat maintenance and Ed Adams as coach and for weather. Another useful weapon? “Getting to sleep in our own beds!” Wilson laughed.

The regatta saw a wide variety of conditions, starting with strong winds up to 30 knots and large waves on day one, and concluding with a light day Sunday with breeze mostly 5-8 knots and flatter seas. The event’s other race winners were Wagner’s Gigi in races 6 and 8, and Clark Pellett’s Sealark in race 7.

Wilson did not sail Convexity for most of 2008 and all of 2009. When it was announced that the North American Championship would be in Chicago, “We decided to put a team together to try to win it!” Wilson declared. The team competed in the Chicago NOOD and the Verve Cup as warm-ups. “Going into the regatta, we just focused on trying to win races. As the regatta went on, we focused on minimizing risk,” he summarized.

Windy conditions greeted the teams on Lake Michigan, with breeze ranging from 16-30 knots as the regatta got underway. But it was no trouble for Wilson who completed day one with bullets in each of the day’s two races. “We were very comfortable

sailing the boat,” Wilson shared. “The top wind speed we saw during racing was 30 knots, and we got the boat up to almost 19 knots downwind. We did shrimp at a leeward mark, but that was more a function of making the rounding unnecessarily difficult than anything else.” The team reveled in the conditions and would have been happy to keep on sailing in 30 knots.

When asked how they achieved superior boat speed in the windy conditions, Wilson responded, “We aggressively adjusted the rig for the conditions. We tended to really put the bow down and get the boat going upwind. And we hiked really hard. Downwind we tried to be dynamic with the tackline and weight placement.”

Wilson doubts that he will race Convexity at major national events in 2011. “One of the things that I have accomplished with CMRC is that I can compete in really competitive match racing just two miles from my house,” Wilson explained. “Since I have small children, that makes competitive sailing more realistic.”

He offered some observations on the fleet and his experience at the North American Championship, “The J/105 as a boat is underpowered, and the fleet is generally too conservative. People perceive they have been fouled when they haven’t been (tacking too close, close crosses on port, etc.).” Wilson prefers the umpires on the water, as in match racing, so it takes the perception out of it. “We were super conservative on these issues for the NAs,” Wilson admitted. “Just didn’t leave it up to perception at all! My feeling is that the complete ban on professionals in the Class is actually a detriment to the progress of the Class, and exacerbates these issues about misconceptions of fouls.”

Wilson praised some of the changes to the Class Rules over last couple of years—specifically the removal of the max forestay length and the second spinnaker. “It really changes the game,” Wilson reasoned. “The previous max forestay length was less than optimal for anything up to 20 knots (maybe higher). With the removal of the max length, it will become necessary



Photo courtesy of: Scott Diamond, Layline Photography



Photos courtesy of:  
Scott Diamond,  
Layline Photography



2010 J/105 North American Champions  
Don Wilson (holding trophy)  
and his Convexity crew

to adjust the forestay length in different conditions.” He continued, “The old rule on the spinnaker was that the second one served only as a backup, and could not be used unless the first one became unusable. Now it is possible to carry two different types of spinnakers, and switch depending on the conditions. Both of the changes make sailing the boat more interesting. There are more decisions to make and things to think about.”

The top five overall all are: Don Wilson, Convexity (18 points), David Wagner, Gigi (26), Jim Rathbun, Hey Jude (35), Carter Williams, Creative Destruction (60), and Blane Shea, Striking (67).

Visit [http://www.yachtscoring.com/event\\_results\\_cumulative.cfm?eID=370](http://www.yachtscoring.com/event_results_cumulative.cfm?eID=370) for complete results. The 2011 J/105 North American Championship is scheduled for August 10-14 at Eastern Yacht Club in Marblehead, MA.



Photos courtesy of: Chicago Match Racing Center

On September 25, Bruce Stone, skipper of 2009 J/105 North American Champion *Power Play*, presented the J/105 perpetual trophy to Don Wilson, skipper of the 2010 J/105 North American Champion *Convexity*, and challenged him to meet on neutral ground in 2011 in Marblehead, MA. No doubt inspired by the applause, Don went on to win the weekend's grade 3 match racing event in Tom 28s at his Chicago Match Racing Center, besting nine other teams including several from overseas. Wind speeds ranged from 20-40kt during the event!

# Technical Committee Report

BY Walt Nuschke (Class Measurer, Fleet 3, Annapolis),  
Pat Benedict (Fleet 1, San Francisco), Robert Baker (Fleet 4, Toronto)

## Moving Forward?

*The Technical Committee, working in conjunction with the Executive Committee, discusses a wide variety of ideas for class improvement that come to us from various sources. The boat end of this discussion always revolves around the tug of war between the progressives, who would push the class toward the performance end of the spectrum, and the conservatives, who would never change anything that costs money. This is a familiar theme these days. The J/105 Class was founded on a principle of cost containment, and this obviously struck a nerve, even in the spend thrift decade that our class grew up in. Things have changed in the world around us and this has led to some nervous thoughts about the future and how the J/105 Class should react.*

What constitutes success is subject to debate, but numbers have always been our mantra, and this requires a healthy market for the boat, as new owners are the key to continuity. The Technical Committee and the ExComm always have this in mind as the definition of a J/105 is reconsidered each year, but we also have in mind the classes that once were that have faded into obscurity. The trend has been to compromise toward the conservative end of the spectrum by allowing incremental changes that help keep the class fresh without huge expenditures. This year is no exception as the class leadership has debated a range of proposals over the past months, gradually thinning the list down to a final set of 7 proposals to present to the class for discussion and final vote.

## Food For Thought.

Looking forward I think it is good to share some proposals that have never made the list and some of the thinking that surrounds them. Some of these might sound radical but in each case the proposal has come from someone who is thinking in the perspective he competes in. This is particularly true of owners who sail a combination of handicap and one-design events. For example this was the thinking that led to the change from the 77 to 89 spinnaker. Developing fleets often sail combination events as the fleet develops into a one-design fleet. The decision point on ownership typically revolves around how the J/105 is perceived to perform in that situation. The 77 spinnaker was a big handicap and the change to 89 helped that situation a lot.

As an example of how fleet development works, my fleet, Fleet 3, has its roots back in the mid 90's, when Bill Sutton campaigned Blonde Attack (starting in 1992) to great success in PHRF. Bill had a very good team (so the 77 didn't hold him back much) and I'll never forget a distance race where I was sailing my J24, and some J/105's, including Blonde Attack, started passing through the fleet from behind. The wind was light so I could hear the talk on the water, "here come the J/105's". I think that is when I decided to buy one of those boats and a lot of others were seeing the same thing. By 2000 we had over 40 boats in Fleet 3 thanks in large part to Blonde Attack's excellent PHRF performance.

Below is a sampler of some things that have been discussed along with the thinking that affects whether it shows up as a proposal. The class leadership is always open to strategic thinking that will help keep us at the top of the mix. Big changes take inspired leadership and a champion. The payoff is great competition and demand for boats.



## A Bigger Jib

One idea that comes to us from the sail makers is to go with a jib that uses the full area available. Look at a Farr 40 to get an idea what this means. Our jib does not have full hoist and does not extend fully to the shrouds so we would gain about 5% in sail area but the main performance boost comes from improved overlap with the main. This has been tested on some other classes and apparently gives an unexpected performance boost with negligible cost difference. Jeff Johnstone informs us that an enhanced jib was tested on a J80 and the performance increase was significant. The J24 class is experimenting with going from the current genoa to the full jib because there is negligible difference in performance and a big gain in boat handling and cost. They are running some international events with this jib and a boat has competed successfully against genoa boats in windward leeward events. The J24 Class is by-the-way one that sees itself as having allowed progress to leave them behind. They only made the switch from Pentex to Kevlar last year.

## Adjustable Leads

This idea has been around since the beginning and several early boats were converted for adjustable lead blocks. This can be a big performance enhancement because the lead angle changes a lot between our fixed adjustment holes, even when additional holes are drilled. The track positions are not symmetrical so getting equal settings on both sides is not possible. Lead position is one of those critical tuning features that can make the difference between top and back of the fleet. I once did an informal survey of lead position at a major regatta and the finish position of boats from the same sail maker correlated to lead position. Obviously there is more to results than this but the fact that it is important is there.

## Kevlar Main Sail

This is another subject that appears year after year. Part of the attraction is cosmetic in the sense that the Dacron main makes the boat look dated and an updated main would look good in relation to some other classes. The other part of the discussion centers how these sails maintain shape, while weighing much less, thus giving a bump in performance. The sail makers say the cost of a Kevlar main would be about \$5800.00 versus about \$3400.00 for a Dacron today. This is where the discussion usually stops. The sail

makers don't support this because they are unwilling to say whether the Kevlar sail would make up the difference by lasting longer. A Dacron main will last two to three years depending on how it is handled and what conditions it sees. Dacron is very resistant to UV degradation, while Kevlar is not, so it is not likely that a Kevlar sail would last twice as long as a Dacron. This leaves us with performance to think about.

## Light Weight Spinnakers

The concept of allowing a lighter cloth weight for spinnakers comes up repeatedly. Once again these owners are at times competing against classes that don't restrict sails the way we do. The current cloth weight requirement results in a sail that can handle winds over 30 knots but is somewhat challenged in the light stuff.

One aspect of this discussion is the rule change that allows spinnaker change without conditions now has some owners dreaming of light air reachers. Whether the concept of a reaching spinnaker gains traction, I can't say, but some are giving it a try. This is something that will play out over time, the battle between runners and reachers. Historically the runner won out as the early class spinnakers were more like reachers but became obsolete when they were eating the sterns of the boats with the new runners that came out in the early 2000's. Based on that experience it isn't at all clear that sailing higher and faster gives better VMG relative to the current running designs.

The other phase of this discussion has to do with keeping the spinnaker filled in light air. Obviously a lighter cloth will keep shape in less air but is this narrow window of better performance enough to counter balance the increased cost of the additional sail and the occasional blow out? Certainly the light sail would go back in the bag over 15 knots.

## A 110 Spinnaker

The 110 Spinnaker keeps coming up in the mixed fleet world and many who regularly sail PHRF bear the extra expense to have one in their inventory. The same argument that took us from 77 to 89 can once again be applied to this discussion. The 110 has the advantage of being the size that the boat was originally designed for. If you wonder why the tuning guides always call for tack up it is because the specified luff length is smaller than the distance from the spinnaker

sheave to the bail of the sprit. Easing the tack or halyard or a combination of both is necessary to achieve the design shape but with the penalty that it is not well supported in choppy conditions. The 110 can be specified to fit the space perfectly as Rod Johnstone envisioned when he originally drew the plans.

The contrary side of this discussion starts with cost, and then moves to light air performance (more weight to keep inflated), and handling issues. These are the same factors that were in play during the change to the 89. You can go to the Forum archives for a déjà vu on this discussion. The switch to the 89 effectively required owners to buy at least one new spinnaker in the year of inception. The actual cost of the sail was marginally higher.

### Adjustable Jib In-haulers

At one point in class history, sail makers were recommending a jib in-hauler rig, but the Technical Committee put an end to this with a ruling that invoked the “not specifically permitted” aspect of the rules. This leaves the lazy sheet as the default means for in-hauling the jib. This is a fairly clumsy way of doing things and the angle from the jib lead to the mast front makes it less effective. The cost of parts to construct an efficient in-hauler is fairly low, and all the sail makers say it is an advantage with our AP jibs, so maybe it is time to move forward with this.

## SoCal Championship *By Dennis Case, Fleet 8*

If you were not at the SoCal Championship, all you can do is talk to a friend to get the details. After the race on Sunday, the buzz around the dockside beer cart was that this was the greatest J/105 race we have ever had—everything was perfect! The winds were never less than 10, nor over 16kts. The vast majority of the time we sailed in 11-14kts, which is just perfect for a J/105. When you add smooth water, minimal wind shifts, and no other race boat classes to get in our way, it was a stampede to the weather mark. We all saw upwind boat speeds that were off the chart (talk of 6.8kts was common).

Close racing was the norm. Two-boat-lengths could mean several places in this race. An example of this was on the last race on Sunday. Wings was on port tack just center of the mid-course line on Blow Boat’s weather hip about two lengths behind. A parade of boats were coming from the right side, and we needed to cross them at some point. One by one Blow Boat crossed ahead of each boat, and Wings crossed behind without altering course. This meant that the upcoming mark rounding was going to be very close with six boats all within two boat-lengths of each other (and not counting boats coming from the far right). As it worked out, Flambuoyant from the far right was on a starboard layline and three boat-lengths ahead. Now it’s getting real interesting. Wings decides to overstand Flambuoyant’s easy layline, hoping to avoid

getting faced by five boats. No such luck. One by one, the other boats came out to Wings’ line for the full facial. Fortunately, there was room for only two boats between Flambuoyant and Wings. Now the other boats that were ahead needed to decide quickly to do a three-boat duck or tack on the layline directly behind Flambuoyant (and blanketed under the boats that did the facial on Wings). Nobody ducked behind Wings, so we all rounded one way or another but very close after a 1.6 mile weather leg. Blow Boat went on to win that race by a wide margin, and Wings fought hard to get a fifth-place finish. Close, fun racing like this dominated every race. Places were made and lost in a flash. Racing just doesn’t get any better than that!

The overall winner of the SoCal Championship was Current Obsession 2 who sailed a flawless regatta with three bullets on Saturday. Wings, Flambuoyant, Blow Boat and Airboss rounded out the remaining trophy positions.

The shoreside activities were great with free beer and lots of swag from our sponsors—Ullman Sails, North Sails, West Marine and JK3. And, the hospitality of LBYC was over the top.

For those of you who missed it, you missed a GREAT regatta. Let’s hope our next SoCal Championship can match it.

# Corinthianism and One-Design

Editorial By Nelson Weideman



Photo courtesy of: Photo Boat

“**Corinthian**” is that adjective that describes the prototypical “amateur” sailor. A Corinthian sailor is one who is capable of managing a sailing craft either single-handedly or with the assistance of other amateurs. The J/105 Class has chosen to ban “professional sailors” (the opposite of the Corinthians) from most of its racing, both to the chagrin and the delight of those same professionals. It is to the sailmakers chagrin because they cannot be aboard to observe their sails in racing action and to tell the owners what sails to buy and how to sail the boats.

It is to sailmakers delight because they do not have to dilute their time available to do those same things.

First, let us distinguish the two kinds of professionals. The first kind (sailmakers) come aboard, usually without pay, for the ability to service the sails you purchased from them and to have you win races using their sails. The second kind are paid hands that primarily make their living by making other people’s boats go fast. Some one-design classes allow the pros to the first kind and not the second kind. But the Farr 40, Swan 42, and Melges 32 are all “owner-driver classes” that allow (a limited number) of paid professionals aboard when racing.

So net-net, is it a good thing or a bad thing that the Class is one of the few one-design keelboat classes that has chosen this route? On the one hand, you have aspiring Corinthians who would like to improve their sailing skills and sail inventories (and they believe they cannot). On the other hand, you have the existing Corinthians who believe that the Class would be hurt by having pros aboard for racing. In truth, there is no restriction on “coaching” outside of racing (either by other Corinthians or by pros), but few of us want to spend any time or money for coaching!

Few, if any, keelboat classes have taken the route that the J/105 Class has and restricted both kinds of professionals in their one-design rules. Further, the Class has chosen to use the ISAF sailor categories to enforce this distinction in the highest levels of its racing.

This system has its own myriad of problems, but is probably the best of many bad systems. It is reminiscent of the Churchillian quote “Democracy is the worst form of government...except for all the others.”

Another manifestation of the Corinthianism of the J/105 Class is our “no chartering” (actually “limited chartering”) by non-owners rule. We have had numerous requests to charter boats at major regattas such as Key West Race Week. Many of these requests have come from true Corinthians. But almost all have been turned down because of the doors that would swing open if we allowed it. If you allow Corinthians to charter, how do you avoid the slippery slope of the professionals coming in? Yes, it is possible, but the Class has chosen not to go down that road. The rationale has always been that we promote racing between owners who have made the financial commitment (including pros who have made a financial commitment) rather than between an owner and somebody who makes a one-time (lower cost) commitment to charter.

“Corinthianism” also seems to be associated with “honesty” and “integrity.” If you are perceived not to play by the rules, you are not “Corinthian.” In the last newsletter, Walt Nuschke wrote a great piece on the arbitrariness of the one-design rules and how they are violated by various parties. Did the sailmakers who published tuning guides that suggested violating our rules do this intentionally? Probably not. Few people, even those who created the rules, read and understand and remember all of them!

Walt has made it his goal to simplify our rules, but as Einstein said, “make everything as simple as possible, but no simpler.” Sometimes a high degree of specificity is required in one-design rule making. But sometimes we need to rely on others who interpret the rules to be the arbitrators. Yes, Corinthians need to rely heavily on the rule interpreters for help—first on the various Class Measurers and then on the Judges at the various regattas. But the Corinthian should be just as skilled and as assiduous at interpreting the rules as he is at sailing his boat. Someone who does not make sure he sails under the weight limit or someone who sails with the swim ladder disabled cannot be considered a good J/105 Corinthian sailor.

Some Corinthians believe that competitiveness is anathema. You need to be naturally good, and cannot exploit every rule and every opportunity to be better than your fellow competitors. There’s a fine line here and some will cross it. To be meticulous to a fault is good. To take undue risks (to oneself and others and to property) is bad. None of us wants our boats to be damaged by poor decision-making. But some are more cavalier to the possibility than others. A good Corinthian will keep the risks to people and property low and not place the prospects of winning above these risks. It is all a matter of putting things in perspective. Safety of people and property come ahead of winning. That should be the basic principle.



Photo courtesy of: Photo Boat

Most Corinthians realize that many of the one-design rules

are arbitrary and that the reason for them is to put everyone on the same competitive plane. But they do their homework and they learn what those arbitrary rules are and then they follow them meticulously. In one sense, they are professionals at being amateurs.

Finally, good Corinthians do not stick their head in the sand. They help out and they do not “take their marbles and go home” when challenged. Or worse, they do not challenge or denigrate those who have challenged them for breaking the arbitrary rules. They either stand up and challenge the rule that they think is unfair or they gracefully accept it. Grousing is everyone’s right, but it accomplishes relatively little.

Grousing anonymously (or behind a cloak of anonymity) is probably the slimiest most spineless of all offenses. Stand up and say what you believe using your own name. Do something positive for the Class! That’s what has made the J/105 Class great for nearly 20 years. If you don’t like how we do business, maybe you should re-evaluate your Corinthian credentials and maybe the J/105 Class is not the best fit for you. If you do like how we do business, volunteer to help.



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# Rolex Big Boat Series



Photos courtesy of: Heike Schwab

*From left to right: Bob Dearborn (bow), Stu Johnstone (pit), Julia Langford (bow), Bruce Stone (helm), Mike Straus (trim) and Brent Draney (mainsheet/tactician)*



There was quite a story behind the St. Francis Yacht Club Rolex Big Boat Series! Bruce Stone's Arbitrage was leading the San Francisco Bay Fleet One season going into Big Boat Series, and also led the first day of racing on San Francisco Bay on September 16 with a bullet and a fourth in the 24-boat J/105 division. However, his rudder bearings seized up during the first race and he could barely move the tiller, so was glad to not have gotten into a tacking duel. Back at the dock, he called Tom Coates, owner of another J/105 (Masquerade), which wasn't racing this year...and didn't even have to say anything as Tom immediately guessed the nature of the call, "Don't tell me...you blew up your boat? You can have mine." On Friday

morning, Team Arbitrage stripped Masquerade of its sails and running rigging and installed its own, tuned the rig and was able to finish out the regatta with 2, 3, 5, 7, 5, staying ahead of Scooter Simon's Blackhawk by six points. For winning the regatta, Stone was awarded the Atlantic Perpetual Trophy and a Rolex watch. He also managed to clinch the Fleet One season championship, possibly the first time someone has won two separate J/105 fleets in one season, as he had earlier won the Rhode Island-based Fleet 14 season on another borrowed boat, Power Play. Jeff Littfin and John Case on Mojo round out the top three with 41 points. For complete coverage and results, visit [www.rolexbigboatseries.com](http://www.rolexbigboatseries.com).

# Calendar

Dates	Event	Contact
October 16-17, 2010	J Fest Southwest Lakewood Yacht Club Seabrook, TX	Dwight Bengtson 832-457-5154
January 17-21, 2011	Key West Race Week (Mid-Winter Championship) Key West, FL	Peter Craig 781-639-9545
April 14-17, 2011	Charleston Race Week Charleston Harbor Resort & Marina Mt. Pleasant, SC	Daniel Havens 843-722-1030, x18
June 19-24, 2011	Block Island Race Week Race Headquarters: The Oar Restaurant on Jobs Hill Block Island, RI	Dick Neville
June 24-26, 2011	Long Beach Race Week Alamitos Bay Yacht Club & Long Beach Yacht Club Long Beach, CA	ABYC 562-434-9955 LBYC 562-598-9401
August 10-14, 2011	North American Championship Eastern Yacht Club Marblehead, MA	Doug Morgan 617-833-3881
September 3-5, 2011	Annapolis Race Week Chesapeake Bay Yacht Racing Association Annapolis, MD	Carl Gitchell 410-626-1055
September 15-18, 2011	Rolex Big Boat Series St. Francis Yacht Club San Francisco, CA	Race Office 415-563-6363
October 28-30, 2011	J/105 East Coast Championship Annapolis Yacht Club Annapolis, MD	Carl Gitchell 410-626-1055



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