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Bermuda 1-2 enroute: Big PHRF divide between Gryphon Solo at 69 to Robin at 234
Sunday, 10 June 2007

Saturday morning Newport Rhode Island was a good place to leave. It was foggy and wet. Forty-one single-handed boats started the 16th biennial Bermuda 1-2 Race and headed south on their 635-mile crossing to Bermuda.

The fog that shrouded harbour lifted shortly before the start and a light south-westerly breeze gave the boats a spinnaker or code zero starboard start against a foul tide. As the boats sailed past an incoming ship in the East Passage, a light rain began to fall. These solo sailors were really looking forward to Bermuda even though it was still a wet lumpy ride across the ocean to the finish off St Georges.

Racing got started with Class 5 that had just two boats, an Open 40 called Wild Eyes sailed by Michael Millard and the Open 50 sailed by Joe Harris. Wild Eyes is the former Velocity that Bermudian Alan Paris sailed in the Around Alone Race in 2002-03. Gryphon Solo is on her second trip to Bermuda in a month.

Harris took line honours in the Charleston to Bermuda Race on May 24th, and he won the Demonstration division in the 2006 Newport Bermuda Race. The two class 5 boats led by Gryphon Solo reached off into the Rhode Island Sound some 30 minutes after their start off of Goat Island. Joe gave a wave as he turned his attention to sailing and settling into the solo mode.

Six classes started with ten minutes between each start. The final start was for a group of eight Open 6.5

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Minis sailing as a demonstration class. These are open 6.5 meter designs that are small, but meet strict safety requirements and must be self righting from 90 degrees with 100lbs on the masthead. They look somewhat like a mini Gryphon Solo

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The race is sailed under PHRF handicapping and the boats range from Gryphon Solo at 69 to Robin a Westsail 32 with a rating of 234. This means that Gryphon Solo gives them 305 seconds for each mile of the race. Harris has to beat Robin, Doug Campbell's Westsail by almost 54 hours.

Sailors expect good conditions for the race with moderate winds from the east, north and west. The offshore winds Saturday night were expected to be from the northeast at about 10 knots. Winds should be 10-18 through Monday afternoon or late Monday night.

"I will aim for the east side of a warm eddie north of the Gulf Stream," Harris said. "This should give me about a 2 knot push south to the stream. I plan to stay west of the Rhumb line through the stream then catch the west side of a cold eddie just below the steam's south wall. This should also be a 2 knot southerly current to boost me on my way. I need to reach Bermuda by late Monday or high pressure may build back in and I'll find myself in the famous Bermuda race parking lot again, like the 2006 Bermuda Race, watching the slower boats make up their time".

You can get more information at <http://www.gryphonsolo.com/page> or at <http://www.bermuda1-2.org/> and follow the race on iBoatTrack at http://charthorizon.com/races/2007_newport_bermuda1/hdocs/.

The 2007 BERMUDA ONE-TWO is organized by Goat Island Yacht Club, Ltd. and Newport (RI) Yacht Club, with support from the Rhode Island State Yachting Committee, the City of Newport, RI and the Town of St. George's, Bermuda. St. George's Dinghy & Sports Club is the host club in Bermuda.

Talbot Wilson

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