



PRESS RELEASE

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Tapio Saavalainen presented with C. Gaither Scott Memorial Trophy for Corinthian Spirit During Annapolis-to-Newport Race Prize-Giving Ceremony



Photo by Will Keyworth

Annapolis Yacht Club member Tapio Saavalainen (at wheel) skippered Kalevala II to victory in ORC 5 class for the 38th biennial Annapolis-to-Newport Race. It was Saavalainen's first class victory in eight attempts in the offshore classic.

Annapolis, MD (June 11, 2021) — Tapio Saavalainen's wife maintains strict control over what is displayed in the family room of their home. Much to Saavalainen's chagrin, almost all the important mementos from his native Finland are down in the basement.

However, Saavalainen is now in possession of perhaps the most prestigious trophy he's ever received. The longtime Annapolis Yacht Club member beamed with pride as he held closely to the C. Gaither Scott Memorial Trophy for Corinthian Spirit.

AYC commodore Jonathan Bartlett presented Saavalainen the perpetual trophy that is a pair of crystal sails atop a mahogany wood base that contains the names of previous winners. The Washington, D.C. resident went home with the keeper trophy, a lovely silver urn.

“I suppose that I’m going to demand that there is nothing else in the family room except this trophy,” Saavalainen said with a wide grin following the Annapolis-to-Newport Race prize-giving ceremony on Wednesday night.

The C. Gaither Scott Trophy for Corinthian Spirit is presented at the discretion of the Annapolis-to-Newport race committee. This special award, which is not handed out during every edition of Annapolis-to-Newport, was named in honor of the Annapolis Yacht Club’s longtime race committee chairman and was introduced following his death in March 2000.

“Every trophy is important, but this one is very, very special. I could never, ever have imagined I would receive such a prestigious honor. Very fabulous,” Saavalainen said.

Saavalainen was honored after finally breaking through to capture class honors in the Annapolis-to-Newport Race. He skippered Kalevala II to the corrected time victory in ORC 5, which drew 10 entries.

Kalevala II, a Grand Soleil 37-footer, posted a corrected time of 3 days, 18 hours, 36 minutes and 24 seconds. That was a mere 27 seconds better than ORC 5 runner-up Towhee, a Cal 40 skippered by Ken Jennings of Branford, Connecticut.

Saavalainen sailed Kalevala II in seven previous editions of Annapolis-to-Newport and has posted some podium placements without being able to come away with the win.

“This was my eighth time doing this race, and one thing you realize is that every time you do it you learn something new,” Saavalainen said. “This time around, what was new was that we were on top of the podium. I’m very pleased because this is something I’ve been chasing for some time.”



Saavalainen sailed with a crew of five amateurs that is quite familiar with Kalevala II, having raced aboard the boat many times over the years. Glaser served as navigator and headsail trimmer, while Nick Amendola was mainsail trimmer. Mike Oh (foredeck), Shannon Hibberd (pit), and Polly Jarman (trimmer) completed the crew.

“We have a great crew that has been sailing together for quite some time, so the boat-handling is excellent, and the overall mood aboard is quite good,” said Saavalainen, adding that his team

strikes the proper balance between enjoying the trip and pushing the boat.



“We would be joking and telling sea stories then suddenly everyone goes silent because they are focused on what is happening on the racecourse and our performance,” he said. “Every now and then you need to relax and recharge the batteries in a long race like this.”

Kalevala II lost battery power while out in the Atlantic Ocean and Amendola had to navigate using a handheld GPS. However, he and Savaalainen had run the routing program twice per day for a week prior to the start and felt comfortable with what the weather pattern was doing.

“We were sailing in close contact with Nanuq for two-thirds of the race. I know the navigator on that boat is very good, so as long as we were with them, I felt confident we were in the right place,” said Saavalainen, an economist by profession who served the Ministry of Finance for Finland and worked for the International Monetary Fund before retiring in 2006.

“As long as I’m still in good physical shape I have to go sailboat racing,” he said. “One of the main reasons I retired was so I would have more time for sailing.”

A large contingent of participating sailors attended the Annapolis-to-Newport prize-giving ceremony, which was held at Waite’s Wharf. Kalevala II was one of eight class winners recognized, while several other special trophies were presented.

Chessie Racing and Dream Crusher received the Blue Water Trophy for top overall performance in fleet. Dream Crusher, a Kernan 47 skippered by Devin McGranahan and navigated by Alex Clegg, posted the best corrected time among 65 boats in six classes racing under the ORC rating rule.

Chessie Racing, a Tripp 62 owned by George Collins, posted the best corrected time among 17 boats in two PHRF classes. Chris Larson was navigator aboard Chessie, which also earned the Chip Thayer Perpetual Trophy for capturing line honors with the lowest elapsed time among Friday starters.

Prospector, a Mills 68 owned by the Shelter Island Transatlantic Partnership, earned the Commodore Peter H. Magruder Memorial Trophy winner for taking line honors with the lowest elapsed time among Saturday starters. Larry Landry, one of four owners, was navigator as Prospector finished the 475-nautical mile race in 2:01:21:42.

J-Curve, a J/122 owned by David Cielusniak, was victorious in ORC 3 – largest class in the 38th biennial Annapolis-to-Newport Race with 18 boats. That was one of the most hotly contested classes with the first five finishers crossing the line off Castle Hill Light within 42 minutes of each other.

Three members of the University of Rhode Island intercollegiate sailing team were part of the 10-member crew aboard J-Curve, which beat the Aerodyne 38 Zuul (Benedict Capuco) by 1 hour and 25 minutes on corrected time.

“We treated night sailing as though it was day sailing,” Cielusniak said. “We knew we were doing well, but we weren’t sure where we stood, so we just kept pushing.”

Cielusniak praised the performance of navigator Craig Priniski for getting J-Curve out of the Chesapeake Bay in outstanding shape and being flexible with his routing in the Atlantic Ocean.

“Our navigator has been preparing for this race for a long time and was right on point with all his decisions,” he said. “I think going inside Block Island was the big difference-maker for us.

We had an hour of catching the tide just right. If we go outside, we’re just following everyone else, so we decided to just go for it.”



Photo by Will Keyworth

Owner Jeffrey Leigh is at the helm of Huck’s Finn just after the start of the Annapolis-to-Newport Race. The Eastport Yacht Club member and his brother Tom sailed the Dehler 36 to victory in the ORC Double-handed division.



Huck's Finn skipper Jeffrey Leigh was stunned when informed on Tuesday afternoon that his Dehler 36 was the corrected time winner of the ORC Double-Handed class. Leigh and his brother Tom checked YachtScoring shortly after arriving at the Newport Yachting Center and thought it showed Huck's Finn in third place.

After being shown an updated version of the results, Jeffrey Leigh noted it was his 50th birthday and he could not have received a better present.

"It feels fantastic. This is our seventh time doing this race and we've gotten podium finishes three other times, but were always a bridesmaid," the Eastport Yacht Club member said.

This year marked the first time the Leigh brothers raced Huck Finn double-handed in the Annapolis-to-Newport Race. They have been sailing together in some form or fashion for 40-plus years now.

"It was much different having just two aboard this year but certainly a wonderful experience," Jeff said.

This 2021 Annapolis-to-Newport was conducive for doing double-handed because the wind direction offshore held steady for almost the entire run. The elder Leigh knew Huck's Finn was doing well when it exited the Chesapeake Bay along with several J/120s, which had never happened in previous editions of the race.

"It was one of our fastest trips down the bay ever, and we got out just in time because the wind shut down and a lot of the boats behind us got parked," Jeff said. "We did not need to make a whole lot of sail changes out in the ocean until after coming around Block Island. We made some changes on approach to Newport because we were pushing to the end."

One of the many storylines going into the 38th biennial Annapolis-to-Newport Race surrounded the return of Running Tide, one of the most renowned racers of the 1970s and early 80s. Beau Van Metre bought back the Sparkman & Stephens 60 that was owned by his father for 16 years and spent three years and \$4.5 million restoring her.

Al and Beau Van Metre sailed Running Tide to victory in Class I during the 1981 and '83 editions of Annapolis-Newport, claiming line honors and setting the course record the last time it competed in the race. She was sold to a French owner in 1988 and fell into serious disrepair.

Beau Van Metre treated the 2021 Annapolis-to-Newport as a Running Tide reunion, putting together a crew of sailors from the boat's heyday. Running Tide received some hardware during the prize-giving as first boat out of the Chesapeake Bay in ORC 2 class and winner of the Corinthian sub-class.

Running Tide was the second boat across the finish line in ORC 2 class but dropped to ninth on corrected time.

Kialoa III, another classic warhorse, returned to the Annapolis-to-Newport Race for the first time since 1975. The Sparkman & Stephens-designed 75-footer, now owned by Newport resident Thorp Leeson, posted a solid elapsed time of 2:15:56:41 while racing in ORC 1.

Kialoa III set the Annapolis-Newport elapsed time record in 1975, the year it was launched for owner Jim Kilroy.

Ranger, a Farr 40 crewed by members of the Naval Academy Varsity Offshore Sailing Team, was eighth in ORC 2 on corrected time. That was nonetheless the top performance among service academy boats and earned Ranger the Surflant Prize. Rising senior skipper Luke Gillcrist also accepted the Gerber Cup for best corrected time for a Naval Academy entry.

The Yacht Club Challenge Trophy went to the AYC team of Kalevala II (first, ORC 5), Zuul (second, ORC 3) and Sly (sixth, ORC 2).

There were five female skippers competing in the 2021 Annapolis-to-Newport Race, which is believed to be a record number. Herrington Harbour Sailing Association member Lynn McClaskey is a veteran blue water skipper and steered her J/110 Cimarron to fourth place in ORC 5. Eastport Yacht Club member Beth Berry was just a half hour behind in fifth aboard the Tartan 4100 Kyrie.

Julianne Fettus led the Cherubini Ketch Benu to a fourth-place finish in PHRF Classic, while Hattie Warwick-Smith skippered the Tartan 34 Iris to seventh in that same class. Meanwhile, Ashley Maltempo was co-skipper of the J/121 Wings.



Photo by Will Keyworth/Annapolis Yacht Club

Four of the five female skippers competing in the 38th biennial Annapolis-to-Newport Race posed together following the prize-giving ceremony on Wednesday night. They are, from left, Lynn McClaskey, Julianne Fettus, Beth Berry, and Hattie Warwick-Smith.

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