

SOLENT 80 RACE SEES H400 “THUNDERSTREAK” SECURE HER THIRD CLASS WIN THIS SEASON.



With Class 3E victories in May's flat-calm Round-the-Island and June's violent Poole 100 races, this iconic Bertram 31 won her class again on Saturday 20th July. H400 now retains her UK National Championship lead by a decent margin.

As is the oldest offshore race-boat competing today, *Thunderstreak's* Solent 80 race result on Saturday was deemed "remarkable": no less than five other much younger - and in several cases, seriously faster - Class 3E competitors were shown the way home on a course starting off Langston Harbour, passing the entrance to Chichester Harbour mouth before turning south into the English Channel for a 30-mile dog leg to St. Catherine's Point. The race fleet then split with the ultra-fast Classes 1 and 2 heading to the Hengistbury Head/Christchurch Bay while the older/smaller boats sought The Needles before turning east past Hurst Castle, Lymington to finish off the Beaulieu River mouth.

THE RACE

The expected stronger winds did not arrive as the 32+ fleet and the flotilla of Race Marshalls departed Haslar Marina after safety briefings and made their way under escort through the Dolphins off Southsea to the muster area off Langstone. At 11:30 promptly, the chief Race Marshal led the fleet on a 40-knot rolling start south-east towards the Winner mark and then, when safe to do so, green-flagged the competitors away in a choppy Solent but with decent visibility. Again, *Thunderstreak's* start was executed well and H400 was among the leading race-boats away on the first leg - until the Class 1 and 2 big horsepower entrants [some with several thousand bhp] overhauled **Team:Royal Yacht Squadron** before the third turn mark.

Thunderstreak's maintained a steady 60-65mph in sea conditions that suited her 60-year old hull form and comparatively heavy weight [over 6-tonnes]: she gradually pulled away from her Class 3E competitors while pursuing Class leader, the ultra-fast [85mph+] lightweight new Phantom Spectre *Renegade/Back Once Again* propelled by 800bhp of racing Mercury outboards which was quite capable of keeping up with the Class 1 and Class 2 boats.

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However, **Team:RYS** - comprising regulars Hugo Peel [Helm] and Adrian de Ferranti [Throttles/trim] Richard Jessel [Navigation] slowly increased their Class lead as conditions became choppier in the two 12-mile legs up to and then from St. Catherine's Point. Again, H400 stretched its lead by another quarter mile as the overfalls towards the Bridge turn mark at the Needles kept the whole crew on their toes: "Races are won and lost on old-fashioned *concentration*," remarked Adrian de Ferranti, "and keeping the power on when things get bumpy and avoiding flying demands anticipation and lightning reactions".

Thunderstreak maintained her race-pace passing Hurst Castle, Yarmouth and Lymington, enjoying the calmer seas in the western Solent with speeds exceeding 60mph against a strong ebb tide - and hitting each waypoint dead-on. This paid dividends, fortuitously, as the Class 3E leader, *Renegade*, went the wrong side of the finish line and thus attracted a statutory 20-minute penalty. This left **Team:RYS** to be awarded first place on adjusted time and secure a dominant lead of 1,200 points in the UKOPRA National Class 3E championship* - with only one points-scoring race in September to go.

Team Skipper **John Simmonds** [right: seen with Solent 80 silverware] observed that *Thunderstreak* had excelled in these conditions - and so had the team with precise, tide-sensitive navigation and meticulous throttle/trim: "Team:RYS, now in its third year, has become increasingly well-polished," he observed, "and the boat and its crew have evolved into a potent competitor and winning combination".



UPCOMING RACES/2024

The next races will be held over the late August Bank holiday when the Cowes-based **British Powerboat Racing Club** will stage two races - the famous annual international Cowes-Torquay-Cowes/Cowes-Poole-Cowes race on Saturday 24th August and a Round-the-Island race on Sunday 25th.

The final race organised by the UKOPRA, the Lymington Challenge, is scheduled for Saturday 21st September. ENDS.

*UKOPRA: CLASS 3E Championship as at 20-07-24

H400 Thunderstreak	1,200pts
E/7 Mango Crazy	900pts
E/17 Blast from the Past	225pts
E/028 Renegade "Back once again"	200pts
E/28 Renegade 2	0pts/DNF
E/28 Top Banana	0pts/DNS
E/12 Mermaid Gin	0pts/DNF
E/31 Warlord	0pts?DNS

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APPENDIX - HISTORY, RACE WINS AND AWARDS

HISTORY

Built in 1963 for the legendary racer **Tommy Sopwith**, this 31ft Bertram "Competition" has been restored and re-engined to compete in the United Kingdom Offshore Powerboat Racing Association ["UKOPRA"] 2024 UK national championships - achieving already back-to-back championships in 2022 and 2023, runners-up in 2021 and undefeated in Covid year 2020.

H400 is powered by a pair of 435bhp Mercruiser V8 petrol engines on Bravo/1 stern-drives. She has been upgraded with external race-steering; extended hydraulic trim tabs; a new 350-litre ballast tank in the bow with stern-mounted scoop to refill on the move; modern Axiom chart plotters; and some intricate new cooling systems for the fuel and air.

CLASS 3E - RACE-WINS, AWARDS AND TROPHIES 2020 - 2024

- **Poole Bay 100 races:** 4 x first and 1 x second places
- **Cowes-Poole-Cowes races:** 2 x first, plus
 - *Tim Powell Propellor Trophy* [oldest boat home] x twice in three years
 - *Lombard North Central Concours d'Elegance* x twice in three years
 - *Unique Thunderbolt Carburettor Award* from Classic Offshore Powerboat Club
 - *Penthouse Salver:* third overall x 1
 - *MEMA Award:* oldest competitor finishing [. . . and still breathing].
- **Cornish 100 race:** first x 1 incl. Cornish 100 Trophy
- **Hamble Races:** first x 2
- **Southampton Boat Show race:** first x 1
- **Round-the-Island races:** 1 x second; 1 x first
- **Lymington Challenge:** second x 1

UKOPRA POINTS SYSTEM

1st Place/400 points
2nd Place/300 points
3rd Place/200 points
4th Place/100 points
5th Place/50 points