



The Officers, Directors and Members of
US SAILING
are pleased to present the
ARTHUR B. HANSON RESCUE MEDAL
to
BILL HARWELL AND BILL BRAUN

On September 12, 2015 a short-lived 60 knot microburst hit the first race of the Flying Scot Atlantic Coast Championship in a fleet of 23 at Blackbeard Sailing Club in New Burn, NC.

The Race Committee onboard a Sabreline 36 *Piccolo* quickly became the Incident Command Center, calling for additional rescue boats from shore, as well as directing the other race support boats on the water.

Bill Harwell and Bill Braun aboard a Boston Whaler 17 were stationed in the middle of the racecourse. Braun saw the line of weather with a bar of pure white at the water level. He knew this was a line squall with straight-line high winds. Braun told Harwell that things were going to get bad very quickly. During the microburst, visibility was less than a boat length for 10+ minutes.

As weather cleared immediately they saw three turtled boats in front of them and another five or six within 150 yards of them. They checked in on all boats, and all sailors were wearing PFDs and Ok.

They attempted to re-right some boats, but their masts had driven into the river bottom and were unsuccessful. They went to a boat with a father and child who had been in the water for more than 30 minutes, they took the child out of the water and transferred the child to *Piccolo*.

As they came back to the turtled Flying Scots sailors wished to continue to attempt to recover their boats, with Braun and Harwell beginning to see fatigue in the sailors. They pulled 4 or 5 sailors onto the Boston Whaler to give them breaks and rest. Once they took the sailors to shore for rest, shower and dry clothes before returning them to the river to continue the recovery of boats.

It was 2-1/2 hours before everyone was back ashore. This signaled the end of the regatta with no races run. It took two hours for the shore crew to complete the head count, with a sigh of relief and smiles all around. In the initial storm as boats turtled in 10' of water, their masts went into the mud and the 3'-4' waves on the hull pounded the mast deeper into the mud. Next the wind shifted 180-degrees making it almost impossible to extract the mast out of the bottom. There were no injuries, and the water was cleared of all hazards by the end of the following day.

For the rescuing of five+ lives, and assisting in clearing the waterway of a navigation hazards, US Sailing is pleased to award the Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal to Bill Harwell and Bill Braun.

Chuck Hawley, Chairman
US Sailing Safety at Sea Committee
By Direction

On January 9, 2015 at the Blackbeard Sailing Club in New Burn, NC, Joleen Rasmussen, SAYRA Race Management Chair, a US Sailing Club Judge and a US Sailing Race Officer made the presentation of the Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medals on behalf of the US Sailing Safety at Sea Committee.

Club members were entranced during the stirring telling, most of them had no idea the severity of what had taken place. The full presentation was nearly an hour long, and kept the audience. Joe Brake's story really set the stage well for the awards. People learned a lot during the ceremony.



Left to Right: Joleen Rasmussen, Eric Rasmussen, Robin Schaffer, Malcolm Shaffer, Ken Gurganus, Richard Schott, Eddy Parker, Mark Brennesholtz, Jeff Thomas, Skip Bynum, Jim Zahradkah, Clare Brock, Roger Brake, Joe Brake...and Sam the Dog.

NOMINATION

Date of Incident 09/12/2015

What was the nature of this Incident? Up to 60mph microburst capsized 23 of 20 boats in the Neuse River.

What Happened? Race 1, last leg of a WD2, Microburst formed, high wind, heavy rain. 20 boats capsized. Wind left as quickly as arrived. All sailboats boats in survival mode during the wind. 5 RC Motorboats at a standstill, nose to the wind, went into recovery mod as soon as winds abated. First, confirmed people in the water OK. Then started assisting with boat recovery. Shallow venue, turtle boats damaged masts. Additional motorboats from the community launched to assist with recovery. Shore personnel readied incoming boats. Sailors returned to the racing area to assist. Estimated duration form wind to last boat under tow, < 3 hrs.

Event Name Flying Scot Atlantic Coast Championship

Sponsoring Yacht Club Blackbeard Sailing Club

Event State NC

Event City New Bern

Body of Water Neuse River

Day or Night? Day

Air Temperature warm

Water Temperature warm

Wind Speed from 10-12 knots < 60mph is seconds

Wave Height 3-4'

Name Most racers

Boat Name several

Boat Length 18'

Boat Make & Model Flying Scot

What Position(s) was/were the victim working before they went in? Skipper & Crew

Was a PFD worn by the victim(s)? Yes

What recovery method was used (Quickstop, Reach Method, Figure 8, etc)? motor to the boat

Did the victim's boat lose sight of the victim? yes, in two cases

What search pattern was used? Visual, and the search area last known location

Was GPS or other electronic MOB function used to track or help locate the victim? No

How much time did the victims spend in the water? 20mins - 2 hrs

Did a Mayday call go out? in a way yes,

Who responded? Fairfield Harbor, Local residents

Nominator Name Joleen Rasmussen

Do you give permission to have this story published? Yes

Can you provide copies of articles published about this event? Yes

Pick up two sailors from signal boat, child & adult, and took them to shore. Rotated checking on 5+ boats during the recovery process, overlapping with a few other motor boats in the checking activity.