

The Officers, Directors and Members of
US SAILING
are pleased to present the
ARTHUR B. HANSON RESCUE MEDAL
to
David Butler, Debbie Adams and John Finks
for the rescue as follows:

While sailing downwind under spinnaker in a strong breeze over 20 knots during a race on Lake Lewisville, TX sponsored by the Dallas Corinthian Yacht Club, Blue Monk, a Merit 25-foot sloop, accidentally jibed. The maneuver was so violent that a crew member leaning on the boom, Adrian Rodriguez, was thrown overboard, well away from the boat and into the water. Rodriguez was wearing thick clothes with no life jacket.

Onboard a nearby competing boat, Shotglass, a 26-foot J-80, crew member John Finks observed the incident. Finks alerted his skipper, David Butler, and served as spotter so the victim was not lost in the two to three foot waves. Butler immediately altered course toward the victim and instructed his crew to take in the spinnaker.

“We were close to the man overboard and knew it was our responsibility and the only thing to do,” said Butler.

As Shotglass neared Rodriguez, Butler headed into the wind and stopped just upwind of the victim so the boat’s hull sheltered him from the wind and steep waves. Just three minutes after he was thrown into the water, Rodriguez was hauled onboard Shotglass by Butler and Adams. Despite the cold temperatures, Rodriguez was not yet hypothermic. He was able to assist in his rescue before being taken below and given dry clothing.

“The man overboard was a little surprised how quick we arrived and was uncertain how to get back in the boat, but with some gentle coaching, he climbed aboard without incident,” explained Butler.

Butler dropped out of the race and headed back to the harbor. Blue Monk followed behind, retrieved Rodriguez, and sailed back out for the next race.

“Communication was easy, because we didn't need to talk much,” added Butler. “They knew the drill. Furl the jib, turn downwind, circle around the man overboard, head back upwind, back the main to slow us considerably, come alongside and haul him in.”

The Dallas Corinthian Yacht Club turned this near tragedy into a learning opportunity by publishing an account of the accident in its newsletter, stressing the importance of wearing life jackets and keeping a lookout.

“Practice man overboard drills and wear life jackets at all times,” said Butler. “Attend safety at sea seminars and always know what the flags and pennants mean on the committee boat.”

US Sailing awarded the Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal to David Butler (pictured) of Dallas, Texas and his crew, Debbie Adams and John Finks, for rescuing Adrian Rodriguez on November 21, 2010.



Dr. Gino Bottino, MD
Chairman, Safety at Sea Committee
By Direction

NOMINATION

Date 3/3/2011 6:27:34 PM

Date of Incident Sunday, November 21, 2010

What was the nature of this Incident? Man Over Board during PHRF racing

What happened? While downwind , a Merit 25, suddenly gybed, throwing into the air and well away from his boat, a crewman who was leaning on the boom. The crewman was not wearing a lifevest, and the boat had veered away from him. A member of crew on a boat headed upwind nearby, a J80, saw what happened and alerted the skipper and remaining crewmember aboard of the situation. The j80 immediately responded by altering course to him. The j80 lessened sail, headed to wind, so that the MOB would be sheltered in the lee of the boat, and he climbed as they pulled him in. Although not yet hypothermic, he was chilled and they put him below to dry off and get into warmer clothes. They headed back to harbor, conferring briefly with the RC Boat on the water of what had happened. The merit 25 followed in to the harbor, retrieving the crewmember and then sailed back towards racing area for the next race. This story was published in Club periodical as a learning opportunity about the importance of safety and of keeping good lookouts and of wearing lifevests!

Event Name DCYC Fall Series Races # 7&8

Sponsoring Yacht Club Dallas Corinthian Yacht Club

Event City Oak Point

Event State Texas

Body of Water Lake Lewisville

Day or Night? Day

Air Temperature 65-70

Water Temperature 60-70

Wind Speed 15-25+

Wave Height 2-3 feet

Name and Home Town (City, State) Adrian Rodriguez, Denton, TX

Boat Name Blue Monk

Boat Length 25'

Boat Make & Model Merit 25

What position(s) was/were the victim working before they went in? out on boom in middle of boat

Was a PFD worn by the victim(s)? No

Skipper's Name David Butler

Boat Make & Model J80

Crew's Names and function each performed in the rescue: "Debbie Adams- assisted on board with pulling him in and getting victim dried. John Finks-- as above"

Boat Name Shotglass

Boat Length 8.0 meters

What recovery method was used (Quickstop, Reach Method, Figure 8, etc.)? described in incident report

Did the victim's boat lose sight of the victim? don't know

What search pattern was used? plain sight

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

Was a rescue swimmer put in the water Y/N? No

Did the victim have a strobe light, a light or whistle? no

What color clothes were visible above the water? yellow

Was the victim able to help in the recovery? Yes

In what way? he was alert and actively pulled himself onto fantail of rescuing boat as the rescuers grabbed him.

How did the victim get hoisted from the water level up onto the deck? see above

Was any injury sustained by the victim? No

Was a Lifesling aboard? No

What type (hypothermia included)? chilled, but alert and physically capable

Was it used? No

How much time did the victim spend in the water? 2-3 minutes

Did a Mayday call go out? no

Who responded? boat nearby who saw the MOB

Nominators Name Robert T. (Bob) Lehn

Do you give permission to have this story published? Yes