

New Westbound North Sea Race Record

STORD skipper Odd Olsen's 1998 North Sea Yacht Race overall record of 30hrs 44mins is safe, despite a valiant challenge by a trimaran to snatch the fastest time for closing the westbound gap between Stavanger and Banff Bay in this year's event, writes *Dave Morgan*.

The multihull managed to reach across the North Sea to the finish line of this year's Halliburton North Sea Yacht Race at Banff in just 31hrs 52mins, a remarkable time given the light conditions facing the 31 strong fleet in Stavanger Fjord on 7 July. While Olsen's overall time is secure, set on an eastbound race which finished at Stavanger, the trimaran Undarousa has set a new westbound record.

Olsen set his unbeaten record three years ago at the helm of his 50ft Wassa Atlantic Skarrungen but for this year's event he joined forces with one of his closest rivals on another boat to pool their resources and go for the bulls-eye.

It paid off, despite coming in some hours behind the fast off-wind Undarousa skippered by Stavanger yachtsman Leif Skivik, Odd and his crew took first place in the X-Yacht 452 Alexis after winds picked up as the fleet cleared the Norwegian coast to bring Odd and his delighted crew overall victory in the 15th Halliburton North Sea Yacht Race and first place in the 13-yacht Class 6A section.

The start line saw seven Scottish and 24 Norwegian boats head for Banff Bay. The home fleet included former winner John Murphy from Port Edgar Yacht Club with his Sun Kiss 45 Alouette which finished sixth overall and fourth in Class 6A.

Other Scottish entries were Class 1 skipper Stewart Webb from Banff Sailing Club who finished 22nd overall; Class 5 skipper Joey Gough of Oban Sailing Club 7th overall, Class 5 skipper Rodger Moir of Royal Tay Yacht Club 14th overall, Class 5 skipper Mark Dunn of Peterhead Sailing Club 25th overall, Class 6A skipper Jan

Mathers of Peterhead SC 21st overall and Class 6A skipper Martin Yarrow of Largs Sailing Club 26th overall.

Only one boat retired, the Norwegian Norlin 37 Vivind of Ola Sorby which suffered running rigging problems.

But so great was the social appeal of this annual North Sea event that Ola and his crew carried on under motor to berth at Macduff Harbour and enjoy the post race celebrations.

Last year's Oban SC race winner, Joey Gough in his Beneteau First 32 Tangle o' The Isles, joined the fleet in Norway straight from another race from Shetland and sailed a cracking passage to take first place in the nine boat Class 5.

Banff SC entry Stewart Webb in his Van de Stadt 34 Sherkin successfully flew the flag for the home side by winning the Class 1 prize for boats competing without a spinnaker, while the Class 7 prize for Gaffers went to the elegant Norwegian owned old-timer Camalie of Lister, a pilot cutter skippered by Farsund Seilforening member John Jacobsen.

The multihull Class 8 section attracted just one entry, Leif Skivik's trimaran Undarousa, which was first over the line and picked up class honours. Winner in the combined Class 2, 3 and 4 section was well-known Stavanger Seilforening skipper Svein Mathisen in his Willing

sloop Lovinda which has made the crossing many times.

Initial light winds off the Norwegian coast made for a slow start, but it was the faster boats which got the best results. They managed to lock into rising north westerly winds which gave them a rapid crossing of the middle of the North Sea, where slower entries found the gale force winds giving them an uncomfortable beat only to die as they approached the Scottish coast. The final few miles for the slower boats was a frustrating search for wind to maintain speed for crossing the finish line.

● Next year's east bound event to Stavanger, jointly organised by Royal Findhorn Yacht Club and Banff Sailing Club, is initially scheduled to take place on the first weekend of July.

● The Orkney Challenge Race from Lossiemouth to Kirkwall attracted a bigger than expected entry when 26 boats crossed the start line in poor conditions on 6 July.

The 90-mile overnight passage race tested the fleet's navigation and racing skills as mist, rain and brisk winds accompanied them to the Orkneys.

Organised by the NSYA who hope the race will become an established annual event, the overnight leg Class 1 section was won by Orcadian skipper George Ratter in the well known Scampi 30 sloop Gambler with Nairn SC's



Halliburton
North Sea Yacht Race

Race Across the NORTH SEA in
Scotland's Premier Offshore Race:

7th July 2001

Stavanger to Banff

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