

Noroton Viper Fleet at Viper 640 Atlantic Coast Championship, Annapolis May 13-15

Five members of the Noroton Viper fleet raced at the Viper 640 Atlantic Coast Championships in Annapolis as part of the Helly Hanson, Sailing World Regatta.

We endured three days of Rain, Fog, Light winds, and Strong tides. So, it may surprise you all to hear that we had a really great time!

Day One:

On the first day we had visibility but little to no wind.

Ignoring the inauspicious omens of starting a regatta on Friday the 13th, the first start was scheduled for 11.00 am. The J70s and J30s did not stand a chance in the light whispers of wind, but the Vipers were moving so we were given a warning signal. It was a drastically pin biased line with a strong current. Fortunately for the NYC team, Noroton's Race Committee has provided us with plenty of practice in biased start lines 😊 and the Zaleski's and Justin Scott (on Steve Taylor's boat) were first and second off the pin end of line on port while 24 other Vipers could not cross the start line on starboard. Sadly, the race was abandoned and by the time the course was reset, the wind shut off.

The Race Committee was transmitting on Channel 72 and giving ten-minute updates about the weather.

Until finally at 2.00 pm a deep voice came in on 72. : "Race Committee , Come in"

Race Committee: "This is Race Committee"

Deep Voice: "Race Committee, this is God" "There will be no wind today. "

RC : "Thank you God, I guess we should send the competitors home"

Female Voice: "Y'all realize that was not really God on the radio?
.....because we all know that God is a woman.....but she concurs"

So, home we went, to be met by Eddie Wolfe and the Marblehead Viper Fleet in the dry sailing area with cases of fresh Fishers Island Oysters and the infamous "Magic Cooler". Magic because it never runs out of beer. Unlimited Oysters, cold beer and good friends make for a very passable afternoon.

Not to be outdone, the Annapolis fleet hosted a cookout at Walt Pletcher's home in the evening and produced two magic coolers of their own.

It was an enthusiastic and sleep deprived group of Viper sailors that gathered at the Bread and Butter Kitchen in Eastport for breakfast on day 2.

Day 2

On the second day we had wind but no visibility.

Thick fog cloaked the Chesapeake and even the locals were getting lost. The Race Committee were not a lot of help.

Viper: "Race Committee, where are you?"

RC: "We are in the same place as we were yesterday"

Viper: Audible Sigh.

Finally, Marek Zaleski chimed in on 72 “I’ve found them, and I’ve pinned the location on Google Maps and posted it on Facebook Messenger”

I can honestly say that navigating to the start line using Facebook and Google Maps was a first for me.

The racing however was fun and intellectually challenging. The cream rose to the top, although this author fell more into the category of skimmed milk.



Blindfold Vipers forming a pack to find the windward mark!

Day 3

Hurrah. Wind and Visibility!

But the Chesapeake was not done with us yet and served us up with a ferociously strong tide. The tide was sweeping boats over the start line and past any resemblance of a lay line. A cautious start at the boat end, ignoring the head fakes of 5-degree shifts, tacking about a ¼ mile short of starboard lay line and flying the spinnaker about 30 seconds longer before trying to round the leeward mark were all ingredients in the recipe of success for Day 3.



Mmmmm....Oysters!

Congratulations to Marek and Chris Zaleski for an overall podium finish at 3rd in some very challenging racing. Joe Healey and Bob McHugh proved that consistent sailing and avoiding disaster gets you into the top third. Steve, Ron and I demonstrated what your coach always tells you: Top five finishes do not compensate for scores in the 20s in a closely matched fleet.

Congratulations to Mary Ewenson and team "Evil Hiss" who sailed an outstanding and thoughtful series of races in intellectually challenging conditions to win the 2022 Viper 640 Atlantic Coast Championship. Which goes to prove that the female voice was right, and the Wind Goddess favored her own!

Thank you to Eastport YC for their gracious hospitality. We look forward to hosting their Vipers at the Women's Atlantic Coast Championship at Noroton in June.



Justin Scott sailing with Steve Taylor and Ron Thompson looking for the leeward mark in the fog. (Its behind us! We overstood by a lot)



The Zaleskis, father and son, and Jacob Brandt on their way to 3rd place overall.



Joe Healey, Bob McHugh and Jill Fattibenne sailed a consistent regatta





Mary Illif Ewenson and Team Evil Hiss.....2022 Viper 640 Atlantic Coast Champions!

All images courtesy of Spinsheet Magazine and the talented lens of photographer Will Keyworth. Please go to [this link](#) for more images and high-quality downloads.