

My first Texas 200 experience 2016

June 8



I hit the road from Idaho Falls with the Saturday Night Special and make it to Moab, Utah

June 9



left Moab drove through Southern Utah, past Roswell New Mexico, lunch in Pecos, Texas and spent the night in Fort Stockton, Texas

June 10 Left Fort Stockton and drove to Port Isabel, stayed to Southwinds Hotel for 3 nights. Launched the boat and kept it at Tarpon Marina for 2 nights. Ate some local seafood and had 2 trips into Harlingen to visit Bass Pro shop.

June 12



Captains meeting and then drove to Magnolia Beach and left the car and trailer. Painless bus ride back to port Isabel.

June 13



Start the Texas 200 and off to port Mansfield. Early in the morning lots of mosquitoes at the Marina and rowed out to the main channel. Put up the sail with no reefs and out in light winds onto the South Laguna Madre. Sailed down wind away from port Isabel using the iPad Navionics app. I realized that somebody had put signs up all the way up today intercostal waterway and decided to follow the channel markers as wind piped up. I was making very good time running down wind on a plane and parked the Saturday night special at the channel marker at port Mansfield. I noticed the boat to be very dry while parked as I put in the first reef. I started to beat windward and took several waves that were 4-5 feet over the side of the boat pretty much ending my dry cockpit experience. I was able to tack all the way to the jetties and only went aground 3 times. It turns out that the Lee shore in the cut is pretty shallow. Met some really nice folks at the camp, had a warm dinner, reviewed the charts for the next day and got a little sleep.



June 14 Port Mansfield to Hap's cut. Launched the boat with the first reef in and sailed on a nice broad reach up the channel back towards port Mansfield. I noticed the Center board had not been placed all the way up the night before and rocking in the sand with the Center board partially down against the gasket had pretty much cemented the board so that it would not move. As the wind came up, I parked the boat again and tied in the second reef. I had a Rollicking sleigh ride down wind in the big waves through the upper Laguna Madre and along the flat water in the land cut. I arrived at Hap's cut and found that with no center board I could not move to windward and so drifted sideways to the Lee shore Beach. I then used the topping lift to turn the boat on its side and with big-time help from Pat and Mike off the Hobie tandem Island and John Fisher off his beautiful Welsford Sweet Pea, I ran around like a one-arm paper hanger first yanking the line on the end of the Center board out and then eventually gently beating the center board down so that it would move freely. I later frantically rowed the 30 yards to the windward shore and with the help of Bobby Chilek, tied up the boat. The mud truly is nasty at this camp and I spent the night sleeping in a hammock slot over the cockpit.



June 15 Haps cut to Bird Island. I started the day with the second reef in an soon shook it out and sailed the entire day with the first reef. I followed the channel markers down the intercostal waterway through upper Laguna Madre with a wonderful down wind sail and almost sailed past Bird Island. I fired up the iPad and looked at the fishing maps and made a hard right turned towards the campsite GPS coordinates. With the Center board down the boat would go to windward smartly. A bunch of a scattered at the coordinates site and decided it was not satisfactory. The group motor or sailed North through shallow water to a much better Site. There was some significant cartilage encountered at the survivors in this Site including busted Rutter cheeks, blown out sail and a bent mast. All in all a pretty sporting day of sailing.



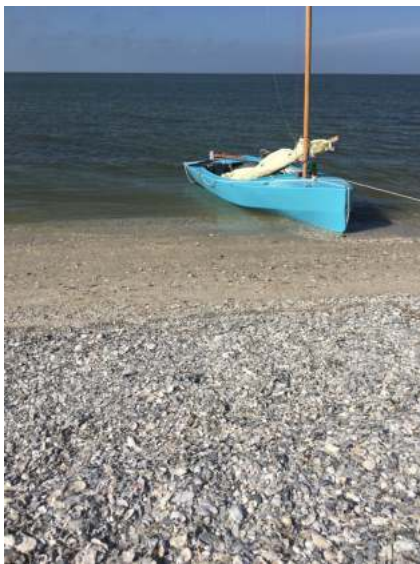
June 16 Bird Island to Quarantine Shore. I sailed the entire day with the second reef in and was underpowered but comfortably lazy. We left Bird Island and gently sailed to the Corpus Christi Bridge and lunch at Snoopy's.



I followed intercostal waterway into Corpus Christi Bay and then used the iPad to make my way past Shamrock Point and Stingray Pass. I had dolphins accompany me the entire way. The cut up the port Aransas channel and past the ferries was another beat to windward and the Saturday Night Special handled it on one tack.



A nice broad reach down the Lydia Ann channel and a hard left to the beautiful oyster Beach at Quarantine Shore. I got a gracious invite to have dinner with David, Paul and Bobby on David's Hunter 26. A chauffeur tender ride at 6:00 out to the anchored boat then tasty red boxed wine, salad, grilled port tender loin and veggie's. What a great break from boiled pre-made Pace dinners.



June 17 Quarantine Shore to Hidden Pass. Sailed the back bays and bayous with the first reef and all day. Sailed past Mud Island up Aransas Bay, through the cut to Carlos Bay, through the cut at Cedar Point, across San Antonio Bay and missed Ayers Cut landing in an oyster bed. I walked 50 yards through the oyster beds then sailed to close reach across San Antonio Bay and using the iPad was able to sail through the cut into the beautiful oyster shell Beach at Hidden Pass. Because of the light winds there was

talk of nighttime departure but I deemed this not smart for my first Texas 200 and watched Tom and Pete takeoff at sunset for a moon light Cruise towards Port O Conner.



June 18 Hidden Pass to Magnolia Beach.



Left camp at first light before sun up. Across Espiritu Santo Bay and turned up the ferry channel for a nice run along the intercostal waterway past Port O Conner. I made a hard left at Matagorda Bay with a broad reach as the winds had turned from the East rather than the South. Apparently the weather underground was the only website that accurately predicted this strange wind direction. Somewhere past Blind Bayou I ended up in dead Irons and watched Presto, Whisper and Gamaray sail off towards Magnolia Beach. Eventually the wind turned from the Southeast and freshened and I was able to surface into Magnolia Beach on the fly along with Skip and John in 40Grit. A cold Shiner's bock, boiled shrimp potatoes and corn was the welcome record at the finish. With the help of Tom and Bobby and Pete I was able to yank the mast out of the boat so that I could load it and had back towards Idaho.



June 19 stayed in a flea bag hotel North of Austin

June 20 made it to Pueblo Colorado

June 21 drove the rest of the way North through Colorado then West through Wyoming and arrived at home one happy camper