



## BLOCK ISLAND RACE WEEK (JUNE 21–25) – Part One of Two

*Preparations for Racing (Our August issue will feature the races themselves.)*

The Bi-Annual Event held on odd years in June has been hosted by the Storm Trysail Club on Block Island since 1965. Block Island Race Week is five days of race activities both on and off the water, including a variety of racing from buoys to distance and the coveted “Around the Island Race”

The birth of The Storm Trysail Club dates to the 1936 Newport-Bermuda Race. The 1936 Bermuda Race is widely considered the roughest before 1960. Nearly 20 percent of the fleet retired. As the group had weathered the previous Bermuda Race, the Club’s name was arrived at easily – a storm trysail being a triangular sail used in place of a mainsail for heavy weather sailing.

The 29th Block Island Race Week presented by Margari-taville kicked off on June 21st with 165 boats representing the East Coast, from Florida to Maine, and the West Coast including California, Chicago, and Texas. After a year with little racing there was a jolt of sailing energy as the skippers with their boats paraded into the channel filling the harbor in the Great Salt Pond, anticipating a great week ahead.

The weekend before Race Week was busy: rigging new sails, tuning up navigation equipment, and practicing racing tactics with crews.

As the Great Salt Pond filled with boats, the parking lot at the Boat Basin also filled up with trailers for the racing teams arriving by land. Names on the trailers set a tone for a week of abundant competition: Gladiator, Dark Energy, Dancing Bear, Direwolf, Phantom, Wasp, Dragon Fly, Kyrie, Defiance. With names like these, it was sure to be a vibrant, intense, and challenging week of racing. Two large white tents were installed at Champlins Marina where Race Week began in 1965. This was the hub for registration, parties after a long day of racing, awards, live music, food, drink and lots of stories to share with fellow competitors.

*(Our thanks to Briggs Whiteford for some of the information used in this article)*



Photo credits: Dean Surret and Ned Phillips, Jr.



**OUR MISSION:** To protect and enhance the environmental quality of the Great Salt Pond, including its shorelines and wetlands, and to promote appropriate and productive uses of the Pond’s resources by residents, visitors and local businesses.

**FUNDING:** Individual contributions, membership dues, special events, program grants. IRS 501(c)3 non-profit. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Please consider becoming a member of The Committee for the Great Salt Pond. For information and details, visit our website at [cgspbblockisland.org](http://cgspbblockisland.org).