2011 Chicago Macinack Race

Lessons Learned

By Ralph Naranjo

A US Sailing Special Report

Inquiry into the Chicago Yacht Club

-Race to Mackinac Capsize and Fatalities

Sport turns into Survival
Great Lakes sailors
Volatile weather and a vulnerable boat

2011 Race
A severe weather warning
Became a watch
Turned into a disaster

Just before midnight on 7-17-11
The least seaworthy boat rendezvoused with the worst part of the storm.
The lessons learned

- Chesapeake Bay
- Long Island Sound
- Puget Sound
- Cold front
- Low pressure
- Trough
- **Unstable air mass**
Kiwi 35
“Wingnuts”

Designer OH Rodgers

-- LOA- 35.08'
-- Beam(with fold out wings)- 14'
-- Draft-7.08'
-- SA(upwind) 477 sq.ft.
-- Displacement 2850lb
-- ballast-1,200lb
-- SA/D 36.29
Low limit of positive stability
Poor secondary righting moment
Tripping effect of wings
1. Mark Morley
2. Suzanne Bickel
3. Peter Morley
4. Stan Dent
5. John Dent
6. Stuart Morley
7. C.J. Cummings
8. Lee Purcell
Four crew trapped under vessel

2 with gear fully functional perish
1 with no gear swims to safety
1 with manual PFD
  \- Chooses not to inflate
  \- Unclips from jackline
  \- Tether tangles and must cut
Those not trapped under the boat

- Helmsman had to be cut free (cowhitch)
- 3 on port jackline
  - One unclipped and didn’t inflate PFD
  - One needed assistance to release
  - One untied sail tie used as a tether while wearing type III PFD
Equipment awareness
Develop an understanding of

- Stability and capsize resistance
- Weather awareness
- Response to heavy weather
- Personal safety gear
Crew Training

The safety of a yacht and her crew is the sole and inescapable responsibility of the person in charge.
the end