

Southport 24 Hour Race - September 2010

It takes more than a broken boat to stop Team Ulley from sailing!

After our best ever result at Southport 2009 - finishing 20th - we went to Southport this year with high hopes. As usual, the team was a mixture of experienced sailors and some novices who had only sailed for a few hours, so it was probably optimistic to hope to match or improve on the previous year's result, but morale was high after the recent grand re-opening of the Club.

However, near disaster struck only a few hours into the race, when the kingpost started to break. [The kingpost is the piece of wood that transfers the loads from the mast, which is sitting on the deck, down to the keel. Without the kingpost, the mast would be supported only by the thin glass-fibre foredeck!] Luckily, the bosun Dave White was in the boat when it started to break. He recognised what the problem was and quickly arranged to be towed in.



When one of the stewards saw what the problem was, he said "That's the end of your race then." The response to this from the Ulley team was "Don't you believe it! You don't know Ulley!" (or words to that effect). Everybody rapidly dispersed across the site in search of a suitably sized piece of wood and a piece of old pallet was soon found. A hacksaw and a some sharp chisels were produced and work rapidly progressed on shaping the wood to replace the kingpost.

[Memo to bosun: take a wood saw with you next year!]

A secure mounting for the kicker was created by drilling a hole through the kingpost-replacement and threading a loop of rope through.

In less than 1.5 hours the boat was relaunched. The repair survived for the rest of the race, although the rope mounting for the kicker had to be replaced or augmented at intervals through the night so the foot of the kingpost grew a nest of ropes around it!



We finished the race in 36th position.

This was a fantastic achievement considering the time lost for the repair and a tremendous example of the great team spirit that we have at Ulley!