

Donald Lawson Racing



Recognize him? Many of us have seen Donald Lawson on various multihulls in our fleet. From Gene Freund F-28 R to this year's High Point winner Tim Layne, Donald have learned a lot from crewing on multihulls. Recently I learned that Donald will be participateing in the 2010 - 2011 Velux 5 Oceans race. This is a solo race on 60' boats. In the coming months I will share his journey to obtain sponsorship, his training and his participation in this prestigious event. I wanted to begin by getting to know Donald a little better. I asked him to share with us his background and what lead him to this event. Enjoy.

"I started my multihull career on Gene Freund on his F-28R back in 2004 for the leukemia Cup. I then started to race on the F-27 Conkor with Phil Wadsworth. It was great for me to race with Phil because he really taught me how to race a multihull. We were very tough to beat in breeze and were really good at buoy racing. I have had great success racing in Northern Bay Race week over the years.

Once Phil moved to Ohio, I began looking for a new crew to race with. I was able to join our nemesis, Wild Card with Tim Layne. We had immediate success. In 2007, we where really dominate in all our races until we lost our rig in the beginning of the Governor's Cup at night, in large seas. It was tough but we had to get back to land on our own. Our crew is full of capable sailors, it was no big deal.

After that interesting night, the crew of Wild Card joined on with the crew of Triple Threat the big 43 foot trimaran skippered by Tim Lyons (a lot of Tims!!). We did the US Navy race and managed to set the course record! From there I finished the season on board the big trimaran and even sailed with Triple T for the beginning of 2008.

After that, it was a rebuilding time where it took about a year to get the boat back up to speed and get the crew back up to speed. By late 2008 we were getting back into form and had some late success. At the start of the 2009 season, we were determined to lead the pack again. We started off a little rough, but once we got our full crew back, we had a number of great races. Whenever Ali is not there, we seem to suffer in navigating, but we never seem to have a problem with making the boat go fast; we need to just go in the right direction!!! We took line honors in the Solomon's Race which was great, and finished off the year looking decent. Those successes where enough to give us the championship for 2009! I was very pleased seeing that it took me 5 years to finally be apart of one!!

When I began sailing at age 6 as a camper of Living Classroom, I had developed a passion to pursue a life at sea. I got into the US Naval Academy, US Coast Guard Academy and other

marine time schools, but I wanted more. I wanted to be at sea the way I wanted to be at sea. I knew I would not make as much money starting off living that lifestyle and I knew I would have to part from some family and friends, but I couldn't let go of who I was.

Last March I reconnected with my long lost love, Jacqueline, and it turned out she too was now into sailing in a big way (funny how life does that!). So we began sailing together and racing together. That's all it took for me to get my mind back to my life time goal of racing around the world. To some it sounds crazy, but I must add this twist, I will race around the world alone and the boat is 60 feet long and I will be the first Afro-American to ever do that. Pretty big stuff.

I kept those thoughts and goals to myself over the years because I never really got much support for them! I remember some sailors trying to discourage me from doing it, but I think I need to let go something's from my past so I could live the life I wanted. So the first thing I did was hired a good friend (who also happens to be the lead marketing group in the USA for this type of racing) Beth Perry of Sailing 360.com Marketing to lead the search. I don't know when this article will come out, but as of right now, we are close to signing our big deal. So lets pray (or when this article comes out! Celebrate a big victory)!



The race is called the Velux 5 Oceans race www.velux5oceans.com. It was known as the BOC, Around Alone back in the day. It is the oldest solo race in the world and has been raced every 4 years from 1982 to now. The USA has been very successful at this race... in class 2 winning that class a few years ago. But no American has ever won the entire race! I plan to do that as well. Right now there is another American entered into the race and he just purchased a really good boat, so it won't be easy, but racing never is!

Since this race will push every ounce of knowledge and skill from me, I started a detailed and dedicated training routine. I have now taken: Safety at Sea, ISAF emergency and survival course, 100 ton Captains course, Auxiliary Sailing Course, Celestial Navigation, First Aid, CPR, and I have the following courses left: diesel repair, electrical, radar and weather course. My goal has been to become the best trained solo sailor the USA has ever had. As of now, no other Solo sailor in US history has gone through the amount of training and qualifiers I have. In addition to the classroom training, I am also in a physical training routine where I have to workout at least twice a day (including once at midnight every night).

From there, I have close to 15k nmiles of sailing miles from racing and sailing offshore on high performance boats. I started my offshore career delivering boats up and down the coast line. I

was fortunate enough to sail with the first and currently the only American to race non-stop around the world and with stops around the world Bruce Schwab. Bruce has been an excellent mentor of mine and will be working with my campaign for the foreseeable future.

We have posted a new website www.donaldlawsonracing.com, and facebook fanpage Donald Lawson Racing, and a LinkedIn group page DLR.

Feel free to checkout the pages. There are even so pictures of multihull sailors and boats from our club in there.

I got to say, the Chesapeake Bay Multihull Association has been one of the most important groups I have ever joined. I have learned some much from sailing and practicing against you guys.



The opportunity to sail on such fast and high performance boats is unlike anything I had experience since I started sailing. The opportunity to sail with small crews allows you to do everything on board which will help you gain confidence in your ability and skills. I love being the first boat in from a race. Being able to look back and watch as competitors, monohulls and big time professional crews look at your boat and say wow. I love when Donnybrook or Samjbok crew finishes behind us and think that the sailed fast.

I remember last year when we were racing into Baltimore and Wild Card was match racing Triple Threat downwind at almost 20knots.... Those are the kinds of memories I will have until I am an old man. You will never see that again unless the America's Cup races in multihulls' again. I remember in that same race we finally passed the last monohull right before the key bridge and they tried to block our wind so we couldn't pass them. Tim Layne told us to unroll the Reacher and the moment the wind hit our sail, it was as if we were hitting the afterburners and they were standing still. The look on their face is what I will remember. I love it.

I will keep the club updated with our progress and any special events. The club will always be invited to big events as they happen!

Following seas! And never let a monohull beat you home!!!!"

Cheers!

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