

## **Stingray Point 2007: A Perfect End to a Great First Season** **By Rich Payne**

Conducting a regatta Labor Day Weekend is always something of a crap shoot in eastern Virginia because of the Atlantic hurricane season. At least once in recent memory, Fishing Bay Yacht Club's Stingray Point Regatta had to be cancelled due to a tropical storm, and only last year, Tropical Storm Ernesto roared through the area the day before the long weekend. In 2007, however, the weather gods smiled on the regatta organizers. With a weak cold front passing through in the early morning hours, the first day of September dawned with brilliant blue skies and a brisk northeasterly wind of 13 knots. Bottle nosed dolphins playing beside the race boats in the mouth of the Piankatank River completed the picture of the perfect "Chamber of Commerce day."

Six of the seven boats in Fleet 15 were registered for the one-design event, although last minute crew problems forced Bob Rock's "Shamrock" to be a no-show. The five boats that raced had an incredible day of racing, with tight races, lots of tactics, and boat speeds of up to 9 knots downwind. New J/105 owner Mike Karn ("Inevitable") won two out of the three races sailed on Saturday. Just before the start of race 2, however, Mike suffered a major equipment failure when the shackle on his jib halyard broke, sending the jib to the foredeck and leaving the halyard at the top of the mast. Despite a game attempt to race on the main alone while simultaneously sending a crew aloft to get the halyard, Mike was ultimately forced to retire. This left the door open for Brad Davis ("Blade Runner"), who won race 2 and took second in races 1 and 3.



**"Flying Colors," "Corryvreckan," and "Blade Runner" mix it up in Race 2**

Day 2 of the regatta saw markedly different conditions, with the wind still generally northeasterly, but down to 6-8 knots. That meant that the honors would go to the tactician who could best identify the shifts and figure out which side of the course the wind was on. Arguably, the high point of the regatta was the finish of Race 4 on Sunday. With the boats sailing high downwind angles in the light airs, "Blade Runner" and "Inevitable" came to the pin end of the finish on port tack, while "Flying Colors" came in to the committee boat end on starboard. The two port tack boats finished one second apart, while "Flying Colors" crossed the line seven seconds later. All five boats in the fleet finished in a span of 35 seconds. Brad Davis won the race, as well as Race 5 on Sunday, and held on to take first place for the regatta. Mike Karn got second, and David Clark third. Full results are shown on the "Results" page.

The Stingray Point Regatta also was the concluding event for the inaugural Southern Chesapeake Bay J/105 One-Design Series. With a total of eleven races sailed, one throw-out was allowed, so the final series standings (shown on the "Results" page) pretty much mirrored the results for the regatta. Brad Davis's consistency earned him a clear-cut first, while Mike Karn edged out David Clark for second. All in all, Stingray Point 2007 was a perfect end to an exciting one-design season.