



GP26: Passing the Test at Key West

The ORC rating system was used at [Key West Race Week 2016](#), with three GP26s competing in the [8-boat ORC 2 fleet](#). This was a new event for the GP26, so Scuttlebutt editor Craig Leweck checked in with the boat's designer Jim Donovan for an update...

When was the first GP26 launched?

The first [Wrace Boats GP26](#) was launched Oct 2011, with Hull 11 just starting construction now.

How new were the boats at Key West Race Week?

- **Hull 4** "Rattle N Rum" raced two seasons in Istanbul (Turkey) as the factory demo and was shipped to the U.S. summer 2015.
- **Hull 7** "Rhumb Punch" was delivered to Annapolis in July 2015.
- **Hull 10** "Supra Turbo" was delivered to Key West 10 days prior to start of racing; perhaps the "newest" boat on the water.

Each boat was configured differently. Why is that?

The boats had slightly different sail sizes, and we adjusted the base-boat displacements on the ORC certificates to account for gear weight carried aboard the boats; different weight outboards, etc.

The boats were all from Maryland. Is that a hub?

Peter D'Arista of California, Maryland, is the owner of Hulls 7 and 10; there is a group of sailors very excited about the boats in Maryland and we have just commissioned Hull 9 in Annapolis. Hull 4 is headed back to Maryland to do work as a demo boat unless it sells before this summer; there's been a lot of interest in this boat. The GP26 is quite an affordable racing platform with great sailing performance, as was clearly demonstrated during Key West Race Week.

Had the GP26 raced in ORC before?

This was the first ORC regatta for the boats and we did absolutely no tuning of the ratings; the boats had limited sail inventories and they just ran with what was aboard each boat.

Before the next ORC regatta we will have some more time to configure the boats better for the rule. I am an advocate for the ORC rule; compared to PHRF it's a more science based rule that will give a boat a single rating no matter what venue it races in.

The results in ORC indicate the rule may have some troubles rating very light sportboats equitably against heavier/slower boats; this isn't uncommon for most rating rules and I know the ORC rating committee is committed to refining their rule.

What was some of the feedback?

Well it is safe to say the boat not only looks fast. The group sailing "Rattle N Rum" really got the boat going, consisting sailing the course faster than very well prepared boats 2 to 2.6 feet longer. They had only a few days sailing the boat prior to the regatta and their only A2 spinnaker was not particularly good for Key West conditions.

It was great to see my design finishing first boat for boat in four races and within seconds of first boat to finish in two other races. The performance will be even better as these guys get more time in their boats and refine the sail inventories. We have many inquiries for new boats and should have one design starts at the major regattas in the near future.

Photos by Sara Proctor





See more at: <http://www.sailingscuttlebutt.com/2016/02/01/49615/#sthash.5hhSfuFs.dpuf>