



# The Coral Classic

There's no doubt about it — this summer somebody up there has decreed that the British must suffer sunny weeks and rainy weekends. The whole thing is getting beyond a joke, and I for one am left wondering quite what heinous crimes we have committed that have led to this long term sentence of rain, wind and fog.

All week the country was bathed in continual sunshine, the papers ran headlines talking of record temperatures, and published countless photos of scantily clad secretaries relaxing at various watering holes during their lunch breaks. Boy, I thought, are we in for a good time down in Brighton — perhaps not the nudist beach, no need to get carried away with it all — but at least a chance to wear a tee shirt instead of my customary six jumpers and Wellington boots.

Saturday dawned, well not exactly, because it was raining so hard that I wasn't quite sure. I could only see a few feet out of the window, and only then when the lightning illuminated the sky! Coral Casinos had put so much hard work into this weekend, and yet the weather was determined to thwart them at every stage. By midday it was obvious that the racing would have to be postponed until the following day, as the wind was approaching gale force and sending huge waves crashing over the harbour wall. One thing however that the weather could not do was to prevent everyone enjoying the marvellous social facilities set up by Coral. The Brighton Marina appeared to belong to Offshore racing for those two days, and a good time was had by all at the Bar-b-que and disco held on Saturday.

Sunday arrived, in its own strange way — total fog with 200 yards visibility. I thought I must be in the wrong town as I listened to Radio Brighton that morning and heard Danny Pouget enthusiastically tell listeners that he could see a clear mile down the Marina. I was only half a mile from the sea myself at the time, and couldn't even see to the bottom of the garden!

Another briefing, and another postponement, would everyone mind coming back at 12.00 o'clock, when it was hoped that the race could begin.



Champagne for the Toleman team.

There were mutters from Class IV as it was suggested they retire gracefully at this point because it was unlikely that the weather would improve enough for their smaller craft to race safely.

"We've come a long way to do this race" grumbled one foolhardy Welshman, "We're not giving in that easily!"

"Why do they have to be such bloody heroes" remarked a yellowish looking Class III entrant "I wish someone would advise me to retire!"

2.15 p.m., and the race was on. Class IV's event had to be cancelled, but they were invited to run in the basic race if they wished. The start was one large mass of flying hulls and whirling propellers as the lumpy seas began to take their toll. One often hears wise old prophets of offshore racing discussing whether it is "cat" or "mono" weather during a race, and any old sage would have told you these were ideal mono conditions. However they would have been proved wrong, as indeed we all were, for the following seas soon destroyed all but one

of the D Class monohull's chances, leaving the cats of Peter Bloomfield, Robert Cook and Paul Sinclair looking remarkably stable. Only Chris Jones in the Fletcher built Pancho was supplying any competition.

Alistair Kendon, Ian Birnie, Peter Armstrong and Barry Drinkwater were all early retirements in their well favoured Phantom hulls, and in Class III overall, more catamarans than monohulls finished.

In Class I, Ted Toleman made it look easy in the 39' Bertram, and, although he was the only competitor in that class, raced well and hard to take the finishing flag first. Adrian Pobjoy showed us once again that there's still a lot of life left in the Allday designed Pobjoy Mint by taking the honours in Class II, followed by the much smaller Samurai driven by Anthony Toll.

It was a most terrifying race to watch, as the smaller boats appeared to be doing more flying than the average seagull, and their drivers must be congratulated on their powers of endurance and sportsmanship. There were no major casualties, although we were concerned at one time for the safety of Steve North driving Doris the Snob. For a first race this Stapley cat was going remarkably well until it hit, and then went through, a rather large wave. Both crew were bruised but unharmed, and vow to be back in the boat as soon as possible.

Coral Casinos deserve all credit for putting on a great race despite the weather. They were extremely enthusiastic sponsors, who couldn't have done more for everyone's benefit. An enjoyable prize-giving took place that evening to finish off the weekend. Why was it so enjoyable? Well of course the sun came out at 5 o'clock, didn't it?

O/A Pos.	Boat No.	Boat Name	Driver	Co-Driver	Class Pos.
<b>Class I</b>					
1	021	The Toleman Group	T. Toleman	N. Cripps	1st I
<b>Class II</b>					
1	202	Pobjoy Mint	A. Pobjoy	A. Foster	1st II
<b>Class III</b>					
1	31	Pobjoy Mint Two	P. Bloomfield	J. Baker	1st D
<b>Cruisers</b>					
1	P4	Splash Down	D. Graham-Smith	P. Rutherford	1st A
<b>Basic</b>					
1	E47	Blackmail	G. Purves	K. Hook	