



SWIFTSURE

SWIFTSURE 2016

HISTORY

Details Current to 2016 Swiftsure Race

Royal Victoria Yacht Club
Victoria, British Columbia
Canada



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*This version of the History guidebook
continues in dedication to the memory of
Chris Caple
who was instrumental in the creation of its original iteration,
formerly known as
“Swiftsure: Facts and Stats.”*



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“SWIFTSURE”

An Elizabethan compound name said to signify "swift pursuer."

FORWARD

A DISTRESS CALL ANSWERED

From the yachtsmen and would-be yachtsmen who follow with interest the Pacific International Yachting Association's annual Swiftsure Lightship Classic, a perennial cry has gone up that it has been difficult to find in one place readily referred to comparative statistics and racing history of this important race.

"SWIFTSURE '66 is the first known attempt to present in one volume the detailed information."

Dorothy and Bill Ouimette
Editors and Publishers of SWIFTSURE '66
(Cover Price: \$1.00)

In the more than 40 years since the first guide was developed, the Swiftsure International Yacht Race has grown and evolved. Information about the annual event up to 1980 improved greatly with the publication of *Swiftsure: The First Fifty Years*, by Humphrey Golby and Shirley Hewett. Still, there have now been over 30 more contests and, with the death of Humphrey Golby, a great loss of both first-hand knowledge and old lore.

The volunteers who assembled this improved and updated guide hope that sailors, spectators and the media will find this information useful. The guide does not tell the Swiftsure story; it is a compendium of core information for reference purposes.

The Swiftsure Committee always appreciates any suggestions or ideas as to materials which should be added in the future, as well as corrections to the information presented.



WHAT IS SWIFTSURE?

The Swiftsure International Yacht Race is the premier annual yacht race in the Pacific Northwest with competitors coming from Oregon, Greater Seattle, Greater Vancouver, Vancouver Island, San Juan Islands, Gulf Islands and beyond. It is a race for sailboats of all sizes and types, and it significantly challenges the skills of sailors because of the changing wind conditions, currents and the stiff competition.

It is also a festive community event with the sailboats that have entered the race showcased at downtown Victoria's Inner Harbour docks in front of the Fairmont Empress Hotel on Thursday and Friday, with food vendors along the waterfront and with bands playing Thursday and Friday evenings. Saturday morning provides spectators an opportunity to see about 200 sailboats off Clover Point jockeying for a good start position.

For sailors, Swiftsure is a must do race, the biggest challenge annually on the coast.

SWIFTSURE.....ALWAYS A CHALLENGE

Vern Burkhardt
Chair
Swiftsure Committee
2011 - present

SHORT HISTORY OF SWIFTSURE

The first recorded sailboat racing in the Victoria area was in the late 1850s, between boats of the Royal Navy and the early Colonists. Interest in the sport grew in the following decades, and by 1930, a long distance race from Cadboro Bay around the Lightship on Swiftsure Bank, at the entrance to the Juan de Fuca Strait was proposed, and there were six entrants! By 1960, forty-five boats were entered in this now-classic race. However, in the following year, the Lightship was removed from service, and now sailors round a Navy Vessel temporarily on station at the same location.

In 1962, after considerable grumbling by skippers of boats that were too small to go to "the Bank", the Royal Victoria Yacht Club introduced a shorter-course race to Clallam Bay, some fifteen miles west of Port Angeles, and called it the Juan de Fuca Race. Like the granddaddy classic, it too started with modest beginnings. In the first year of the Juan de Fuca race, there were but four entries; by 1969 this had risen to forty-nine boats.

With continued and increased participation, and faced with only two courses, one of 137 miles and the other of only 76 miles, the race organizers and many skippers found themselves in a dilemma. The solution was the introduction in 1988 of the Cape Flattery race, of 100 miles in length, halfway between the Swiftsure Bank and the Clallam Bay courses. This has proved to be a very popular race, attracting some of the very largest boats.

In the earlier years of Swiftsure, Eaton's major-display window at the corner of Douglas & View, in downtown Victoria was set up as "Swiftsure headquarters". A large map of the racecourse was installed, and moving miniature boats across the map showed the progress of the race. As the numbers of boats increased this became a daunting task. The event, and this way of graphically displaying progress, was very much appreciated by Victorians. "People used to line the sidewalks, sit on the curbs. There was a feeling of excitement right there, in the middle of town".

"Since the first radio broadcast from 'Does crazy yotsmen' competed with the fisherman's band to the outside world during the 1952 race, and L'Apache (later Diamond Head) broke her backstay during the effort, Humphrey Golby has been 'on the air'. Coverage expanded when Harold Elworthy's Island Tug and Barge Company generously provided tugboats for the press. Radio station CKDA pioneered with the limited ship-to-shore equipment of the day and 'The voice' was born."

For more details, refer to the 1980 publication of *Swiftsure: The First Fifty Years*, by Humphrey Golby and Shirley Hewett.



SWIFTSURE TIMELINE – EVENTS CHRONOLOGY

YEAR	EVENTS OF NOTE
1930	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First Swiftsure Lightship Classic race, under Royal Ocean Racing Club (RORC) rules; six boats entered. <i>Claribel</i>, a “skimming dish schooner,” wins by 7 hours.
1931	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First Royal Victoria Yacht Club entry - <i>Minena</i>, skippered by Harry Barnes.• First known communications report - a wireless message from the lightship to the Gonzales Wireless Station.
1934	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Start at 8:00 p.m. on Friday evening to tie into PIYA regatta in Vancouver.
1947	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First "modern" Swiftsure race. CC of A handicap system.• <i>Owens Cutter</i> in Class BB (skipper Chas Ross) takes overall prize
1948-50	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Swiftsure race starts at Port Townsend and finishes in Victoria. Overall winner awarded Juan de Fuca Commemoration or Challenge Trophy.
1951	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First disqualification in Swiftsure event - <i>Maruffa</i>.• Swiftsure Trophy re-dedicated for the race.• First boat to miss the mark at Swiftsure Bank and head for Japan (a RCN patrol caught up with <i>Ono</i> 20 miles beyond the lightship and <i>Ono</i> quickly turned back. But they then missed the mark again and, since the boat did not round, it was disqualified.
1952	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First use of radio reports, from L <i>Apache</i> - Humphrey Golby goes on the air as “the Voice of Swiftsure.” Dr. Ben Nickells, a former R. Vic. Commodore and amateur ham radio operator, is the relay.
1953	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First boat to hit the lightship on rounding - <i>Dragoon</i> from RVic YC.• First SAR search after 8-foot dinghy found off Neah Bay; all competitors spotted.
1955	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>HMCS Oriole</i> 's first Swiftsure.• Start of the Friday evening ceremonies, including roll call of yachts and the Rainbow sea cadets’ sunset ceremony; crowd of 1500.• First time Eaton’s window used as plotting centre for the public.• First entry from Oregon - <i>Mischief</i>, from Portland Yacht Club, only 28.6 feet long.• <i>Maruffa</i> finishes stern first, after losing main mast 100 metres from the finish line.
1956	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Swiftsure held in late June, as a part of the combined PIYA and PCYA regatta - R Vic YC last hosted this double event in 1925.• CKDA’s News Director, Andy Stephen, does a 32 hour marathon radio broadcast with reports every hour.
1957	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First "Triple Crown" winner - <i>Maruffa</i> - First to Swiftsure Bank



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- 1958
- Driftsure! 16 of 39 starters finish. *HMCS Oriole* corrected time 76 hours.
 - A wicked flood tide at the start pushed most boats back some two miles after the gun.
 - Unofficial entry by the eight-person wardroom of HMCS Fraser in a 32-foot open ships cutter. With no self-bailing cockpit, could not enter race.
 - Crowd on Friday night estimated at 5000.
- 1960
- Smallest Swiftsure entry ever -*Aida*, a 26 foot Spitzgatter, owned by Hunter Vogel from R. Vic YC. Time allowance of seven hours.
 - Out of a fleet of 44, there are 12 brand new yachts on the start line.
- 1961
- *Winsome III* from Royal Van YC first Canadian boat to win Swiftsure since 1931. Bonar Davis is skipper as owner Ches Rickard was away.
- 1962
- Swiftsure grabs hold - 62 entries.
 - First Juan de Fuca race to Clallam Bay for smaller boats - 4 entries.
- 1963
- *Winsome III* becomes only yacht to ever win three successive Swiftsures.
 - *Thetis* loses Swiftsure Trophy on a protest by Lol Killam on *Velaris* about right of way at the start line. Initial hearing results in a DSQ for *Thetis* but the appeal in March 1964 reversed this. The 1963 race winner finally settled in September 1965(!) by the Canadian Yachting Association - *Thetis* is out.
 - Dorade and Troubadour experience major knockdowns - two of Jim McVie's most famous Swiftsure photos.
- 1964
- A tug with a log boom goes through the start line, delaying the race by a half hour.
 - Flood tides at Race Passage so strong that some boats take three tries to get through.
 - In the Juan de Fuca Race, winner is 17-year-old Huphrey Jones, skipper of *Saraband* from the West Van YC.
- 1965
- Ned Ashe, at age 70, sets record for Juan de Fuca Race in *May D II*.
- 1966
- *Mary Bower* beats *Diamond Head* by one second for first boat home; finish line crew did not even have time to reload the gun. *Diamond Head* tore all three of its spinnakers on the run back from the bank.
- 1967
- PHRF handicap system introduced for Juan de Fuca race. *Rain Bird* from Tacoma Yacht Club first PHRF winner.
- 1968
- *Diamond Head* again eclipsed at the finish, this time by *Porpoise III* by 2 seconds.
- 1969
- First PHRF group in Swiftsure race. *Intrepid* out of Seattle Yacht Club wins.
 - *Circe*'s last Swiftsure.
- 1970
- *Endless Summer* takes all four top trophies - first sweep since 1957? - but misses beating 1957 elapsed time record.
 - First ferro-cement entry - Patricia Ann II, a 53 foot schooner chartered by Ken KcLean of R. Van. YC in the Juan de Fuca Race.



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- 1971
- One of toughest races to date - 6 boats dismasted just after the start due to 35 knot winds; in all, 44 boats retire.
 - IOR rating system takes over from CCA.
 - Brand new R Vic YC sisterships *Scot Free* and *Shalimar* core of Race Committee Afloat. A 40 foot trawler designed by Monk and built at Philbrooks.
- 1972
- Swiftsure records shattered! *Endless Summer*, an ex America's Cup 12 Metre, completes the race in under 24 hours, knocking off more than two hours off *Maruffa's* 1957 record.
 - *Endless Summer* takes three top trophies but just misses line honours
- 1973
- Swiftsure moves into computer age. Results are slow as information had to be delivered by hand to the University of Victoria and then laboriously key punched.
 - *Graybeard's* revenge - sweeps top four trophies.
 - Safety inspections result in 11 DSQs.
- 1974
- Start delayed for 3 hours - no wind then the fog rolled in.
 - *Graybeard* repeats a four-trophy sweep.
 - Juan de Fuca race gains popularity - over 100 entries.
- 1975
- Ned Ashe, at age 81, helming *Andiamo* from Royal Victoria YC.
 - *Destiny* establishes new Juan de Fuca record, breaking Ned Ashe's eight-year-old pace by 45 minutes.
- 1976
- Swiftsure's only fatality. Wilbur Willard, skipper of *Native Dancer* was swept out of the cockpit off Bonilla Point in a 30-35 knot gale.
 - First aluminum boat in Swiftsure - Alvin Narod's 56-foot *Sunbird* from R. Van YC.
- 1978
- *Windward Passage* skins 3.5 hours off the record set in 1972 by *Endless Summer*. Five other yachts also eclipsed the old time. Swiftsure now aiming for a race in under 20 hours.
 - Beken of Cowes pays first visit to Victoria to photograph Swiftsure and ¾ Ton Worlds.
 - First official Oregon International Offshore Race, bringing Swiftsure competitors.
 - Infamous photo of a boat high and dry on Race Rocks at low tide, after being badly holed.
- 1979
- The wind blows! Some 130 boats knocked out of the race within two hours of the start. Two boats collide at the start and one of them almost sinks!
 - Dorade holes Zuben Ubi near Neah Bay; crew forced to take to the liferaft.
- 1980
- Swiftsure celebrates its 50th anniversary. A special lunch for skippers who have competed in 20+ races.
 - John Graham, crew member on *Claribel* in 1930, and later a skipper of *Maruffa* once again in the race with his new boat, *Elixir*.
 - *Cresset*, a competitor in 1930 and 1931, makes a return appearance.



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- 1981
- *Heather* captures Swiftsure Trophy with a crew of Sea Scouts and Explorers.
 - Threatened blockade of Victoria harbour by the commercial fishing fleet protesting changes to federal government regulations.
 - A real Driftsure. In the Juan de Fuca Race, over 70% DNF.
- 1982
- The year of the safety crackdown - 31 yachts disqualified for infringements of safety equipment requirements. One did not even have the mandatory liferaft aboard.
 - All skippers now required to two have done two qualifying overnight races.
 - Fog causes one Juan de Fuca boat to run aground on Race Rocks.
- 1983
- Start of the "race week" concept - inshore races on Wednesday and Thursday.
 - First attempt of a Harbour Fest, combining Victoria Days and Swiftsure.
 - With a canned music rock concert too, a crowd of 30,000 to 40,000 downtown on the Friday night - 48 arrested. Even Saturday night, while the races were underway, a further 16 arrests as a result of a drunken brawl.
- 1984
- In the Juan de Fuca Race, *Knockout* bests the previous record set in 1978 by *Gogama*.
 - Eight others all under 13 hours too.
- 1985
- A Royal Vic YC boat finally wins Swiftsure Trophy- Steve Merriman on his Crown 34, *Country Style*.
 - Cape Flattery Race introduced.
 - In the Inner Harbour, first "\$100 Sailboat Race," sponsored by Royal Naval Sailing Association (different from CFSA).
 - A carnival atmosphere prevailed most of the evening before the races; some problems from a rock concert.
- 1986
- Multihull division established for long course; *Chaak* first winner.
 - Team racing introduced for all three courses.
 - A crackdown on rowdiness and a greater police presence led to 128 arrests among spectators on the eve of the races.
- 1987
- *Magic Hempel*, a multihull, capsizes. Another yacht lands on Race Rocks.
- 1988
- The Russians arrive, sponsored by Bellingham Yacht Club.
- 1989
- No flying sails class (i.e., no spinnakers) tried for Juan de Fuca to encourage more cruising boats to participate.
- 1990
- Owen Point Race introduced; met with mixed success and not repeated.
 - IMS rating system tested in Cape Flattery Race.
 - First Mini 12 challenge races in the Inner Harbour - Dale Gann wins.
- 1991
- Last year of inshore/ race week experiment.
 - Introduction of a written test for all Swiftsure skippers; complaints from freighters about yachts in the shipping lanes.
 - Two men in a 21-foot boat drown mysteriously overnight after watching Swiftsure start.
- 1992
- Both Royal Victoria and Seattle Yacht Clubs celebrate their centennials.
 - Driftsure again - more than 60% of fleet DNF.



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- 1993
- 50th Swiftsure race (vs. 1980 being 50th anniversary of first race).
 - PHRF rating system used exclusively after IOR groups fade.
 - Swiftsure headquarters moved to the Inner Harbour.
 - Seattle-based People for Puget Sound organizes the “Love Your Puget Sound Regatta” as an alternative to Swiftsure, based on concerns about Victoria sewage system.
- 1994
- A major re-think of all aspects of Swiftsure over the winter almost leads to the demise of the long course. Leads to first time corporate and private sponsorships are sought.
 - *Rage* from Portland sweeps trophies on long course.
 - The 290-foot pocket cruise ship *World Discoverer* cuts through the Swiftsure start line.
- 1995
- Swiftsure renewed, thanks to Kathie White-Fryer's "Back to the Bank" Campaign. 48 entries. First recipient of the Jim McVie - Humphrey Golby Memorial Award.
 - Swiftsure celebrates “the Roaring 40s” a group of Cal 40 sailors from Seattle that helped save the Swiftsure Lightship Classic.
 - *Cassiopeia* from Seattle shaves 2.5 hours off *Windward Passage*'s 1978 record for best elapsed time - just under 18 hours. Also establishes a new corrected time record - first in under 20 hours.
 - In the Cape Flattery Multihull race, *Red Shift* reaches speeds of 20+ knots.
 - On board Bonar Davis' *Ksan* is the Rickard clan as crew - Ches, his, son, grandson and great grandson; Ches and Bonar are only three-time winners of Swiftsure (on *Winsome III*)
 - Humphrey Golby, the “Voice of Swiftsure,” dies; 1995 races dedicated to his memory.
 - Swiftsure goes on the Internet.
- 1996
- Good winds and favorable tides lead to new records. Even so, a quarter of the fleet retires.
 - *Pyewacket* has downwind ride back to home - 22+ knots. Skipper Roy Disney from Los Angeles sets new Swiftsure record for First to Finish - 16 hours, 45 minutes and 39 seconds.
 - *Hanoman* sets new pace for multihulls; *Aldebaran* cracks Juan de Fuca mark.
 - All quiet downtown; Swiftsure returns to being a community event. Two weeks before Swiftsure, “Good Morning America” sees the arrival of the fleet in the Oregon Offshore feeder race
- 1997
- Multihull racing to both Swiftsure Bank and Neah Bay.
 - Exhibition Race introduced.
 - Start delayed two hours but then it blew! - Steve Fossett on the big multihull *Stars & Stripes* establishes course record for any kind of boat.
 - *Atalanta* foils *Cassiopeia*'s try at tying the record for three consecutive wins. At 73 feet, *Atalanta* is indeed big but also relatively heavy; it weighs six times as much as a Santa Cruz 70.



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- 1998
- Around the world sailor John Guzzwell of *Trekka* fame participates in Swiftsure.
 - Longtime Swiftsure veteran Doug Fryer of Seattle surprises everyone by winning overall honours aboard his Custom 42-footer *Nightrunner*. For Fryer, this marked a triumphant return to the racing circuit, having been absent for the past several years while cruising in the southern oceans.
- 1999
- All boats in Swiftsure Lightship Classic Race recorded a corrected time of 32 hours or greater.
- 2000
- Team Trophies introduced in Multihull Racing for the first time.
- 2002
- A boring “Driftsure,” as there was an abundant amount of DNFs within each category of Swiftsure due to the lack of wind.
 - Swiftsure Lightship Classic Race had 28 registered, with 22 DNF.
 - Juan de Fuca Race had 34 registered, with 34 DNF.
 - Cape Flattery Race had 120 registered, with 95 DNF.
 - Cape Flattery Multihull Race had 8 registered, with 6 DNF.
- 2003
- From May 24th to May 26th, the Royal Victoria Yacht Club celebrated the 60th running of the Swiftsure International Yacht Race. To mark this special occasion, the committee saluted yachtsmen and boats from the “woodies” era. Their participation and sportsmanship established the race as one of North America’s most challenging overnight events.
 - The following are those boats who represented an outstanding contribution to Swiftsure: *Mary Bower*, *Galatea*, *Circe*, *Adios*, *Diamond Head*, *HMCS Oriole*, *Cressett*, *Mara*, *Mistral*, *Rainbird*, *Ladybug*, and *Kate II*.
- 2004
- Inaugurated the “Classics Race” (Inshore) for yachts of either a class where the first boat in the class was launched prior to January 1, 1975 or one-off designs launched prior to January 1, 1975.
- 2005
- *Coruba* established new long course record with the new distance (140.4 N.M. instead of 136.8 N.M.).
 - *Circe* came back to race in the “Classics” race (first launched in 1932, raced and won the long course in 1934).
 - Pacific Western Brewing Company signed on to a five-year term agreement as the Swiftsure Presenting Sponsor.
 - Experimented with transponders in the Classics Inshore Race.
 - One of the best currents, tides, and wind conditions over all.
- 2006
- John Buchan and *Glory* were winners of this year’s Swiftsure Lightship Classic (John’s father William Buchan won with *Thunder* in 1965).
 - Multihull *Cat Sass* capsized during the race.
 - Transponders were used for all yachts, except the inshore races, making Swiftsure the largest offshore racing fleet to deploy this amazing technology.
 - Two new races were added to the event: the Rosedale Rock Race (an inshore race formally incorporating the “Sookesure”) and the Juan de Fuca Race for Multihulls.



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- 2007
- R. Flemming and *Coruba* finished the Swiftsure Lightship Classic race of a corrected time of 17:21:48.
 - C. Burnett III and *Braveheart* had the fastest elapsed time at 15:08:02.
 - S. Travis and *Flash* had the fastest elapsed time of 12:51:13 in the Cape Flattery Race
 - C. Lees and *Bullitt* finished the Juan de Fuca Race with the fastest elapsed time of 11:20:50.
 - 5 boats finished the Swiftsure Lightship Classic by a hour under the fastest time marked (16:48:52 by *Coruba*) in 2005
- 2008
- John Buchan and *Glory* won the Swiftsure Lightship Classic race in a corrected time of 24:46:25. *Glory* was the fastest rated boat to ever enter Swiftsure races with a rating of -126 s/m.
 - Only two boats in the inshore races made it to the Pedder Bay rounding mark. These two boats were, *Hi5* and *Sauterelle*
 - Seventy-six boats did not finish their assigned races.
 - We used a new tracker system provided by Flagship.
- 2009
- John Buchan and *Glory* triple crowned for the second year in a row in the Swiftsure Lightship Classic race.
 - Two RVYC boats also triple crowned in their classes. They were Richard Ackrill and *Dragonfly*, and Larry McFadden and *Ghost Dancer*.
- 2010
- The race began with too much wind, then not enough
 - 30% of the entries were DNF (did not finish)
 - One boat, Kevin Reith's *Something Wicked* of the Sidney North Saanich Yacht Club, won 5 firsts (first around the mark, first to finish, first overall in the Cape Flattery race, first in division, and first in class)
- 2011
- This year challenged sailors with very light airs and lots of current off the start then winds built to about 10 knots lasting until about midnight and early finishers had max winds of about 18 knots with later finishers having a 37-knot tailwind
 - Results reflect the fact it became a small boat, slow boat race for handicap honours
- 2012
- The first time double-handed crews were permitted in all three long courses
 - The J122 *Anam Cara* blew up their boom near the gooseneck and sailed the last 20 miles under jib along to a second place finish
 - "Time Bandit, J120, wrapped their kite around their forestay, top and bottom with a small bit unwrapped in middle" said the Swiftsure Race Blogger. Entering Race Rocks the wind blew the kite open in the middle, filled it and knocked them over pinning them down for a sustained period. Anemometer went from 39 knots of wind to 6 knots of boat speed through the water as the tip of the mast submerged. Scary moments as they were almost pushed ashore before the very experienced crew got the boat back under control
 - *2012 continued on next page*
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- 2012
continued
- Custom 29 Melaque developed some reported problems with their steering and with darkness and high winds were forced into some rocks off of Beechy Head on the return to the finish line, May Day called, the search and rescue crews quickly got to work recovering all eight crew unharmed - eventually the boat was recovered with extensive damage
 - We were getting ready to take the kite down,” said a crew member aboard Wasabi, “when we rounded up hard in a big puff and our Kite Trimmer flew across the cockpit over the life lines into the water. On the second pass we were still going a bit fast but we got a line to him and he managed to hang on as the crew pulled him back on board.”
- 2013
- 70th running of the Swiftsure International Yacht Race
 - Included divisions for sailboats racing under an IRC handicap in the Swiftsure Lightship Classic and Cape Flattery Unlimited Races
 - Live online streaming of the start sequence
 - Plenty of wind at the start but then not so much during the rest of the day and overnight. Of the fleet, 23 boats record an FSC (finished shortened course) and 57 DNF (did not finish).
 - Doug Fryer, “Night Runner,” Anacortes Yacht Club recognized for competing in the most Swiftsures.
- 2014
- Solid winds from the start of race until early evening which then went light and remained so for the rest of the race
 - Only three boats in division 1 of the Swiftsure Lightship Classic PHRF fleet finished, five in the IRC fleet, and no boats in PHRF divisions 2 and 3 - scoring for these two divisions was based on rounding times
 - Boats in the Cape Flattery and Juan de Fuca fared much better regarding winds
 - Doug Fryer’s 45th Swiftsure raced – on his inimitable Night Runner
 - Ron MacKenzie’s 41st Swiftsure was celebrated on his Future Primitive by awarding him a bottle of Mount Gay Rum. Ron also won the oldest Swiftsure t-shirt contest with a 1978 Swiftsure t-shirt!
 - Swiftsure adopted ‘Always a Challenge’ as race slogan
- 2015
- Another long distance course added, the Hein Bank race
 - New location for Swiftsure Centre: the Steamship Building in the Inner Harbour
 - Good winds and smooth waters challenged the largest complement of racers in years (of the 199 that registered, 190 completed their race)
 - The largest number of multihull competitors and for the first time, they were given their own start
 - John Buchan, SYC, raced in his 60th Swiftsure aboard his TransPac 52 “Glory”
 - There were 1367 registered skippers and crew out on the water for the 2015 event
 - Swiftsure Race Committee hosted a Technical Night at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club with various presenters sharing great insights to help folks go fast and safe
- 2016
- IRC classes eliminated for monohulls in both the Swiftsure Lightship Classic and Hein Bank races to be replaced with ORC classes

HMS SWIFTSURE

*The following article first appeared in the June 1988 edition of the Maritime Museum of BC's "Resolution." It is based on information derived largely from an earlier article by Admiral G.A. Ballard, entitled "British General Battery Ship: **Swiftsure** and **Triumph**" in the April, 1948 Mariner's Mirror.*

"The Swiftsure Race is of course named after the Swiftsure Bank, which is located southwest of Carmanah Point, just outside the entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The Bank, in turn, was named after the 19th century Royal Navy battleship, which served as Pacific flagship stationed at Esquimalt."

"**H.M.S. Swiftsure**, 1870 to 1908, was the seventh ship in the Royal navy to have that name. The earliest **H.M.S. Swiftsure**, a 360-ton, 41-gun galleon, had been launched at Deptford in 1543. That ship was involved in action against the Spanish Armada in 1588, so "our" **Swiftsure** has a particularly honourable lineage!"

"The **Swiftsure** was launched in 1870 and commissioned two years later at Plymouth. An 'armoured central battery' screw ship, she and her sistership **Triumph** were designed specifically for service at remote Royal navy stations, such as Esquimalt. She was 280 feet long, had a beam of 55 feet and a draft of 24.5 feet. Her registered tonnage was 6,910."

"During the 1870s, she was stationed in the Mediterranean, and was then refitted to replace **Triumph** eventually as flagship in the Pacific. In 1882 she arrived on the British Columbia coast to assume duty as flagship."

"In The Mariner's Mirror, Admiral G.A. Ballard stated, "during her three years west of the Horn ... she sometimes passed a couple of months or more (under way), and occasionally had to hold a course in only half-surveyed seas, where many islands on the chart were still marked P.D. (position Doubtful) and lighthouses and buoys were absolutely non-existent."

"At that time of a growing Canadian presence on this coast - the Canadian Pacific Railway, that would finally tie British Columbia to the rest of Canada, was then under construction - the **Swiftsure's** presence would have been a strong reminder that this area was still part of the British Empire."

"In 1885, she was relieved by **Triumph**, and returned to Britain for an extensive refit, including new boilers. At the end of the **Triumph's** three-year commission on the Pacific, the **Swiftsure** returned to British Columbia waters."

"When relieved by the armoured and pole rigged cruiser **Warspite** in 1891, the **Swiftsure** was the last flagship to carry sails. Ballard states, "it fell to the lot of the **Swiftsure** ... to become the very last in a succession reaching back for centuries to observe to the letter the ancient regulation ordaining a 'top gallant masthead' as the proper place to fly an admiral's flag"

“That was the end of the **Swiftsure**’s overseas service. After retention at Plymouth as a guard and supply ship, she was removed from the effective list, used as a store hulk and broken up.”

- **HMS Swiftsure** arrived in Victoria in April, 1883 as the new Pacific flagship for Admiral Algernon McL. Lyons and was on station until 1885.
- She returned to England in 1885 for a refit, being replaced by a sistership **HMS Triumph**. The Swiftsure's second tour of duty was from April, 1889 to June, 1890, with Admiral Algernon C.F. Heneage. She arrived back in England in September, 1890 and was paid off the following month.
- **HMS Swiftsure** cost some £257,000. The ships complement was 450 and it had a range of 1,600 nautical miles at a cruising speed of six knots (maximum speed during trials after the refit was 13.75 knots). In 1883, she made 41 miles in only four hours under sail alone on a run from Hawaii.
- Between the original galleon and the 1870 ship, five others bore the name Swiftsure. In 1903, the battleship **HMS Swiftsure** was launched and then on active duty until 1920. This was followed by the 1943-1962 group of Swiftsure Class cruisers and, more recently, submarines.

More information is available on the ship's officers and armament. The Maritime Museum has research on hand about each of the **HMS Swiftsure**.

SWIFTSURE LIGHTSHIP

The following article by Robert L. Spearing first appeared in the June 1988 edition of the Maritime Museum of BC's "Resolution."

“The Swiftsure lightship station, which became the midway turning point of the Swiftsure Race, was established by the United States Government in 1909. It was the last of five lightship stations established on the Pacific Coast by the United States and was served over its period of existence by two lightships and their relief ships.

“The purpose of this lightship was to mark Swiftsure Bank, thirteen miles northwest of Cape Flattery and ten miles southwest of Carmanah Point, off the entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The three and one half mile (five and three-fifths kilometre) bank was named after H.M.S. Swiftsure, which recorded the first official soundings at the bank in 1889.

“The first vessel assigned to Swiftsure station in 1909 was lightship No. 93. She was built on the Atlantic Coast of the United States and had sailed around Cape Horn with a fleet of United States lightships and lighthouse tenders.

“No. 93 was painted yellow, with ‘Swiftsure’ in large black letters on her sides, the reason for this unique paint job being to distinguish her from the Umatilla lightship, twelve miles south. No. 93 was replaced on Swiftsure station in 1930 and to Umatilla Reef and later to the Columbia River station. I do not know her fate, but I assume she was scrapped.

“The replacement lightship for No. 93 in 1930 was the No. 113, one of the United States’ first diesel- electric lightships. She was a steel ship built in 1930 at Portland, Oregon, and was 133 feet 9 inches long (40 metres), 30 feet beam (9 metres), and 15 feet deep (4.5 metres) and had a displacement of 630 tons. She had a red hull with white letters on her sides.

“Both lightships had many experiences in rough weather on this exposed station. In December 1932, No. 113 was hit by a storm, which caused her to drag her anchor with her engines running full speed ahead. A sea boarded her bow and broke in her wheelhouse portlights. The force of the water flattened the helmsman against the wheel and broke three spokes, and a foot of water sloshed about on the wheelhouse deck.

“On December 30, 1952 a gale broke No. 113’s moorings and she was swept two miles off station before she could beat her way back and drop a second anchor.

“On July 1, 1961, with a notable lack of protest, the Swiftsure lightship station was considered unnecessary and No. 113 was recalled. The lighthouses at Carmanah Point and Tatoosh Island had been re-equipped with much more powerful lights and Carmanah Point had been fitted with a radio direction finding signal.



“No. 113 was transferred to the Umatilla lightship station on July 10, 1961, and finally retired in 1972. It was proposed to make her the flagship of the projected Puget Sound Maritime Museum at Tacoma, Washington. The museum, however, was not built, and she was used by the Tacoma sea scouts.

“Later she was sold for scrap to Schintzer Steel Company of Portland, Oregon, and while tied up on the Columbia River, she sank. She was refloated and in 1982 was towed to South Beach, Newport, Oregon. Her engines were removed, a special spot was dredged at a small boat marina, and the old Swiftsure lightship was moored there and converted into a floating restaurant. In 1987, this last connection with the Swiftsure lightstation was seized for debts and was offered for sale by her creditors.”

- When the first lightship went into service in 1909, she carried lanterns burning sperm whale oil, later changing to lard oil and then kerosene before being refitted with diesel electric generators.
- During WW II, the lightship was fitted with anti-aircraft guns and patrolled Alaskan waters. Swiftsure Bank was marked by a lighted whistle buoy.
- Mushroom anchors weighing up to 8,000 pounds each were used to secure the lightship in position. Additional anchors were kept on board for emergency use during high winds. In fact, every piece of equipment was carried in duplicate so that there could be speedy repairs in the case of a breakdown.
- Sharp-eyed readers of "Swiftsure: The First Fifty Years" may have noticed that some photos show a lightship with RELIEF rather than SWIFTSURE on her hull. This is the 94-year old Lightship No. 83 which filled in for the Swiftsure, Umatilla and Columbia vessels as they went in for their annual overhauls (usually two months). It was decommissioned in July, 1960 after serving for 55 years.
- One of these relief vessels was No. 83. Listed in the US National Register of Historic Places (1975) and designated as an American National landmark (1989), it is the only US lightship left with its original steam power plant intact. She now is viewable to the public at Northwest Seaport at Historic Ships Wharf in Seattle's Lake Union Park. In 1995, the hull lettering was changed to SWIFTSURE to recognize the nearest lightship station.
- Northwest Seaport is soliciting contributions to fund SWIFTSURE restoration and education activities. Contact PO Box 9744, Seattle, WA 98109, email info@nwseaport.org, phone (206) 447-9800, fax (206) 447-0598, website, <http://nwseaport.org>

OVERVIEW OF THE RACES

For 2016, the Swiftsure International Yacht Race will be made up of multiple races over five distinct courses, as well as an Inshore Regatta:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To Swiftsure Bank and back 	<p>Swiftsure Lightship Classic (from Clover Point to Swiftsure Bank rounding mark, an anchored Royal Canadian Navy vessel, and return to Victoria Harbour): 138.2 nautical miles</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To Hein Bank and back 	<p>Hein Bank (from Clover Point to Neah Bay rounding mark, an anchored Royal Canadian Navy vessel, to ODAS buoy 46088 located five miles west of Hein Bank, and return to Victoria Harbour): 118.1 nautical miles</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To Neah Bay and back 	<p>Cape Flattery (from Clover Point to to Neah Bay rounding mark, an anchored Royal Canadian Navy vessel, and return to Victoria Harbour): 103.4 nautical miles</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To Clallam Bay and back 	<p>Juan de Fuca (from Clover Point to Clallam Bay rounding mark, a Royal Victoria Yacht Club member’s vessel, and return to Victoria Harbour): 79.7 nautical miles</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inshore Classic 	<p>course destination and length set on-the-day</p>

The Swiftsure Lightship Classic is the premier event, with the longest course and venturing out into the Pacific Ocean. This race course is open to yachts under the Pacific Handicapped Racing Fleet (PHRF) with divisions for sailboats racing under an ORC handicap as well. First overall and first to round the mark are awarded.

The Hein Bank is a race open to all PHRF and ORC handicapped monohull yachts. It is a fourth “Long Course” option for racing in the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

On the middle course, there are the following races:

- The Cape Flattery Race for (monohull) yachts racing under a PHRF handicap; and
- The Cape Flattery Race for Multihulls, previously known as the Port San Juan Race (racing with a PHRF handicap).



On the shortest course, the Juan de Fuca Race has two distinct classes based on Sail Area/Displacement ratios: heavy and light and is for yachts rating 40 and higher PHRF. In 2012, for the first time, a double-handed division was included for all three long courses. Since 2015, a double-handed division is only offered for the Juan de Fuca course.

The Swiftsure Inshore Classic is a one day race in the vicinity of Juan de Fuca Strait and the Victoria waterfront reaching from William Head to Trial Island, and in the vicinity of Haro Strait, as far easterly as Beaumont Shoal and northerly to Johnstone Reef. The race is the fifth start and finishes in Cadboro Bay near the Royal Victoria Yacht Club's facility where competitors may moor/raft overnight. The course is determined after consideration of the weather prediction and tidal currents. Provision is made for flying and no flying sails monohull yachts as well as a multihull division. Since 2012, single handed crew are permitted as well (for 2016, in the monohull flying sail division only).

Within each race, sailboats are divided into divisions based on their ratings and number of entries, so that yachts are competing with similar yachts within a division and also seeking a win overall.

In earlier years when two parallel rating systems were often being used, there were in effect two Swiftsure races and two Juan de Fuca's - one for the IOR (International Offshore Rule) fleet and one for the PHRF fleet each with their own starts and series of prizes.

INNOVATIONS

Over the years, the organizers of Swiftsure have introduced a number of innovations to increase the event's appeal and popularity, as well as responding to the wishes of participants. The key ones include:

- 1960
 - Swiftsure start moved from Friday to Saturday to encourage more US entries - Memorial Day.
- 1962
 - Juan de Fuca Race, called "the little Swiftsure", so that smaller yachts could participate. In the 1966 and 1967 races, even Cal 20s entered.
- 1965
 - PIYA safety categories updated.
- 1975
 - Club team circuit racing - best overall in Swiftsure, Southern Straits and Great Equalizer races.
- 1982
 - Offer to establish One Design classes in long course.
- 1983
 - Race Week concept introduced.
- 1985
 - Cape Flattery Race started after several "Driftsures" led to so many withdrawals due to people having to get back to their home ports.
- 1986
 - Multihull group inaugurated.
 - Club team racing introduced for each race in Swiftsure.
- 1990
 - Owen Point Race experiment.
 - Introduction of experimental International Measurement System (IMS) ratings.
- 1991
 - IMS group proposed for Swiftsure Lightship Classic but no entrants.
- 1992
 - Concept of a division for older wooden boats in the Juan de Fuca Race so that they would not be competing with "the Tupperware fleet."
- 1993
 - Swiftsure nexus based in the Inner Harbour, for greater public access
- 1994
 - One Design class for Cal 40s, recognizing "the Roaring 40s" rally to help save the Swiftsure Lightship Classic.
- 1997
 - Swiftsure Exhibition Race introduced
 - Both long and middle courses for multihulls.
- 1998
 - Official "unofficial" start for Sookesure Race
- 2000
 - Start line change to Clover Point
- 2001
 - 30-Foot Express introduced
- 2002
 - Swiftsure Exhibition race changed to the Unlimited Flattery for faster boats wanting to sail the Neah Nay Course.
- 2003
 - 30-Foot Express removed
- 2004
 - Classics Race (Inshore) introduced for yachts' design prior to 1975
 - Start time for Swiftsure Lightship Race changed to 10:05AM
- 2005
 - New logo
- 2006
 - Addition of the Rosedale Rock Race (formally the "Sookesure") and Juan de Fuca Race for Multihulls
 - The use of transponders for the entire fleet (except inshore)



- 2007
- New Orca Class Vessel was used as the start vessel
 - Development of the new race tracker program
- 2008
- Got rid of the barge and created the “bimini” which is located directly on Ship Point
 - Radio equipment provided by the Base Amateur Radio Association (BARS) and the emergency programs of several Capital Region municipalities allowed the race officers on the four mark-rounding vessels to deposit race participant rounding times directly into the Swiftsure information system from those far-flung locations. Also, these amateur radio organizations tested their ability to send in digital video and audio files from ships at sea. If successful, these connections will allow people on shore to see almost real-time video shots taken on board the mark rounding vessels.
- 2009
- The communications team put in place the new Mt. Survey Repeater. This repeater will automatically and directly relay voice and Airmail traffic from all stations between Victoria to Swiftsure Bank.
 - Moving the data entry personnel into the CRD radio station was a success. The duty race officers at Ship Point appear to have liked having liaison radio operators attached to them.
 - The Sunday Race was a success. In the future this will allow the inshore racing crowd to participate in Swiftsure for both days of racing.
- 2010
- Every boat in Swiftsure Lightship Classic was given a SPOT (Satellite GPS messenger) as a backup safety device and to enable non-racers to watch the track sailed by competitors.
 - An increase in attention paid towards ensuring the race is environmentally friendly (e.g. recycling).
- 2011
- The Race Tracker using Globalstar’s SPOT units became an integral part of Swiftsure’s safety program, enabling the Race Committee to keep track of competitors as they progressed on the race course; the system was also proved to some other yacht clubs for their key races.
- 2012
- A significant rewrite of the automated Results System enabled fast and accurate posting of the results of the race.
 - The online registration system was enhanced and for the first time, competitors could pay online
 - Enhancements to the Race Tracker System were also made such as the ability to replay the race at any time after the event was over
 - New look and feel to for the website in general
- 2013
- Live streaming online of the start of Swiftsure
 - Sponsor videos streamed on front page of Swiftsure website
 - Changes to PIYA Special Regulations Governing Minimum Equipment and Accommodation Standards included for the first time the requirement that racers’ personal safety equipment include a crotch/thigh strap attached to their Personal Floatation Device



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- 2014
- The new PIYA Safety Equipment Requirements for monohulls which replaced the PIYA Category Certificate (Special Regulations Governing Minimum Equipment and Accommodation Standards) was adopted but with some amendments unique to Swiftsure such as Swiftsure Lightship Classic yachts no longer being required to carry a liferaft
 - Safety Equipment Requirements for multihulls were developed for Swiftsure in conjunction with the Multihull Association NW and BC Multihull Society
 - Lekwungen First Nations elders blessed the fleet from Clover Point race morning
 - Night Market was operated at Ship Point on Friday and Saturday for the first time
 - Victoria Kinsmen Club operated a battle of the bands in Swiftsure Centre on Saturday
- 2015
- Added new long course, the Hein Bank Race
 - For the first time, the multihulls, the largest fleet of them ever, had their own start.
- 2016
- IRC classes eliminated for monohulls in both the Swiftsure Lightship Classic and Hein Bank races to be replaced with ORC classes

INTERESTING PARTICIPATING YACHTS

Biggest

Extra Beat from the Seattle Yacht Club is the largest yacht to date at 120 feet. She was the sole entrant in the 1997 Swiftsure Exhibition Race. The Frers 120 was not eligible to compete with other yachts as the International Sailing Federation Racing Rules of Sailing do not permit boats with movable ballast.

The biggest competitor over the years has been *HMCS Oriole* at 91 feet (with bowsprit, 102 or 110 feet LOA?). She weighs some 100 tons and has a beam of 18 feet. Originally, known as *Oriole IV*, she was launched as a private yacht in June, 1921. She was commissioned into the Royal Canadian Navy in 1952, but had been used as a Sea Cadet training vessel since 1941. Originally her mainmast was 105 feet high and her mizzen was 55 feet. Later it was found necessary to shorten her main to a little over 89 feet, which slowed her down except in the strongest of breezes.

For more information on the Oriole, see applicable section in this guide.

Smallest

For the Swiftsure Lightship Classic, it seems *Aida* has been the smallest ever competitor, entered in 1960 and 1961. This 26-foot boat was a Spitzgatter, a Danish design, owned and skippered by Hunter Vogel of the Royal Victoria Yacht Club. On her first time out, she won among the seven yachts in "B" class and placed 31 out of 36 overall. *Aida* then switched to the shorter Juan de Fuca course in 1963 and took first place overall, racing out of the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club.

In more recent years, the smallest Swiftsure entry has been *Giant Slayer*, a Santa Cruz 27 skippered by John Knudson from the Sloop Tavern Yacht Club.

The smallest boats in any of the races were probably the group of Cal 20s, based at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club, in some of the early Juan de Fuca races (1966 and 1967). The first was likely *Galenaia*, owned by George and Pat Dufour. Upgraded safety rules in later years meant these solid yachts could no longer compete.

Oldest

HMCS Oriole is the most likely candidate as she was 89 years old in her 2010 Swiftsure appearance. Her first time in Swiftsure was in 1955.

Ray Cooke in *Circe*, the winner of the 1934 Swiftsure, was still sailing her in the 1963 race and J. Seaborn from Seattle also entered her in 1965 and 1966. Her last Swiftsure was in 1969. Now, she often comes to Victoria for the annual Classic Boat Festival.

Cresset, a competitor in the second Swiftsure in 1931, has come back to visit from time to time. Her last race was a special appearance in 1980 to help mark Swiftsure's 50th anniversary.

Minena, the earliest R Vic YC entry in 1931, is now based in Australia and still competes in classic yacht races.

Maruffa, owned for years by John Graham of the Seattle Yacht Club, was usually the first home all through the 1950s but finally won the overall title in 1957. She ended up in New Zealand and was lost on a reef there in 1979.

Most Unusual

- Buchan's daggerboard vs. keelboats in 1978
- *Stars & Stripes* - 60 foot long with 60 foot beam - America's Cup vs. New Zealand
- *Endless Summer* and *Weatherly* - ex 12 Metres
- *Gometra* - the gold ship
- *Glory* - The fastest rated boat to ever enter Swiftsure with a rating of -126.

For further information on *Gometra*, see “*Swiftsure: The First Fifty Years*,” Golby, H., & Hewett, S. (1980). Sidney, BC: Manning Press.

From Afar

The first yacht from beyond the local waters of Puget Sound, Georgia Strait and Juan de Fuca Strait was *Mischief* from Portland in 1955. Skipped by R. Smith, she was 28 feet 7.5 inches long.

The first visitor from California was *Tasco II*, a 48.6 foot "A" class yacht from the St. Francis Yacht Club in San Francisco, skippered by T.R. Short. One of the famous boats from California was Pyewacket, an 87-foot yacht skippered Roy Disney in 1996. Pyewacket remained in Victoria to do the Vic-Maui race that same year.

With the start of the Vic-Maui races in the late 1960s, it is thought some Lahaina Yacht Club boats came up in the early 1970s to first try Swiftsure and then race home. The old results do not confirm this.

When Royal Victoria Yacht Club hosted the IOR Three Quarter Ton World Championships in June 1978, a record number of competitors took the opportunity to use that year's Swiftsure as a warm up. Those from afar, included *Windward Passage* (New York YC); *Bravura* and *Drifter* (Lahaina YC); *Pendragon* (California YC); *Chocolate Chips* (Michigan City YC) and *Lobo* and *Discovery I* from other clubs on the Great Lakes.

In 1988, the Russians made their Swiftsure debut with the *Kapitan Panev*, skippered by Viktor Bukhalsky from the Antares Yacht Club in Nakhodka, near Vladivostok. The boat arrived by freighter, with the crew sponsored by the Bellingham Yacht Club. Unfortunately, the *Kapitan Panev* was involved in a collision at the start line and had to retire from the race.

SAFETY AFLOAT

Safety on the water is necessarily uppermost in the minds of all - the Swiftsure Committee, the skippers and crews and the support fleet. Experienced sailors know and respect the vagaries of weather and tides in the Strait of Juan de Fuca because they realize the winds and currents can be challenging.

The Swiftsure Committee has a safety policy, which is reviewed and updated annually to guide all aspects of the race. The Race Committee also follows a Meteorological Monitoring Protocol to guide decisions related to when to not start and/or to abandon a race because of adverse winds and sea states.

There is close coordination with the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre which would mobilize rescue resources in the case of an incident on the water. Available resources include all other racers (they are most often closest to another racer in distress), Oak Bay Royal Marine Search and Rescue, Victoria Royal Marine Search and Rescue, Sooke Royal Marine Search and Rescue, Canadian Coast Guard, Canadian Air Force SAR helicopters stationed in Comox and US Coast Guard.

All competitors must comply with the Safety Equipment Requirements issued by the Pacific International Yacht Association (PIYA). The three distance courses (Swiftsure Lightship Classic, Cape Flattery and Clallam Bay) are designated as 'Coastal' and the Inshore Classic is designated as 'Nearshore+'. The Safety Equipment Requirements are found at: <http://www.piyasailing.com>

Each skipper formally acknowledges their responsibility for the safety of their vessel and crew when they register by acknowledging and agreeing to the following (which is also included as 1.2 of the Safety Equipment Requirements):

"The safety of a boat and her crew is the sole and inescapable responsibility of the "person in charge", as per RRS 46, who shall ensure that the boat is seaworthy and manned by an experienced crew with sufficient ability and experience to face bad weather. S/he shall be satisfied as to the soundness of hull, spars, rigging, sails and all gear. S/he shall ensure that all safety equipment is at all times properly maintained and safely stowed and that the crew knows where it is kept and how it is to be used. S/he shall also nominate a person to take over the responsibilities of the Person in Charge in the event of his/her incapacitation."

There are safety inspections after the race. All finishing yachts must proceed to the inspection dock for an inspection of their compliance with the Safety Equipment Requirements. Failure to comply may result in disqualification from the race and, if a serious infraction of the requirements, refusing entry in the next year's event.

Out of the thousands of yachts that have participated in the Swiftsure International Yacht Race since the first race took place in 1930, there has been only one fatality - in 1976. Safety consciousness among racers has come a long way since then.

STRAIT OF JUAN DE FUCA VESSEL TRAFFIC SYSTEM

Swiftsure sailors have to contend with more than just wind and tidal currents. There is all the deep sea shipping and other commercial traffic - tugs with barges, fish boats and even ferries. One must remember that every freighter going to or from the ports of Vancouver, Seattle and Tacoma has to transit the straits and, at that point, the sea-going vessels do not have a local pilot on board. Imagine some 200 yachts racing through the night, crossing the vessel traffic lanes while some of the biggest freighters in the world plow through the racecourse at speeds of 15 knots.

The American and Canadian Coast Guards operate a traffic separation system in the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Inbound vessels must use the lane marked on charts to the south of the Strait; outbound vessels are to stay in the lane to the north. A one to three mile wide separation zone lies between the lanes. The Coast Guards' vessel traffic control centers track all commercial ships in transit, much like air traffic controllers at airports.

A part of Swiftsure racing rules is the application of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea - in effect a worldwide treaty. Sailboats are not to impede larger commercial vessels. But the tide and wind do not always cooperate. Also, for most racers the rounding marks are on the other side of the shipping lanes.

HANDICAPPING AND RATINGS

Perhaps the most frequently asked question to the Swiftsure organizers is how do you determine the placings in each division and the overall winner of each race with so many different kinds of yachts competing? Like horse racing, a handicap or rating system is applied so that each boat, no matter how big or small, should have the same mathematical chance of winning. This time allowance or differential is applied to a boat's elapsed time to give its "corrected" time.

Rating systems usually take into account length, weight, sail area and, under some systems, past performance. Some yachts do better in certain types of conditions than others.

For the past few years, the Pacific Handicap Racing Fleet of the Northwest (PHRF) system has been used for Swiftsure, with the multihulls using ratings from the North West Multihull Association or the Western Multihull Association. The numbers show a yacht's rating in seconds per mile it will be given as a time allowance. The difference between the ratings of two competing yachts, multiplied by the distance of the race, shows a skipper of a faster boat how much sooner he must finish in order to still place above a slower boat.

Over the years, a number of different rating systems have been used. This has sometimes been in parallel, so there have been, in effect separate races within a race (e.g. Juan de Fuca PHRF and IOR classes each with an overall winner). The major systems have been:

Royal Ocean Racing Club (RORC)	1930s
Cruising Club of America	
Swiftsure	1947 - 1970
Juan de Fuca	1962 - 1970
International Offshore Rule (IOR)	
Swiftsure	1971 - 1992
Cape Flattery	1985 - 1993
Juan de Fuca	1971 - 1984
Pacific Handicap Racing Fleet (PHRF)	
Swiftsure	1969 -
Cape Flattery	1985 -
Juan de Fuca	1967 -
"Classics" and Rosedale Rock Race	2006 - 2011
Inshore Races	2012 -
Hein Bank	2015 -
International Measurement System (IMS)	
Cape Flattery	1990 - 1993
Northwest Multihull Association or Western Multihull Association	
Swiftsure and Cape Flattery Multihull Races	1986 -

Royal Ocean Racing Club, United Kingdom (IRC Rating)	
Swiftsure	2013 – 2015
Cape Flattery Unlimited	2013 – 2014
Hein Bank	2015
Offshore Racing Council (ORC Rating)	
Swiftsure	2016
Hein Bank	2016

In the past, yacht designers paid very close attention to the handicap systems, striving to gain every possible advantage but still stay within the rating rules. Since the early 1980s, however, a different philosophy has gained momentum - “fast is fun”.

One prominent advocate is Bill Lee, the California-based designer of the popular Santa Cruz yachts. The bigger 50 and 70 footers are called ULDBs for ultra-light displacement boats. In more popular terms, they are known as the big sleds or rockets and to maximize their power is called “turbo charging.”

The goal for these boats is line honors - first boat to finish. The development of ULDBs (ultra light displacement boats) played havoc with the handicapping systems. New calculations had to be done as the handicaps were off the chart. The result has been “negative” ratings - the ULDBs not only have to give everyone else time; they have to beat themselves in order to win on correction!

The combination of the rating system and the wind conditions can lead to the fast boats being favored in some years and, in other years, being penalized. Two examples:

1997: With lots of wind, eight out of the top 10 in the Swiftsure Lightship Classic were ULDBs. They just took off at speeds approaching 20 knots to outdistance the smaller boats and save sufficient time on correction.

1985: A *driftsure*, with boats taking 35 hours to sail the long course. *Meridian*, a 70 footer from Seattle, was the first PHRF boat home therefore won a trophy. On correction, however, she placed last in her division and 87th among the Swiftsure PHRF fleet.

The PHRF handicapping system changed in the late 1980s. Until then, a boat’s rating was expressed in minutes per mile (and tenths of minutes). For example, a Catalina 27 rated at 3.3. Taking the standardized length of the course, skippers could calculate the relative times needed to place better than another yacht.

The change in the late 1980s was to express ratings in seconds per mile. The same Catalina 27 would now rate 198. With the changeover however, there were also adjustments in many ratings to reflect data collected on actual relative performance.



THE SWIFTSURE VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION

From its inception, Swiftsure has been both a volunteer effort and a partnership with its supporters. Until the mid 1970s, the race was conducted under the auspices of the Pacific International Yachting Association (PIYA), the governing regional body for yacht racing from Oregon to Alaska.

From 1950 onwards, the Royal Victoria Yacht Club has been the permanent host of Swiftsure and some 300+ of its members volunteer their time to organize the multitude of tasks required for the event (RVYC’s membership averages about a thousand, including spouses and juniors). In the mid 1970s, the Yacht Club took over complete responsibility for the event but some of the trophies are still owned technically by the PIYA.

Not enough can be said of all the added work performed by the small staff at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club and all the Swiftsure volunteers.

2016 SWIFTSURE COMMITTEE:

Chair	Vern Burkhardt
Principal Race Officer	John Abel
Entertainment Coordinator	Jonas Zolpys
Finance	Heather Brazier
Logistics	Louise Smith
Media and Promotion	Chad Grice
Sponsorship Relations & Silent Auction	Charlotte Gann
Technology	Dennis McMillan
Trophies and Award Records	Alan Barber
Volunteer Coordinator	Judie Abel
Multihulls & Special Advisor	John Green
Swiftsure Office	Debbie Palinkas

There are many different groups under each of the sub-committees. Race Management in particular has some 15 distinct responsibilities covering all aspects of race operations. As well, from 1999 to 2012, Swiftsure developed a partnership with the University of Victoria, where a coop placement in the Swiftsure’s office was set up for students to aid in event’s success.

**PAST SWIFTSURE COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND RACE OFFICERS**

Year	Swiftsure Committee Chairs or Vice-Chairs	Race Management Committee Chair or Race Officers (PRO)
2015-2016	Vern Burkhardt	John Abel (PRO)
2014	Vern Burkhardt	Andrew McBride (PRO)
2011-13	Vern Burkhardt	Jennifer Guest (PRO)
2010	Bill Conconi	Jennifer Guest (PRO)
2008 - 2009	Bill Conconi	Guy Tyrwhitt-Drake
2002 - 2007	Bill Conconi	Andrew McBride
1995 - 2002	Bill Conconi	Gerry Guest
1994	Bill Conconi	Hugh Porter
1993	Trevor Hayward Vice-chair, Bill Conconi	
1991 - 1992	Dick Readshaw Vice-chair, Trevor Hayward	92 - H. Porter; M. Turner; J. Newton 91 - H. Porter; M. Turner
1990	Dick Readshaw	H. Porter; G. Nickells; T. Stamper; R. Ginniver
1989	Roy Barber	G. Cooper; G. Guest; D. Reedshaw; R. Ginniver
1987 - 1988	Hugh Porter	88 - S. Bryant; T. Raymond; D. Reedshaw 87 - S. Bryant; W. Roots; T. Raymond; T. Stamper
1984 - 1986	Roy Barber (for 1986, Vice- chair, H. Porter)	86 - W. Roots; S. Bryant; B. Wright; G. Screech 85 - S. Bryant; W. Roots; H. Porter; T. Stamper; B. Wright 84 - S. Bryant; W. Roots; B. Wright
1973 - 1983	Frank Piddington	Sid Bryant
1972	Frank Piddington	Walter Roots
1971	Frank Piddington	Dick Readshaw
1969 - 1970	Frank Piddington	
1968	Frank Piddington	
1966 - 1967	Sid Bryant	Neville Life
1962 - 1965	Dave Angus	Frank Piddington
1961	Jack Gann	
1960	Bud Trythall	Jack Gann
1960	Monty Christopher	Jack Gann
1959	Bud Trythall	Monty Christopher
1958	Jack Gann	Monty Christopher
1957	Jack Gann	Bud Trythall
1956		Jack Gann
1952 - 1955	Beau Orht	

HMCS ORIOLE - THE NAVY'S OLDEST COMMISSIONED VESSEL

INTRODUCTION

Sometimes she is called the “Grand Lady of Swiftsure” and is truly a Swiftsure veteran. Her Majesty’s Canadian Ship Oriole is the sentimental favorite among Victorians. Whenever the wind pipes up in late May, local sailors start to wonder if, perhaps this year, the Oriole might win a Swiftsure.

The basic facts and stats for HMCS Oriole are:

Designer:	George Owen of Cambridge, MA
Builder:	George Lawley and Sons of Neponset, MA
Length overall:	31.1 metres (102 feet)
Length waterline:	19.2 metres (63 feet)
Beam:	5.8 metres (19 feet)
Draught:	2.7 metres (10 feet)
Displacement:	93.5 tonnes (92 tons standard)
Mainmast height:	31.7 metres (104 feet including attachments)
Mizzenmast height:	70 feet
Maximum sail area:	1,458 square metres (15,700 square feet)
Working sails area:	50 square metres (6133 square feet)
Spinnaker:	650 square metres (7,000 square feet)
Sail composition:	¾ to 12 ounce Dacron/Spectra/Mylar
Spinnaker poles:	42 feet long; each weighs 125 pounds
Standing rigging:	steel wire rope
Motor:	261 h.p. Detroit diesel
Accommodations:	24 (earlier, was 21)
Provisions:	can carry a 60-day supply
Water:	can make 500 gallons of fresh water a day

Oriole is a Marconi-rigged ketch. She has no winches for sail handling; instead, all halyards and running back stays are rigged luff on luff to give sufficient mechanical advantage to sail her. Oriole remains very much the same as when she was built for George Gooderham of Toronto as his family yacht (named Oriole IV), save improvements to the rigging, galley, and the latest in electronic navigation and communication systems. She is still a beautiful yacht with graceful lines, commemorating the golden age of sailing.

Oriole’s current mission is to train personnel of the Canadian Forces in basic seamanship. She is both the oldest vessel and the longest serving commissioned ship in the Royal Canadian Navy

Complement: 1 officer; 4 crew; 18 personnel under training



The Oriole began racing in Swiftsures in 1955. In 2007, it was her 50th race. She has both IOR and PHRF rating certificates, as the ship sometimes competes in one fleet or the other. The Oriole has only missed five Swiftsures and two or three were due to her being on extended voyages abroad. In 1971, the Oriole was shore bound due to lack of qualified crew.

Under Lt.-Cmdr Jeffery White, the Oriole came 2nd overall in her division, making 2007 her best finish ever. Her previous best finishes were 10th overall on correction in 1976 and 1993. The race proceeds to the Swiftsure Bank and back which covers 138.7 NM. The Oriole was able to produce a new fastest corrected time of 22 hrs: 03 mins: 26 secs. Back in 1983, she set her best elapsed time of 27 hrs: 48 mins: 11 secs.

When the Swiftsure race is plagued by light winds, the Oriole does not fair well. At her slowest elapsed time in 1973, she recorded almost 61 hours to finish. On at least three other occasions her corrected time was over 55 hours. While most of the boats retire in light airs, the Oriole has been known to stay out racing for as long as possible. Over the past 50 races she has entered, she has recorded some 15 DNFs and quite a few “last boat home” distinctions.

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS: HMCS ORIOLE

The following table chronicles some of the highlights in HMCS Oriole's history.

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|--------------|--|
| 1880 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• George Gooderham, Commodore of the Royal Canadian Yacht Club in Toronto, launches the first Oriole. |
| 1886 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gooderham has Oriole II built. |
| 1909 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gooderham launches Oriole III. |
| 1919 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initial work on the Oriole IV at the Dominion Ship Building Company of Toronto, but a prolonged strike put the company out of business.• The preliminary work was being sent by rail to Boston but was lost in the post-war confusion on the way. The construction was restarted and finished by George Lawley and sons in Neponset, MA |
| Jun 1921 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Launched at Neponset and christened Oriole IV by Gooderham's youngest daughter Mary. |
| 1921-28 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sailed under the burgee of the Royal Canadian Yacht Club in Toronto while George Gooderham was the commodore. |
| 1922 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Main mast shortened 86'; centreboard removed. |
| 1924 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topmast added |
| 1928 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jib boom added; mizzen mast extended to 55' |
| Apr 1941 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sold to Gordon Leitch of Upper Canada Steamship Lines (or the Upper Lakes and St. Lawrence Transportation Co.) |
| May 1941 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resold to the Toronto Branch of the Navy League of Canada and used to train Sea Cadets on Georgian Bay• As the RCN took over the responsibilities for Sea Cadet training at this time, the Oriole, based at HMCS York came under naval control as well |
| 1943 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• RCN formally leases the Oriole from the Navy League for \$1.00 a year. Year to year administrative arrangements varied over the next six years.• For 1943-45, navy personnel as well as cadets trained on board. |
| 1949 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oriole attached to HMCS Cornwallis for basic seamanship training purposes |
| 1950 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Too many ordinary seamen so Oriole used to train only cadets from the University Naval Training Division. |
| 1951 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transferred to Halifax. Just made it out before the St. Lawrence freeze up. Refit. During this time, attached to HMCS Stadacona seamanship school and still known as Oriole IV. |
| Jun 19, 1952 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commissioned HMCS Oriole and attached to HMCS Cornwallis at Digby, Nova Scotia. |
| 1954 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oriole transferred to HMCS Venture, the Navy's officer training establishment at Esquimalt.• The 8,000 mile trip via the Panama Canal for five officers and men and 20 crew took 72 days. Arrived at Esquimalt on October 3, 1954. |
| 1955 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oriole's first Swiftsure, placing 14th with a corrected time of just over 39 hours. |



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- 1957 • Royal Canadian Navy purchased Oriole for \$14,500 (she had been leased all this time)
 - 1958 • Bellingham, Washington awards Oriole's skipper with the freedom of the city.
 - 1962 • Oriole's cruise to Alaska - 1,800 miles.
 - 1963 • Oriole designated as senior ship of the four-vessel auxiliary training squadron.
 - Nov 1/63 • Report to Esquimalt that Oriole had gone down with all hands off Chatham Island in 60 knots of wind;
 - A resident of Ten Mile Point thought the flapping sails were a result of a broken mast but when she looked again, the ship was gone. Oriole sailed safely to Swartz Bay.
 - 1964 • On a trip to San Francisco, Oriole logs 213.5 miles in a 24-hour period. The 700-mile trip took four days.
 - 1968 • Oriole in the first organized Vic -Maui race.
 - 1969 • Oriole grounded on Clover Point and had to wait six hours for the tide to rise. No damage but Navy holds board of inquiry.
 - 1971 • Oriole cannot enter Swiftsure due to a shortage of qualified crew. She was shore bound for a year due to budget pressures in the Navy.
 - 1972 • Rigging replaced and new sails. Becomes senior ship in the Fourth Training Squadron.
 - 1976 • The year of the big storm during Swiftsure., Oriole's best performance to date - 10th place overall with a corrected time of 26 hrs 16 mins and 44 seconds.
 - 1977 • In the Swiftsure Race, Oriole returns from the Bank at 12 Knots under spinnaker in a 20-25 knot breeze but the wind later dies and Oriole is a DNF.
 - 1978 • Oriole sweeps the silver in the Pacific International Sail Training Race from Diamond Head Hawaii to Victoria: first across the line and first overall - Cutty Sark Friendship Trophy.
 - This was Oriole's first big win in long distance racing, beating Lol Killams's Greybeard.
 - This was part of the Captain Cook bicentennial events, in which Oriole acted as host ship.
 - 1980 • Oriole participates as the first Canadian entry in the Swiftsure feeder race from Astoria. Since then called the Oregon International Offshore Race.
 - Replacement of original teak decks.
 - 1981 • Refit to celebrate Oriole's Diamond anniversary.
 - 1983 • Oriole's best elapsed time for Swiftsure: just over 27 hrs and 48 mins.
 - 1984 • Oriole travels over 18,000 nautical miles to participate in Tall Ships events in Quebec City and Halifax.
 - 1980 • Oriole in the TransPac race - California to Hawaii.
 - 1990 • Oriole places second overall in the 5,500 mile Vic-Maui race.
 - 1995 • Oriole logs more days at sea than any other ship in the Pacific Fleet. On average, Oriole spends some 180 days a year at sea for training each year.
 - 1997 • Oriole gets a \$400,000 refit.



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- Oct 1997 • Oriole starts a 17,000 nautical mile (31,000 km) trip to participate in Tall Ships Australia 98.
- Jan 1998 • In the 760 nautical mile Sidney to Hobart Race, Oriole is first tall ship across the finish line and also wins trophy for fastest 24 hour run.
- Two other prizes as well: excellence in communications, and for having traveled the longest distance to participate.
 - Oriole placed seventh overall in the race, behind several modern racing yachts.
- May 1998 • Oriole finally home. She attained speeds of 13 knots under double-reefed main and mizzen in the north Pacific.
- Best 24 run was 234.9 nautical miles.
 - For the entire trip, Oriole used less than 500 gallons of fuel.
- 1998 • Oriole did not compete in the 1998 Swiftsure, having just returned from many months abroad.
- 1999 • Oriole, returning again for competition in the Swiftsure Lightship Classics race was under the command of Lt.-Cmdr. Larry Trim; will be joined in the race by HMC Sail Training Vessel *Goldcrest*.
- 2000 • Competing again in this year's Swiftsure Classic under the command of Lt.-Cmdr. Scott Crawshaw.
- This is the 43rd Swiftsure for Oriole, which will also compete in the Victoria-Maui yacht race in June.
- 2001 • HMCS Oriole is 80 years old this year, and will compete in her 44th Swiftsure Race.
- 2003 • HMCS Oriole, under the command of Lt.-Cmdr. Gary Davis, competed in Swiftsure with a crew comprised of experienced navel officers and non-commissioned members (NCM), as well as naval officers and NCM trainees.
- 2004 • Oriole's Swiftsure crew is comprised of a wide variety of new sailors from several backgrounds with one or two "old salts" for experience.
- 2005 • After Swiftsure this year, in June, the Oriole was refitted with a new mizzenmast, and the booms were all refinished.
- 2006 • Last year that Lt.-Cmdr. Gary Davis was the captain of the Oriole.
- 2007 • First year that Lt.-Cmdr. Jeffery White was that captain of the Oriole.
- 2008 • HMCS Oriole competed in her 51st Swiftsure race.
- 2010 • Oriole's captain donated a Trophy made from bits of her old mast. Oriole has more than 50 entries in Swiftsure and in part, the trophy recognized the 100th birthday of the Canadian Navy.
- This year Swiftsure was dedicated to the Navy in recognition of its 100th anniversary year, as well as over 60 years of service to the race.
- 2015 • Last year that Lt.-Cmdr. Jeff Kibble was the captain of the Oriole.
- HMCS Oriole finished within the time limit.
- 2016 • First year that Lt.-Cmdr. Mike Wills was that captain of the Oriole.



HMCS ORIOLE'S SKIPPERS

Sailing has lots of jargon and so do Navy ships. On the Oriole, those in charge are:

CO	Commanding Officer (Lt Comd)
Swain	Coxswain (Petty Officer First Class) – Crew morale and welfare
Buffer	Chief Bosun's Mate (Petty Officer Second Class) - Seamanship
Stokes	Engineer – (Master Seaman) ship's machinery
Doc	Paramedic – (Various ranks) embarked for longer cruises/races
Cookshack	Cook – (Leadind Seaman) most important person onboard!

Years Commanding Officer (usually Lieutenant-Commander)

2016	Mike Wills
2011-2015	Jeff Kibble
2010	Jeffery White
2008-2010	Erik James
2006-2008	Jeffery White
2002-2006	Gary Davis
1999-2002	Scott Crawshaw
1998-1999	Larry Trim
1995-98	Mike Brooks
1992-95	Mike Cooper
1989-92	Ken Brown
1985-89	Peter Watt
1983-85	Jim Gracie
1981-83	Peter Hunter
1976-81	Bill Walker
1973-76	J.R. Horner
1970-73	R.D. Bissell and P. Cox
1968-70	G.S. Hilliard
1965-68	J.S. Butterfield
1963-65	W.D. Walker
1962-63	S.B. Watts
1958-62	J. Prosser
1954-58	R.C. MacLean
1954	E.T. Coggins (from Halifax)