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race report



Bill Moore sailed the old wooden El Toro, *Buttercup*, which was raced by Cinde Lou Delmas when she was a small child, and which Bill retrieved from Oregon. He was the first 'maiden voyager' to finish.

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Bulls in the Mist

April 7, 2013

The 60th running of the El Toro Bullship Race was full of surprises and weather trickery for the 24 boats that showed up in the cold drizzle, fog and light wind on Saturday morning to race from Sausalito to San Francisco. "This is the El Toro version of the Three Bridge Fiasco," said fourth place finisher Fred Paxton. Like in January's Fiasco, negotiating the tides and wind make the race a challenge. After the start, playing the currents and puffs is important, but once out in the Slot it's a drag race across the Gate to the finish at the St. Francis YC breakwater.



The herd waits out a shoreside postponement at Sausalito YC. ©2013 norcalsailing.com



The start, off the deck of Sausalito's Trident Restaurant. ©2013 norcalsailing.com



Art Lange, who won in 2008, and James Savittore, who, at sixth place, would be the first woodie sailor to finish. ©2013 norcalsailing.com

The usual strategy is to pick a lane south depending on if it's flooding or ebbing. This year, a one hour postponement waiting for some big ships going out to sea pushed the 0900 start back to 1000, which mixed things up on the racers' tide calculations for the planned flood. Those who stayed east through the Slot gained distance by finding an early ebb about a mile from the San Francisco shore. Those who thought it would still be flooding all the way across were caught heading the wrong way on the west side. The top three finishers stayed east, with Bruce Bradfute in third, Buzz Blackett in second, and Gordie Nash, a past winner in 2002, in first. Vickie Gilmour was the first woman to finish, and Chris Nash (Gordie's brother) won the Clyde (heavyweight) award.



El Toros in the mist while the last container ship they were waiting for heads out. The first finisher took 65 minutes to make the crossing. ©2013 norcalsailing.com



The 'podium': Buzz, Gordie and Bruce. ©2013 RYCPhoto

Cinde Lou Delmas ended up with the Tail End Charlie trophy for last place finishing 24th. But just competing in this race has become a high priority to many NorCal racers.



2004 champion John Amen, who placed ninth this year, and Cinde Lou Delmas, who fulfilled a childhood dream. ©2013 RYCPhoto

For complete results, see www.eltoroyra.org. [Go here](#) for Michelle Slade's preview story in the *Marin Independent-Journal*. The 2014 Bullship will be held on April 26.