

Texas 200
2022

“The hell with it,” I tell Jaguar finally. “Let’s just go.”

Tom Pamperin

Full Rambo

Texas 200 Year Three for the Rambo’s sailing our Com-Pac Sun Cat *Sandpiper*

Day 2 Texas 200

The mast comes crashing down “Full Rambo.”

How has this happened again? But this time, it’s not the last day of the 200 as it was in 2020. As Bob starts the motor after he gathers up the sail, mast, and gaff and secures them, we head into 3 and 4 ft waves and 25+ mph winds back to Port Mansfield across the shallow bay.

How did we get here again? Before we left Camp 1 at the Port Mansfield jetties, Bob noticed the loose stays and tightened them. We sail towards the Laguna Madre, and the land cut. The winds are high, and the stays stretch, so Bob decides to drop the gaff and tighten them. I’m at the tiller. In the cockpit, Bob raises the gaff and pulls in the mainsheet to engage the sail. At that instant, the mast falls on the port side—the End of the Texas 200 2022 for the Rambos.

Our boat is a 2004 Com-Pac Suncat with a gaff rig and hinged mast. In 2020, our mast fell after losing a cotter pin and ring on the starboard side stay. Our fix in 2020 is to send the hinge back to Com-Pac based on their recommendation. The mast leans back slightly after the repair.

After this last mast failure, I order a new hinge from Com-Pac. It’s a couple of months before Bob musters the courage to tackle the repairs while I’m off camping with friends. The bottom of the mast twisted when the mast fell to the lee side of the boat. After removing the mangled two-piece mast hinge, Bob took an 8-foot-long two-by-six and cut out an oval in one end using the new mast hinge as a pattern. Standing on a ladder, he twists the board around the lower mast, but the two by six cracks. The device is strengthened with a pair of 2 x 2’s on each side braced in the back with a small piece of plywood fastened together with 3” deck screws. The twisted mast base realigns without further protest.

Next comes the task of trimming the connecting ends of the mast, which were left uneven after the repair of the first demasting two years prior. The cuts are marked with a sharpie using a square and level. A thin cut-off disc and a 4-inch right-angle grinder remove more of the mast. Finally, with long broad strokes using a 10-inch file, like farriers flatten horse hooves, the mast sections are equal. Bob checks for squareness with the tri square before connecting the new hinge halves to the mast sections with eight small bolts on each side. Once stepped again for the first time since the June demasting or “Full Rambo,” as one friend was kind enough to say,

the repaired mast stands perfectly straight, needing only some adjustments of the stays to be ready again for the bay.

Thanks to friends Mike and Terry McGuire, we will arrive home by midnight Tuesday. We shuttled stranded sailors from Corpus Christi and Port O'Connor the rest of the week, along with Roger Siebert and the Bennetts. After meeting Kate Davis in Corpus Christi, Kathy Roberson and I even had lunch with Will and his sister at Marker 37. We celebrated with all the Texas 200 participants arriving at Magnolia Beach for BBQ and beers on Saturday. Our Texas 200 Renegade North Bounders gang hung out at the Indianola Social Club doing what we like best ~ talking about boats: building boats, fixing boats, building other boats. None of this hard-core Texas 200 boat sailing crew can think of a better way to end the week.

I'm sad to see everyone go on Sunday, and I am pretty depressed that we didn't sail very far this year. It makes me smile to think of Will and Jenn's success and getting to meet them at Maggy Beach. Until next year ~ and many more sailing adventures on Matagorda Bay with the Renegade North Bounders.