

# The Formula Poker Run Team Reports



**2025 Formula Poker Run Issue 1.**

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# 1000 ISLANDS INTERNATIONAL CHARITY POKER RUN

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♦♠♥♣ *CLAYTON, NEW YORK*



*(Photo Courtesy of Shaun & Jan Macaulay)*



## Formula Boats Makes a "Splash" at 1000 Islands Charity Poker Run.

The Formula Poker Run team rolled out to the 9th annual 1000 Islands Charity Poker Run July 16, 2025, with the name of the game being, "it's all about the kids," a sentiment that could not have been more ingrained into the entire 4-day event. From the moment we arrived in Clayton, NY, to the moment we left town, it was a completely immersive experience in charity and giving back.

Arriving on Wednesday, splashing the boat and driving it down the St. Lawrence River was a wonderful experience in its own right. We arrived at our home port for the week after a short boat ride, the Clayton City Municipal Marina, welcomed quickly by a wonderful and attentive staff. We knew we were in the correct location.

One of the very first people to greet us was Committee President Bobby Cantwell, a Formula owner himself. With a warm smile and friendly handshake, he expressed his gratitude for coming

all the way out from Indiana. As we tied up for the night, I watched Bobby greet almost every single boater and family that either came by car or boat. Running and organizing an event of this size and magnitude has to require a lot of energy even before it begins. However, that did not stop Bobby and the committee of seven individuals who work all year to make sure everything is done top-notch.

Thursday came with registration and poor weather. If any day had to be a bad weather day, Thursday was the perfect one for it. With registration indoors, safely inside the host hotel, everyone on site was seamlessly registered and greeted.



## Smiles and Miles

Friday was the big day for team Formula. When applying to sponsor the event, Formula asked if we could be a part of the Make-A-Wish rides on that morning. Welcome a larger-than-life personality in the most genuine way, Court Rutherford, the assistant VP of the 1000 Island Run. Court introduced himself Wednesday evening during the sponsor riverboat cruise. We gave him our contact information and said "whatever you need, we are there."



*(Photo Courtesy of Make-A-Wish Central NY FB)*

Court was a man of his word when he said he would be in touch. We were on the dock promptly at 10 a.m., waiting for families and kids to arrive. In a matter of moments we had two kids and their families on board and ready to go out on a ride. Captain Jeremy Porter, (3rd-generation Formula Boats family) and his team, Christopher and Jessica Everett, were ready to make everyone enjoy as many smiles as possible. Little did they know, they were the ones in the end that were going to be blessed.

Each child and family had a different story or reason they were a Make-A-Wish recipient. Each story was heartwarming and heart breaking all at the same time. While it was hard to hold back tears at different moments, Team Formula was on a mission to show everyone the best possible time.

Our first boaters were a group of Taylor Swift fans, so crank the radio and drop the throttles they did. Team Formula wanted each child to be the captain for even a brief moment if they wanted to. One by one, we let every child drive.

Hearing the infectious giggles of children makes all of the struggles of the family seem to melt away, if just even for a moment.

As we returned to the dock from our first trip, Court was waiting to see if we would be willing to take another group of kids and families. Team Formula promptly replied, "Court, we will run kids and families until there are no more rides needed or we run out of gas. If we run out of gas, we will get more and come back for even more." Court chuckled and assisted the loading of smiling faces onto the boat.



*(Photo by Jeff Helmkamp, copyright Helmkamp Photos)*

This is where Captain Joey came aboard with his family. Instantly you could see a true connection between Captain Jeremy and Joey, who, his mother informed us, has had over 20 brain surgeries. Even with all the adversity Joey has faced in his life, he was the happiest person someone could ask for. Jeremy helped Joey get behind the helm as cheers erupted from everyone on the boat. Jeremy and Joey drove us all down the river with masterful grace and skill. At one point, Joey could be heard yelling, "This is my best day ever!"

Honestly, what more do you need in life than to make someone's day better? Splash in a few waves and some sun, and you might have the perfect day. As we switched captains to the next child, I had to sit back and take a moment to collect myself. Realizing that everyone on the 1000 Islands Charity Committee pours themselves into this event for this exact reason, to make sure kids get a chance to have a great moment, day or memory.



*(Photo Courtesy of Make-A-Wish Central NY FB)*

Again, we docked back at the marina, with Court waiting. We were ready, and after four more boat rides, Court said that everyone was all done with riding. Team Formula took a moment to sit back and collectively talk about our day on the water.



*(Photo Courtesy of Jeff Morgan)*

## **Tour of the River**

Enter stage left, Jeff Morgan, aka Captain Morgan 3.0, a Formula 400 SS owner, and family.

While attending various poker runs around the country, it is easy to spot a beautiful Formula gracing the waterways one such boat was Jeff's 400 SS. Once we were docked at the end of the day, Jeff came over and offered to take us on a tour around the 1000 Islands waterways. With Jeff being a native of the area, and Team Formula never having boated in the area, we jumped at the chance. Jeff grabbed his family and a few friends, and we departed.

What we did not know was that Jeff has been in every single tributary, creek and channel this amazing place has to offer. We got to see beautiful homes, water features and all-around boating glory.

One of our favorite parts was called "The International Rift," a small creek at best, but absolutely stunning in beauty. Jeff knew exactly where the boat should be placed for safe passage. We returned back to the dock after about an hour and half of boating.



*(Photo Courtesy of Jeff Morgan)*

Meeting Jeff's "double trouble" twins Ashley and Dylan, getting to talk with them both while boating gives hope that the next generation is bright, eager and passionate about the future of boating. They operate a Boston Whaler named "Double Trouble" that they can operate with the best of any seaman. They were the marshal boat for the upcoming poker run as well.

As evening approached, we all hung out aboard Jeff's boat until dusk and talked about boating, Formula and a myriad of different topics with the poker run at the forefront of our minds. We then retreated to our accommodations for the evening.

## **Give 'Til it Hurts, Then Give Some More**

With Saturday's Poker Run getting ready to kick off, everyone understood the real goal of this amazing event: to run your amazing boats on beautiful water, get back to the dock safely, then have a beautifully handcrafted dinner with live auction to donate to Central New York's Make-A-Wish charity.

The run was fantastic as Team Formula piloted their 387 CCS along with a few guests, including Chris Perera from BoatBlurb.ca. We were all treated to a lunch of BBQ and fixings.



After we finished up the run, we all went to get cleaned up and ready for our evening activities.

A completely immersive experience awaited everyone who attended the event, roughly 800-1000 people in attendance for the dinner and auction.

One of the most memorable speeches came from 17-year-old Kaitlyn Soules, who gave an account of her courageous battle with cancer. Her entire family was in attendance minus her sister Amanda Uden, currently serving the U.S. Air Force in Minot, N.D. Little did everyone

know, including Kaitlyn, that Make-A-Wish did what they do the best by bringing her sister to the event.

With her big sister by her side and the majority of the guests in tears, Uden gave an emotionally charged and heartfelt speech. "There's no way I would have missed this tonight," she told her sister. "I'm so proud of you. Not once during your journey have you ever complained and I'm so happy to be here to tell you that your wish for you, me, Ashley and Christina to go to Hawaii will come true in October."

Next was Bobby Cantwell with a plethora of awards for different categories, such as best stereo, best light show, best dressed crew, and many others. Cantwell then started to talk about an unknown award called the WishMaker Award, an award that Team Formula did not even know existed. While Cantwell thanked everyone who gave rides to Make-A-Wish kids and families, he said that one boat and team took 60 of the 120 participants. It was at that moment he announced that Team Formula was this year's recipient of the WishMaker Award, accepted by Jeremy Porter and Christopher Everett on behalf of Formula Boats.

Per Speedonthewater.com's article, "Other highlights from the auction included the sale of a four-seat golf cart for \$53,000. It was donated back and purchased again for \$33,000. A photo of President Trump brought in \$18,500, the KISS bass guitar fetched \$15,000 and a Generac generator sold for \$11,000 before it was donated back and re-purchased for \$3,000. With the one-off Make-A-Wish challenge coins bringing in \$50,000, it's not hard to see why Cantwell was confident about surpassing last year's numbers. "We've come back stronger every year," he said at the event. "Tonight is the culmination of months of planning, coordination and community."

Participating in a wonderful event with an amazing charity and cause, Team Formula had a blessed and wonderful event, leaving with full hearts and faith that the boating community as a whole comes together to support such great causes at each and every run. Until next time, thank you!

