

Round Prevost Race, March 17, 2019

Sunday the 17th March marked both St. Paddy's day, and our highly anticipated Round Prevost Race: a Club favourite. Wind forecasts were light to nothing most of the week leading up to the race. But things began to improve as we got closer to Sunday, with many forecasts suggesting breezes of 4-8 knots could be expected from the North North West. The tide book called for a small flood for a couple of hours in the late morning, early afternoon followed by a larger ebb beginning around 1:30. As usual, nothing came to pass as was forecast.

There was excited chatter on the docks as over 30 sailors from 12 boats turned out for this annual special. Tony arrived in his Irish green boxing singlet, circa 1963. I forgot to ask if it was from the year he won the Irish boxing championship. Shelley, who arrived for her first race after 4 months sailing in Thailand, was greeted by a snowball. Our fleet of 12 boats was like both our island, and our club: diverse, eclectic, and with different reasons for being there. But all were there to do well for themselves and for each other.

Our FCR,, reverting to tradition, maybe inspired by Tony's singlet, announced that the route would be skippers choice.. In the "Olden Days" the direction around on some of these circular races was the choice of the skipper, but in recent years the direction was set by consensus.

Out on the pre start, with 20 minutes to go, everyone was manoeuvring while getting sails set and trimmed. With enough breeze to sail with just the main, Radiant Heat and several others, opted not to bother with head sail and simply get into position and launch the spinnaker in the northerly breeze.. A Couple of runs to the line and away again gave a rough time taken to cover the distance to the start line.

From aboard Radiant Heat: 'turning with 2 minutes to go we had clear air on a broad reach to the pin end while on starboard tack, an almost perfect approach. The wind was WNW. 20 seconds to go we were in good time and started the spinnaker launch. Shingebiss was moving fast at a higher angle. Tucked in out of sight was Imp on a similar course.

Keeping a steady pace Radiant Heat steadily increased her lead as she ran up the Salt Spring shore, paced by Shingebiss on the Sisters Island side of the harbour. Here we had our first decision and so as Shingebiss cut across and headed out toward Channel Islands we found the wind now switched North East and hardening up we dropped our spinnaker and close reached to Captains passage with the Genoa.

We watched with interest as Shingebiss appeared slower but still heading out. Good luck, we thought in our finest Paddy Day brogue. By the time Radiant Heat turned into Trincomali and passed Piele point there wasn't a member of the fleet within a half mile'.

Skeena Cloud, for the first time, had an almost flawless spinnaker launch and crossed the line near first. Her feeling of success was to be short lived. The rest of the fleet filled in on both sides, most with spinnakers flying, with the faster being as only a few hundred meters ahead But to Skeena Cloud, Second Wind, Evangeline, and Effervesence, it was if the lead boats greedily took all the wind with them. We were left windless, forlornly watching them go.

Again from Radiant Heat, 'That was the end of the beginning (after passing Peile Point). Now the wind was less steady and more variable in direction. Holes open up in different places. All boats were affected at different points and times.

Several boats were advancing and were closer. Oasis, Imp, and Shingebiss now drew within a few boat lengths as we struggled to find wind as we approached Pt Liddell. At this point we were buzzed by the Coastguard as it appears we have a defective radio that transmits clicks. They tracked it down to Radiant Heat.

Then Shingebiss was in a hole and we sailed off, but Imp was making good time closer to the Prevost shore. As we cut across Captains Passage we were caught by Imp and Shingebiss still behind. After a spell of good sailing we again hit those holes near to 2nd Sisters, and Imp slipped ahead. Now the wind turned to the South West and Imp had the chute up heading down the harbour. The wind had not done the same for Radiant Heat but slowly filled in. Half way to the finish and RH was in the last hole just off the sandbar of Walter's Spit. The wind now went back to the Northwest and Imp made a fine finish with line honours. We then watched Shingebiss tack 3-4 times and they were over. Finally, Radiant Heat caught a Starboard tack little breeze that slowly filled in and we squeezed passed Walter's Spit and then to the end of the club docks through the anchored boats and with a final tack made it over the finish line.'

Meanwhile, Deryn Mor came to intimately know Pt. Liddell. He reports being within speaking distance for two hours. He would get a shot of SE breeze, quickly trim his sails, set a course, only to have the breeze spin around 180 degrees. Time after time. His years in education must have gifted him with an almost supernatural ability to remain calm.

Finally, the last four boats came unstuck from beside Second Sister and headed towards Captains Pass. The three smarter boats took a direct line. One, who shall remain nameless, other than to say she besmirched the name of the second largest river in BC, thought she would take the great circle route, thereby catching the flood current. But as the breeze shifted into NNE as she approached Captains Pass she was headed more and more. She could only watch as the other three boats sails slipped by the outside of Peile Pt. She did not exhibit the same supernatural calm as Deryn Mor.

Finally, rounding Peile Pt, she saw the other three boats dead ahead, going slow, very slow. Racing down upon them at over 5kts under spinnaker put her in a better mood. She came closer, still closer, 500 meters, 250 meters, 100, 50 , 10, and then, full stop. It was whiplash inducing.

The three of us drifted around chatting, Effervescence I, 600 meters ahead, could see a wind line. But it might as well have been in the China Sea. We decided to give it another 30 minutes, and if nothing happened, organize an impromptu race home. So that's what we did. We just had to get turned around , drift sail 20 meters, and we were all doing 5+ knots close hauled. It was great fun until we got to Second Sister where we could see the leaders gamely attempting to cross the finish line. Not wanting to miss the beers and stories, we started our engines and motored to the dock to join them..

There was a jolly gathering on the dock as munchies were exchanges and favourite brew were consumed. Everyone enjoyed the 16 degree sunny weather while tails were told.

Well done to the finishers. Next race is in two weeks. Stay tuned

By Greg Taylor / Tony Brogan

Round Prevost - 3/18/2019 at 10:30

Rank	Boat	SailNo	Rating	Finish	Elapsed	Corrected	Back Calculated Rating	Points
1	IMP		0.917	15:20:45	4:50:45	4:26:37	0.917	100
2	Radiant Heat	67901	0.98	15:34:36	5:04:36	4:58:30	0.875	91
3	Shingebiss	49077	1.01	15:27:04	4:57:04	5:00:02	0.898	82
4	First Draft	29921	0.9	16:18:46	5:48:46	5:13:53	0.764	73
5	Oasis	421	0.974	16:11:15	5:41:15	5:32:23	0.781	64
6	Skeena Cloud	121	0.833		DNF			9
6	Second Wind	175	0.992		DNF			9
6	Firefly	169	0.939		DNF			9
6	Deryn Mor		0.856		DNF			9
6	Evangeline		0.906		DNF			9
6	Effervescence				DNF			9