

It was nice to get out on Sunday to tour Captains Passage. The course was set as Start, Batt Rock (P), U62(P), Welbury Spar (P), and again Batt Rock this time (S), and finish.

The weather forecast for the last week had promised light air, 4 knots from the NE dropping to 1-2 knots from the SE by 2 pm. It didn't look promising for a good sail as we went to bed. But in the morning trees were waving in the breeze and upon arriving at the dock we were greeted by a steady 6 knots from the SE. It proved, once again, that one should never decide to race or not based on a wind forecast. It is best to just plug each race into your calendar.

Deciding the sail plan was iffy. Was there enough wind for the jib or little but enough for the genoa? The result was both were set with sheets attached, each to its own track on the headstay. The spinnaker was placed on the bow and sheets deployed. Six sheets found their bitter end in the cabin. Add the three halyards and the cabin was a mass of line. How to keep it all from becoming a big knot is always a challenge. Practise (and struggling and cursing with balls of entangled lines) has taught us that bunching a line before deploying down below is a knotty recipe, whereas contrary to expectations, snaking each line down individually results mostly in no knots in the lines.

Back to the dock.

FCR Greg had been placed in irons by airline snafus out of San Francisco and Past FCR Douglas was standing in. The wind was still good, the skippers and crews were chatty and jovial before the horn called us to order. This was a pursuit race with staggered starts and each was given their individual starting time. First over the line is the winner. Slower boats start off ahead being to be hunted down by the faster boats. The theory says boats should all finish at the same time.

Seven boats, by my count, were out for the day including Soul Thyme and Firefly.

The first to take the line was Kay D, who appeared to be having some sail problems, and was a minute or two late crossing the line. Most of the other boats were lollygagging around getting ready for their starts.

Oasis was starting near to our time and Imp a minute after. RH was a little early to the line and luffed up between the dock and the starboard mark, where we nearly had a minor disaster. We had slowed alright,to a stop.....in irons we were back winded toward the docks. We quickly reset the jib for a port tack but we were now only feet from the dock, on course to strike it at a 45 degree angle. We gained just enough forward speed to gain some steerage and tacked away: our stern clearing the dock with less than a foot to spare.

We crossed the line with 10 seconds late. Three boat lengths to leeward Oasis crossed the line 10 seconds after us. We were on a close hauled starboard tack. Our angle to the wind again proved the J30's pointing ability. Oasis was making similar speed but the gap between the boats was widening. Imp too was appeared to have to maintain a wider angle to the wind.

Meanwhile, back to the lollygagging. Our acting FCR was doing some of his own, until that is, he noticed all the other boats who had been lollygagging with him had sailed off, leaving him lollygagging solo. He wondered, 'what's going on, where are they going', before quickly realizing that he had been so enraptured with being back on his boat, he had missed his starting time.

By the first tack away from Chain Islands RH had widened the lead and Imp and Oasis were well to Leeward having to tack earlier. Kay D was out of sight in the lead obscured by the sun reflections on the water.

As RH approached the passage after Second Sisters we saw Kay D taking the long starboard tack well out into Welbury Bay, almost to the Scott Point shore, while we were on Port tack, passing by the Ganges Shoal marker and heading toward the Salt Spring shore. Was Kay D counting on a residual ebb current to get down to Batt Rock? But Kay D soon tacked back toward us. When we came onto a starboard tack after reaching the Salt Spring shore, Kay D passed well ahead of us on a port tack, but it was clear we had made up some distance. I thought the wind looked a bit stronger mid-channel compared to the wind down near Beddis Beach. Imp and Kay D seemed to favour being closer to the beach. Oasis remained just behind us.

We took a tack out to the left into stronger wind and noted a good half knot flood current against us, but opted for the extra wind. After a short tack we turned back to Batt Rock and found we could head high of the mark. Kay D was stalled as we passed her just 200 yards off our beam. Looking over to the boats closer to Salt Spring, we appeared to be moving ahead of them.

We changed up to the 155 genoa in reaction to the lighter breeze. This did not seem to give us more speed, but it allowed us to power through the motor boat wakes a little better than with the jib. Coming down to Batt Rock the current was now a good knot and we waited 10 boat lengths before turning for U62 to avoid being pushed back onto the mark. Kay D had set her spinnaker pole and was headed back home.

We had set a course 10-15 degrees above U62 to accommodate the strong flood current. We were making good speed and lengthened our lead. We were halfway to U62 before the next boats rounded Batt Rock. Imp seemed to be ahead of Oasis. Soul Thyme who had shown good speed in the early going had fallen back in the lighter air.

As we approached U62 the flood current lessened to near zero and we eased sail to clear the mark and turn downwind to Welbury Spar. The boat sailed well wing on wing and we stayed that way across the passage. Imp and Oasis made good speed from Batt Rock to U62 and appeared to be gaining after hoisting their spinnakers.

We debated whether to follow suit and hoist our spinnaker but decided to avoid the aggravation of having to reset the Genoa and rebag the spinnaker for the run to home.

(From Imp's perspective: there was never any debate about setting the spinnaker on the short run down from U-62 to Welbury. In fact, we had the spinnaker prepped and ready on the reach across from Batt Rk, and had it going up as we rounded U-62! We seemed to make up some significant ground on RH by so doing. Oasis right behind us at U-62 did likewise (hoist the chute) and also made up ground on RH. But it wasn't enough, and the superb pointing ability of the J-30 was once again evident as RH was able to make Batt Rk all in one tack, where Imp had to throw in a tack. Tony sure had it dialled in!)

The course from U62 to Welbury Spar was a deep port reach. Rounding WS tightened our sails, putting on a close hauled course to Batt Rock, meanwhile searching for Batt Rock on the plotter. Both Imp and Oasis were closing the gap. The wind now steadily increased and for most of the leg was sailed in 11-14 knots of apparent wind. Again we were headed higher than the other boats. Our objective was to make the mark without having to through in an additional as we thought the boats following us might have to do.

Rounding Batt Rock, without having to tack, we ducked around a large cat out for a Sunday sail, and headed for home. The spinnaker was hoisted on our starboard side and we set a deep reached course for the finish line.

Relaxed, sailing beautifully, visioning a cold beverage on the dock, the wind suddenly went forward, the spinnaker collapsing back against the head stay. What was going on? Looking back, Imp had

rounded around Batt Rock and was headed on the other tack towards the Salt Spring shore with Oasis close behind.

We hauled hard on the sheet. The pole was let forward. The wind went back aft, the sailed filled, then collapsed again. Got to get out of here!! We headed right toward darker water on the main alone where the spinnaker filled again to put us back on course towards for Second Sisters. Taking a look back we could see a sheen on the waves and the hole we narrowly escaped from. Oasis, not far behind us, escaped its clutches.

Both Imp and Oasis were setting wider angles with their spinnakers than Radiant Heat. Thus, although having boat speed, they also had further distance to travel. The wind held up and we made good progress down the harbour gybing onto port near the Sisters, we set a course direct to the finish line.

This race was all about the angles. I am not sure why we headed so well on the beats. The downwind metrics of the J-30 say that the optimal speed over ground is to sail very deep and the last two races show that to be the case. That was our advantage today.

The table on the dock was packed with cheerful crews and by the look of it everyone agreed it was a great day on the water for everyone.

*And from Shingebiss, reporting, as he says, from the back of the pack.
I don't have a lot to add as we had a rather uneventful sail. With two wives manning the helm for most of the race and Paul and I working the pit and foredeck we managed to stay in the wind for most of the race.*

Creeping up the Salt Spring shore with Soul Thyme kept us out of the tide which had stopped some boats dead for a little bit waiting for the wind to fill in so they could make Batt Rock on the first rounding.

It was interesting to watch from behind as everyone pretty much scattered from one side of the course to the other, I am sure some gains and losses were made but it is always hard to tell from the perspective of water level.

This always seems to be a challenging course with exposure to big tidal streams and the possibility of repeated spinnaker launches and take downs which offer opportunities for lets say brilliant crew work or complete disaster.

Today we had all that plus lots of sun and enough wind for everyone to finish in good time. A good day on the water.



Captain Passage - 6/16/2019

Start: Start 1, Finishes:
Place

Rank	Boat	SailNo	Start	Finish	Elapsed	Points
1	Radiant Heat	67901	10:52:43	13:29:00	02:36:17	100
2	IMP	2107	10:53:55	13:31:56	02:38:01	88
3	Ogopogo		11:13:31	13:34:13	02:20:42	75
4	Oasis	421	10:52:53	13:34:42	02:41:49	63
5	Firefly		10:56:04	13:45:54	02:49:50	50
6	Shingebiss	49077	11:11:41	13:46:09	02:34:28	38
7	Soul Thyme		10:53:00	13:54:03	03:01:03	25
8	Kay D		10:45:56	DNF		13