

## The last hurrah: the final Wednesday Night Race of 2019

Written by Tony Brogan

Wednesday's forecast looked OK with a steady NW wind of 5 knots or so. Our FCR was on other duties so it was left to yours truly to call the last race.

I expected to be single handed and so was trying to figure out how I could rig the course to make it easy on myself, (Just Kidding).

Late Tues there was a note from FCR that a sailing couple visiting from Hamilton would like a passage for the race and so were contacted and agreed to ship with Radiant Heat.

Arriving early at the dock it was noticed the wind forecast had misled again as the wind was steady at 5-6 knots from **the SE**. I rigged the 135 genoa as it will sail in a range from 2-20 knots of wind, would be easy to handle, require no sail changes, but still allow decent performance. It is my most underused sail, but the most versatile on the boat.

On the dock at 4.15 prior to the skippers meeting it was ominously quiet with not a soul in view although Imp, SorceryX and Shingebiss were observed being prepped for sail. Jim Raddysh was also lurking on the dock somewhere. My visiting crew were not in view.

At 4.25 the buzzer was pressed with my signature call to arms with the beep, be be, beep. and soon there were people ,skippers and crew arriving. In the lead was an expectant Philip Grange, arriving by bike, who assumed he was required as dockmaster!

A brief meeting was held, Jack and Jill race etc on Sunday, do not forget the 50th Anniversary day regatta on the 22nd when boats from SNSYC will visit us to join the fun.

An ambitious course was set: start, Ganges shoals (P) Batt Rock(P) , Welbury Spar(P) , Ganges Shoals(S) and home. Everyone agreed it seemed reasonable. If required a short course time would be used at the Sisters light transit if the lead boat was not finished by 7 pm.

It also turned out that Heather and Chris were available to crew. There being no takers from others, Radiant Heat offered them a ride. So off we went to the boats and still no sign of the couple, John and Diane from Hamilton.

Just as we were preparing to cast off there was a cell call from Diane, "We are here!". Quick, run, run!! they were exhorted.

So surprise, surprise we had 4 good crew aboard!

It was a pleasure to experienced crew aboard!

Motoring out and heading up into the wind, the skipper (me) politely ordered: "raise the main. Each, without instruction, found a place to be. Up went the main. Where would you like the sail ties? . "In the sink!."

'Raise the Genoa', I requested. Off went the ties and up went the Genoa. Pumped at the mast and tailed at the winch. Good stuff.

Twelve minutes to the start. Time for a couple of practice tacks. So we did three tacks up the harbour, then turned back to the line. In the meantime the other boats were getting set with their own maneuvers. We found ourselves with now three minutes to start at the outer end of the line and on the wrong side.

"What is your start plan?", enquired Heather. Nothing like putting the skipper on the spot. " I haven't got one", responded this skipper, "Except to get a starboard start."

So we made a dash to the starboard end on Port tack noting Imp was behind and Shingebiss ahead, just beginning to turn for the line. Sorcery was closer and also heading for the Starboard end.

It is a little confused as to who did what, where, and when, but Radiant Heat was on port tack, moving away from SorceryX, but with Imp on our port quarter. Increased speed took us in front of Shingebiss. Imp tacked away on Starboard.

Forty seconds to go. Radiant Heat tacked onto Starboard, headed for the pin. Seeing Shingebiss could close the gap, we maintained speed ahead of her to the line and then along it until, with 5 seconds to go, we turned up to the line, and over. Followed by Shingebiss, with SorceryX and Imp both to leeward. (Sorry Battle Axe must have been there somewhere!.)

'Good start!', the crew, all smiles, cheered. But alas, the wind gods took charge again.

Tacking away, Imp went right, followed by Shingebiss in the bad air of Radiant Heat. SorceryX carried on to the left side as did Radiant Heat. Close behind was Battle Axe too, just a little further aft.

The wind showed signs of patchiness and we debated where it was better: this side or that. Sorcery X was now well ahead, taking the long tack to the right. Imp was ahead, having as usual, found good air, Shingebiss passed ahead on starboard, as we now were on Port.

The wind was lighter and the water looked flat beyond Ganges shoals. It looked as if the course was too ambitious. What to do?

Your's truly decided that positions of the three boats ahead would not be adversely affect too much if we headed to Welbury and eliminated Batt Rock.

Hey, this was a chance to see if the new hand held radio worked!! The first calls on 72 elicited no replies. Then slowly after several tries contacts were made and all notified of a course change. The times were the same, a 7pm deadline for the first boat, but take short course times at the Ganges shoals transit.

The wind went to zero for us as we made 1 knot on the flood back toward 2nd Sisters. The three lead boats hunted for their own wind. Imp tacking out right into the great unknown.

Bit by bit the vespers kicked initial slowly and we saw the leaders pull away. Slowly, oh so slowly, we drifted. We felt a breeze, but the current still commanded the direction. Then we began to move, and slowly made our way toward the Welbury mark. The three leaders passed us with wimpy spinnakers, having already rounded.

Finally in a fresher breeze, we rounded after a short tack, and gybed for home. It was a beam reach. Do we leave the genoa up or try the spinnaker?

Nothing ventured, nothing gained, so we opted for the spinnaker. Again the expertise of the crew made for an easy launch. Chris on the fore deck, Diane in the pit. Heather on port, and John on starboard. It was still a light 3 knot beam reach.

We greeted Jim on Battle Axe, headed for Welbury, who passed us in good wind, not too far behind us now. Ahead we watched the lead boats round Ganges Shoals and head slowly for the finish line.

The procession grew slower, but just before 7 pm Sorcery finished, Shingebiss and Imp were still flying spins but Radiant Heat had run out of wind. Current alone was moving us forward at 0.7 knot, causing the spin to collapse. Finally we downed the spin, raised the genoa, and sniffed for the breeze, wherever it was hiding. Smoke from a chimney in Squalor Bay was seen drifting in a NW direction. Was the wind going forward?

Nothing more happened and we voted to abandon the race and motor home. Battle Axe was seen gamely trying a collapsing spinnaker, but he too gave in to the inevitable, and motored in.

As we motored toward the finish line, we passed Imp now on a close reach heading for the line at 2-3 knots boat speed. The wind indeed had gone ahead!

In the end just SorceryX and Imp were the only finishers. Kudos to them!

That was the last gasp of the summer wed night series. Overall we had good winds for the Series and terrific participation. We averaged 7 boats per race, with a high of 11.

The crews held the usual gathering on the dockside tables. The last Wednesday race of the season had us reminiscing in the gloaming. It was a fine summer series and we all look forward to seeing everyone the first Wednesday in June, 2020.

#### **Wed Aug #5 - 9/4/2019**

Rank	Boat	SailNo	NHC3	Start	Finish	Elapsed	Corrected	BCR	Points
1	Sorcery X	CAN32	1.068	17:00:00	18:53:45	01:53:45	02:01:29	1.068	100
2	IMP	2107	1.009	17:00:00	19:33:23	02:33:23	02:34:46	0.792	80
3	Radiant Heat	67901	0.941			DNF			20
3	Shingebiss	49077	1.049			DNF			20
3	Battle Axe		0.813			DNF			20