

**The Wise Guy Race Around Wise Island
Sunday September 1, 2019**

Written by Tony Brogan
with comments by Greg Taylor in italics

The weather forecast was not much to look at, with a forecast of only 4-5 knots of wind, but the day turned out much better than that.

The course was: Start at Second Sister - keep Welbury Spar to P and Horda Shoals to S - Lv Sphinx Is to S – Lv Charles Is to P – Lv Wise Island to P - Finish at Second Sister

The starting line was a transect from Sisters light through the Ganges shoals marker, meaning one had to keep Ganges Shoal to port. Five boats, wisely knowing you can't trust any forecast in our area, turned up: Shingebiss, SorceryX, Radiant Heat, Sparky and Skeena Cloud.

Getting to the start line with sails up and ready on time was a challenge as I was sailing singlehanded. The genoa seemed in order, but by the time I could see the Ganges mark, the wind was pushing 8-10 knots, and I was wondering if I had made the correct choice.

I couldn't spot Sparky, but Skeena Cloud was slow getting rigged closer to the Sisters. Shingebiss was already sailing at good speed tacking up the harbour. SorceryX was over to the right under main only.

With 4 mins and 10 seconds left before the start, I turned off the engine. Approaching the line on a port tack, picking up speed as I closed, I saw Shingebiss turn on to a starboard tack on her approach to the line.

Radiant Heat was now on a collision course and the give way boat. Not waiting to get too close, I crossed over on to a Starboard tack, and as there was room, decided to run the line with 10 seconds left. Shingebiss, now behind Radiant Heat, was hot on her tail and both boats hardened up onto a close hauled course to cross the start line and set off towards Welbury Spar.

As we headed for the Spar, Radiant Heat was intent on making the mark on one tack while Shingebiss was sailing deeper and faster. Shingebiss, now ahead of Radiant Heat, was forced to tack across, just ahead of Radiant Heat in order to keep Welbury Spar to Port as required. SorceryX, making up lost time, also tacked out into the channel to make the mark. Meanwhile, Sparky had cleared the start line with Skeena Cloud, and both were well back. *We too had to tack.*

Clearing Welbury Spar, Radiant Heat, knowing there was adverse current, opted to pass close to Scott Point and head for Nose Point and the tide line.

Both Shingebiss and Sorcery X were slowed by the current, but not much as I had hoped, and now all three of us faced the same adverse current, with Shingebiss close ahead, and SorceryX to Leeward.

Sparky, with wife Katie crewing, along with Skeena Cloud, had the leaders in our sights. We could see them slow in the Pass and both stayed a bit more to the middle. It wasn't long before we caught up with Radiant Heat and Sorcery X.

All of us were hard pressed to make headway in the adverse current and a withering SE breeze. Radiant Heat, as he says, thinking himself the wise guy, raised his spinnaker as the wind was mostly well aft of the beam to a broad reach.

As Radiant Heat reports, 'there was no difference in boat speed but I realized Shingebiss had found wind and taken off while I was "messing around in boats". Then here were Sparky and Skeena Cloud, seeing my pickle who stayed out in center channel and they, and then Sorcery X did the proverbial horizon job being well over a mile distant on the Galiano shore before RH began to master the channel and find some wind. First it went aft, then it went to the Port side and forced a gybe. Then it went back to Starboard with another gybe forced and then the wind picked up to 10 plus knots and moved forward of the beam.'

Sparky, sailing parallel to Skeena Cloud, provided the following expert advice: 'Whatever Radian Heat is doing, let's do the opposite'. Seemed reasonable to me.

I (Radiant Heat) was pretty busy with end for end pole changes but it seemed prudent to douse the spinnaker and up the jib rather than the genoa. Preparation is key and all lines looked assured to run free. With the jib pulling well, I relied upon the tiller tamer rather than the autohelm. Up with the jib set the sheet.. Let go the guy line, spinnaker collapses behind the main, gather in the foot, loose the halyard, pull the spin into the companionway and out of site, loose the sheet line and off we go in the at 6-7 knots in the freshening breeze across Trincolmali. (*Remember, Tony was singlehanding – ed*)

While Tony was messing with boats, the three of us - Sorcery X, Sparky, and Skeena Cloud – were sailing hard on the wind, away from Tony as if he had the measles, towards a defined wind line of dark, rougher water.. Once we entered it, we cracked the sheets, and began reaching for Galiano in a rising breeze, led by a joyful, excited hooting and hollering skipper of Sorcery X. It was perfect. Good wind on the beam, enough waves to hear, as well as feel, the boat, and clear, warm weather.

Setting the course for Spinx Island I could see Shingebiss reaching for the passage to Charles Island. SorceryX was deep reaching up the Galiano shore followed at a distance by Skeena Cloud and Sparky who were close together. We were a long way back.

We were indeed deep reaching, fighting to keep the wind on our aft quarter to ensure the genoa stayed full. But as we got closer to Galiano, the wind lessened and came

more aft. All of us had to gybe out from Galiano before gybing back to make the northern tip of Sphinx Island.

Radiant Heat, now on a better – hotter - angle was rapidly closing the gap. Now Shingbiss disappeared behind Sphinx Island, SorceryX was moving fast and heading into the gap. Sparky was ahead of Sheena Cloud and both closer but now on my beam.

Then Sparky took the short cut close to the point through shallow water and headed through the gap. Skeena Cloud was on opposite tack to Radiant Heat and gybed across and ahead of Radiant Heat by 100 yards. But turning now for the gap we three headed to turn around Charles Island. As we did I could see Shingbiss emerge on the other side as she headed to round Wise Island.

Turning downwind on the far side of Charles, I slid past Skeena Cloud on the inside to see Sparky 150 yard ahead. SorceryX and Shingebiss were both headed to round Wise Island and back into Trincomali Channel and a quarter mile ahead.

We left SC 10-15 boat lengths behind. Sparky and Radiant Heat played tag with each other, in and around the islands, first one, then the other drew head, but both made it out to Trincomali abeam: Sparky on the inside.

Skeena Cloud slowed because she was putting in a reef in preparation for beating back across the channel. Knowing the winds would generate too much weather helm and heel for her to sail well balanced. With the full genoa, anything much over 14 - 15 knots apparent is inefficient.

The wind was fresh but again RH did not have the upwind speed to stay with Sparky. The wave action was bad with Radiant Heat hitting into the waves and slowing. I could surmise that Sparky with shorter waterline was riding the waves better.

So we eased off 10 degrees of pointing but picked up .7 knots of boat speed, with a better angle to the waves. Slowly Sparky out-sailed Radiant Heat gaining a good 2200 yards by the time we were close to Captains Passage. Meanwhile, Skeena Cloud was hanging in, and was not too far back: perhaps 3-400 yards. *(Actually, until Radiant Heat altered course, we were gaining on her – a unique experience. Knowing Skeena Cloud can't point as high as Radiant Heat, I was about sailing to my tell tails about – as he says – 5-10 degrees lower and slicing through the waves instead of plowing into, and through, them)*

The two lead boats were stretching their wings and were well down past Welbury. Sparky and Katie were making their way through the passage.

Radiant Heat was making the final tack out before turning past Nose Point and Skeena Cloud was tacking away from the Salt Spring shore and had to tack twice more before making the passage. *(How does he notice such things in the heat of a race? I can't find time to drink or pee, never mind check out what others are doing! But he is correct, I*

tacked once more than necessary after not making Nose Point the first time. Again, not being able to point as high, a short lull in the wind, combined with power of the now flooding tide, set me into the point. I learned from John Gauld a couple of weeks ago to shorten the distance sailed by grazing the beach. This week, I learned can overdo it.)

It was now a close reach to the finish line, starboard of Ganges Shoal marker. Sparky's lead had extended. Shingebiss and Sorcery X having long crossed the line. Indeed all positions were extended as it took a while for Skeena Cloud to poke her nose around Scott Point and head for the finish.

But here Skeena Cloud picked up some time. She hoisted her asymmetric and reached across to the finish line at well over 6 knots.

In the end it was who showed up who were the wise guys of the day. Those who didn't missed a spectacular day of sailing.

As for me? Maybe it is time to haul out and check the bottom. I also need a wire connection on the plotter, Maybe, some attention to a line or two and have the standing rigging checked out for service.

Always something, isn't it.

(From Skeena Cloud's perspective, I think Tony should leave well enough alone. It is nice having him in sight once in awhile – ed)

Wise Guy - 9/1/2019

Rank	Boat	SailNo	NHC3	Start	Finish	Elapsed	Corrected	BCR	Points
1	Skeena Cloud	121	0.792	10:30	13:50:04	03:20:04	02:38:27	0.792	100
2	Sparky	67901	0.897	10:30	13:31:30	03:01:30	02:42:48	0.873	80
3	Shingebiss	49077	1.046	10:30	13:13:33	02:43:33	02:51:04	0.969	60
4	Radiant Heat	67901	0.943	10:30	13:37:26	03:07:26	02:56:45	0.845	40
5	Sorcery X	CAN32	1.063	10:30	13:17:00	02:47:00	02:57:31	0.949	20