

Loopy K Race or Phoenix Rising.

October 27, 2019

Written by Tony Brogan with some input from Skeena Cloud

Sunday's race was the Loop the Loop or Cross Current K race, conceived by the author in an idle moment as a race to keep the fleet in touch with each other and to avoid a light air battle against an adverse current.

Our objectives were achieved, augmented by a gorgeous sunny day benignly smiling on all who ventured forth. The course involved a couple of loops in Captains Pass that avoided the dreaded Batt Rock, which can act like a black hole on light air days, sucking all sailing aspirations down into a well of frustration. The course was: Club start, Ganges Shoals(P), Welbury Spar(S), Horda Shoals (P), U-62(P), WS (P), Horda (P) WS(P), GS(S), club finish.

Seven regular boats and their crews were introduced to the new addition to our fleet, Phoenix, with its all lady crew (owned and skippered by Lisa Lipsett, Heather Sloat was their tactician/first mate, and Sabine Cazabon and Katie crew) at the skippers meeting.

A little earlier Eric was seen unpacking his light air secret weapon, dreaded (by the rest of the fleet) Code zero. To be more confused as to what a code zero is, read this <http://forums.sailinganarchy.com/index.php?/topic/5417-code-zeros-in-phrf/>

Or to be a slightly less confused, see this

<https://www.northsails.com/sailing/en/2019/06/north-code-sails-defined>

The post-race discussion (held in a warming sun on the bench) debated whether there is a rating penalty for a code zero. As far as I can see, it depends on the size of the other sails in your bags. If it is the boat's biggest sail, whether a spinnaker or a genoa, there will be a penalty on the rating. (There is no penalty in our rating system, but if Eric were to keep it on his boat for PHRF-BC events, it would be his genoa, and Second Wind would need to be rated accordingly. Mind you, in that the setting of the sail made Eric late for the start, maybe we should encourage him to use it more – ed)

Setting and trimming our sails for the start we experienced a 4-7 knot breeze from west of NW to North of NW. This would remain true until we rounded Ganges Shoals for the last time on the way to the finish.

Upon nearing the start, Radiant Heat decided to come from the left side of the course on a starboard tack, approach to the line, cruise along the line for the last 20 seconds, then duck over the line in the center area at the last second, gybe onto port, and put up the spinnaker.

And that is exactly what we did: sort of. Except John informed me we were over early!! Too close to call from the helm, and as there were no protests; I kept going. (Tony, did you not see the enormous red protest flag flying from the dock! How could you miss it? Eric had it 40 feet in the air for God's sake!. And here I thought Eric had just screwed up hoisting his Code 0. It

turns out he was protesting you. I think. Ed.) (Maybe, but he did not yell protest loud enough-T)

Most of the fleet were over to the left but with the symmetrical spinnaker, we were on a deep reach making 3 to 4 knots along the Salt Spring shore, gybing three times as the wind switched back and forth.

Skeena Cloud took the left side of the course, gybing her asymmetric over onto starboard near The Deadman Islands, and with the wind shifting into the north, was able to maintain a course to the mark.

Ogopogo took the early lead gybing out on the left shore along Chain Islets and finally across from Sisters to the first mark at Ganges shoals. Oasis followed RH closely behind, with the rest of the fleet slowly falling further back, spread across the left side of the harbour.

We were having trouble seeing the mark in the shimmering glare of the early morning sun, but finally, there it was. Ogopogo was already around and on a close reach to Welbury, off like the rocket she is. Next was RH, hardening up, we found a comfortable beam reach with the spinnaker, softening to a broad reach as we approached the spar. Oasis was further back and the fleet yet further beyond.

Skeena Cloud, gybing at the mark, looked back and could see Phoenix, followed by Second Wind, working their way down the harbour. Second Wind looked spectacular with her bright red Code 0. Phoenix was the only boat, other than Shingebiss, out with white sails. As it was downwind work all the way to the third mark of the day, she was at a disadvantage, but did very well.

Turning for Horda Shoals, we (RH) noted that Ogopogo was a long way to the right of Horda. We were told by Paul later that he expected a strong flood and was compensating.)

As we traversed Captains Passage we noted the current streams. At first we had 3/4 of a knot of current against us. Then as we gave Horda Shoals a wide berth to allow for the current it converted to a nearly 2 knot ebb stream! This is known in the manuals as the Estuarine influence of the Fraser River. The tendency of the fresh river water to flow over the saline water of the sea, resulting in ebbing rivers of current even as the tide rises. These are prevalent in the Gulf Islands and Captains Passage is one of those places. (Fishermen call it surface tide – ed)

In any event we had to harden up abruptly to make the U-62 mark as we went from a broad spinnaker reach to a beam reach. Oasis a little further back was still hot footing it behind us. Ogopogo was beating along the Prevost shore gaining position before she tacked for Welbury Spar. The rest of the fleet, while close together, was strung out further behind heading for Welbury.

Crossing from Ganges Shoals to Welbury was a delight for Skeena Cloud as I sailed in the company of two accomplished sailors: John Hillier and Gyle Keating. That I was even sailing alongside them was the delightful part. It is a rare event. And, as I turned a bit downwind to

avoid the kelp below Welbury, Shingebiss, not having the advantage of a spinnaker, gybed to starboard and into a nasty hole. Now that never happens, it's what I do, not Gyle. You know what they say, something about a dog and the sun....

Sparky was next to leave me behind. I was to catch up and pass Sparky before U62 but then did what I do less, but still way too often, screwed up a tack. The Genoa's lazy sheet first caught on the mast, then the working sheet tied a knot in itself, and jammed in the car. Sparky passed swiftly by, kindly saying, 'too bad'. I said, '#\$&@%'.

Suddenly there was a fresher wind from the North out of Captains passage and RH called for a quick raise of the genoa and down the spinnaker. We were now on a close reach and the spinnaker blowing back behind was a struggle to pull down and in. We fell off 30 degrees to ease the situation and the spin was stowed below. The mark was now close and we hardened up to round and were on a beat to the Prevost shore with little current evident.

Ah that breeze, it caught up Shingebiss, and suddenly it appeared she was sailing across the water on ball bearings, leaving me, Skeena Cloud here again, and my brief glory, in her wake. But Oasis had got herself into some poor wind and adverse tide. I was rapidly gaining on her as she struggled to turn on Horda Shoals. But while I avoided the hole and tide for as long as possible, I had to make the same mark. Reaching it I saw Oasis take off towards U62 which she gained in no time.

Meanwhile, Second Wind was clawing back lost ground. Every time the wind picked up, she gained a bit of ground on me, and in the softer breezes, she gives little back. Every mark she was that bit closer. Phoenix, behind Second Wind, was also steadily pulling a bit closer, although still at least a mark behind.

The course was fun as no matter where we were, we were passing each other, checking out tactics and trim, learning, and being pushed to get that bit more speed from our boats.

Going as far as we could over to Prevost, RH tacked back to Welbury, completing the first loop and found we were high enough to head for Scott Point. Current did not affect us too much. Most of the fleet was around Welbury now and Ogoopogo started to lap Second Wind

We (RH) were now back to around Welbury, still tailed at a distance by Oasis, Ogoopogo extending their lead on the reaches. Heading back for Horda the wind was lighter and we debated a spinnaker raise and set or to keep with the headsail. By the time we decided the decision was made for us, we were too close to the mark to bother. It may have cost us a minute or two as now Oasis was closer again. But in the meantime we said Hi to Phoenix and Skeena Cloud.

The final loop around Horda was done and we were back to Welbury for the last time regaining some distance from Oasis. We saw Ogoopogo already down past Sisters as we set off in pursuit. The wind was steady from the North West and we were on a close reach to GS. Oasis was further back but Shingebiss who opted for no flying sails was now pressing and closer to Oasis. The others were doing well, and closing from the rear.



We could see that Ogoopogo was stopped before Ganges shoals, the wind non existent in the harbour. It is anybodies race now. As we approached Ganges shoals Ogoopogo was moving in very light air, and with current assist, squeezed past the mark, and was headed for Boulder Bay. The fleet looking like a pack of wolves bearing down on unsuspecting prey was closing the gap in still fresh breezes as we rounded the last mark and took our time in case it took 3 hours to finish the race!!

Skeena Cloud was flying on a reach towards Ganges Shoal. Unbelievably, being we were only .3 nm away, everyone else was parked at Ganges Shoal. At .2 nm the breeze went from about 5 or 6 knots to a zephyr in a blink of an eye. We ghosted past Sparky who warned me he was not going to make the mark as he was being set into the harbour. Warned, I tightened my course and slid by Ganges Shoal. Looking back, I could see Second Wind roaring in to join the party with Phoenix one mark behind and doing well.

The hole expanded some and now the fleet was slowing behind us in no air and we seeing 0, 0.2 wind on the dial. We moved with the current and some boat speed through the water at 0.6 -1 knot over ground. It was now a case of who would get the puffs. What would the wind gods

decreed. Meanwhile the sun shone and it was hard to remember that this cool late summer day had replaced last weeks wintry promises.

Ogopogo was still moving. RH spotted a zephyr on the right side. There was wind at the bottom of the harbour slowly coming this way. Although we had no wind to fill



the sail we had sail shape. The current gave enough apparent wind to move us in the water. We had steerage and were able to harden up enough to move to the right.

There it was , a whisper of wind felt on the cheeks. A knot of wind on the dial. Boat speed over ground up from .8 to a whole 1 knot. Rats! gone again. Wait a minute, look back , look ahead, then there it was again , this time stronger and we were "in it" , and moving at 2 knots. the dark water in the harbour had moved closer . Would be the left side or the right to get it first.

Ogopogo was now in the breeze tacking toward the finish line, The fleet behind now 10 minutes back and not moving . The wind playing just 100 yards ahead, tantalizingly close.

We fell off to a close reach to maximize boat speed, in the center of the harbour while we waited for the wind to reach us, and there it was. Now we moved at 3 knots and then closer to 4 knots tacking out to the right. Still we could not make the finish line on the final tack and so we tacked left and the wind shifted, a 30 degree lift for us on the wrong side . Now we were angled to the line rather than parallel and required yet another tack to get over the line.

Skeena Cloud had her spinnaker up twice as she chased wind up the harbour. I took it down seeing Radiant Heat tacking all over the harbour. I thought the wind was going to shift into the NW onto my nose, but although it was variable, it stayed enough to the north to fill the asymmetric. I had Sparky and Shingebiss to my port and Second Wind to my starboard. The first two were in lighter and more fitful breeze. Second Wind was in better breeze but would need to turn more into the breeze, losing the advantage of close reaching, and had further to

go, to make the finish line. So I played like Goldilocks and chose 'the just right' course in the middle, crossing the line one second behind Shingebiss.



Now the fleet (RH reporting) behind was beginning to move but further back. Then the front moved through and the wind lightened yet again to slow the fleets approach to the finish line 20-21 minutes behind Radiant Heat.. It was a fun finish for the 5 boats abeam of each other. The fast rated boats gritting their teeth to be caught by the slow rated boats who could now sense victory and a podium finish.

As soon as the fleet crossed the line, the wind died. Phoenix, as game now, as she was at the start, had bagged out her main to port to catch what wind there was, and lined up the crew along her rail, finishing her first race, without flying sails, only minutes behind the rest of us. She will be a force to be reckoned with by us slower rated boats.

There was a pleasant gathering on the dock and I'll leave you with a quote from the FCR, Greg.

""It was a spectacular day today. Enough breeze to make it fun. A terrific course. And beautiful weather. To ask for anything more in late October would be churlish""

"Hey, and I am #1 today!!-(tony for greg)

Loopy K - 10/27/2019

Start: Start 1, Finishes: Place

Rank	Boat	SailNo	NHC3	Start	Finish	Elapsed	Corrected	BCR	Points
1	Skeena Cloud	121	0.792	10:30	13:48:55	3:18:55	2:37:33	0.792	100
2	Ogopogo	2	1.11	10:30	13:00:32	2:30:32	2:47:06	1.047	86
3	Phoenix		0.784	10:30	14:17:40	3:47:40	2:58:29	0.692	72
4	Radiant Heat	67901	1.005	10:30	13:28:23	2:58:23	2:59:17	0.883	57
5	Sparky	67901	0.911	10:30	13:49:02	3:19:02	3:01:19	0.792	
6	Oasis	421	0.958	10:30	13:49:00	3:19:00	3:10:39	0.792	43
7	Second Wind	175	0.959	10:30	13:51:15	3:21:15	3:13:00	0.783	28
8	Shingebiss	49077	1.032	10:30	13:48:54	3:18:54	3:25:16	0.792	14