

Hot Rum Race, January 1, 2020

Commentary by Tony Brogan:

The forecast over the last week predicted New Year's Day would be clear and windy. So it turned out to be.

This was the New Years Day Luncheon with a free mulled rum tottie. Many were expected to be there and so the annual NYD race is planned to be short and sweet with crews headed for the Clubhouse by 12 Noon. The winner of the coveted bottle of rum is by draw for all those participating in the race. Everyone has an equal chance to win. Just take part.

The day dawned gusty and sunny and double digit warm at 10.5C degrees. While getting my gear together and gulping the first coffee of the day, I contemplated tactics. We would see if the forecast 10-25 knots from the West, South West was evident at the club.

There was lighter air upon first arriving at the dock but soon thereafter the rattle of halyards and moaning of wind in the shrouds announced the forecast was on track!

I set the jib and then tied on the outer sheets to make the sail double sheeted. (*Note: the Maestro is giving us a tip here. That extra pair of sheets is for use off the wind, providing a much better sheeting angle – ed*). I discarded the idea of the spinnaker being flown but we did not yet have the course.

First crew to arrive was Martin and we decided then and there to reef the main at the dock. The boat was moored head to wind and that was soon done. The anemometer showed wind to 20 knots and down to 8. Then John arrived keen to fly the spinnaker but was soon dissuaded!!

At the 0945 skippers meeting we discovered only three boats attending. Greg Slakov opted from single handing Sorcery X, to going with the girls on Phoenix. David Wood was crewing with Ben Sutton on Evangeline. Three crew on Radiant Heat. That was the quorum for the day, The race was on.

Greg Slakov was the race officer of the day as FCR Greg Taylor had other obligations. He decided after thoughtful deliberations that the course would be Start , Batt Rock (P) and finish.

We cast off and motored out to the far end of the start area. Turning west, we raised the main. Reefing was a good idea as we were promptly hit with a 25 kt prolonged gust. Turning downwind, we took off down the harbour like a scalded cat at 6-7 knots.

The question became whether we even needed a jib today? As within 5 minutes we were halfway to 2nd sisters! We turned back and found the single sail capabilities of Radiant Heat showed again as we made 4.5-5.5 knots to weather under reefed main alone. This is a good cruising set up I thought.

Meanwhile, Phoenix appeared sporting a reefed main and a 50% furled genoa. Evangeline was reefed too with a regular genoa. All were now trying the starting angles as time ran down to the last 8 minutes.

Even with only 3 boats, there was not as much room as one might think as closing speeds between boats approached a combined 12 knots. We deemed it prudent to stay away from whomever and turned back toward Grace Point. At 5 minutes to go we turned back for the start line but were too early, took a lazy luffed 360 circle, before again heading back to the line.

A brief lull meant we were now a little late. Phoenix at the Pin end made a very good start and was promptly on her way with a 5 length lead. Radiant Heat quickly crossed the line as the winds picked up again. We were to weather of Phoenix and beginning to catch her. Evangeline was a little further back directly off our stern.

The wind was steady at 12 knots on the beam Then it was a broad reach at 14 knots apparent and as it came and went we accelerated and slowed but boat speed never slowed below 5 knots. Rather it was 6-7.5 as the norm. We were halfway to Sisters before we passed Phoenix and noticed our acceleration in the puffs was an advantage. Evangeline was to leeward but keeping pace with Radiant Heat.

We were at Sisters light in 11 minutes and it was a drag race out to Batt Rock. Evangeline losing maybe a boat length, now moved to the weather side of Radiant Heat's wake. I supposed to avoid any dirty air.

As we approached Batt Rock we had lengthened our lead to 10-15 boat lengths and we debated whether to gybe around the mark or do a chicken gybe.

The apparent wind was 12 knots on a broad reach but as we approached it increased to 15 knots on the beam. Just as we approached the rounding the wind eased and so a quick gybe was made. Excellent. It could not have been better executed. We were on our way back close reached to close hauled. Now we felt the strength of the wind and several times saw 20+ knots apparent and once 27 knots!

John made himself busy easing the traveller in the gusts but it was still hard to keep the boat on its feet even with the main ragging as it was depowered.

It was one tack down the harbour but we could not quite make the finish line being 200 yard to the right. Evangeline, looking for less troubled wind was wider yet, and was another 200 yards to the right. Two quick tacks and we were over the line. Evangeline was now 3-4 minutes back and Phoenix a further 30 minutes or so.

Phoenix won the draw from the hat to win the bottle of rum!

This was a remarkably quick race as average speeds over ground on a rum (pun intended) line were near 6 knots. Many times in both direction we saw 7.5 knots of boat speed and over 8 knots more than once.

We were blessed again with fine weather. It was dry and sunny, even a bit "warm". Those that did not come missed a great sail and a fine lunch, a free mulled rum and the chance of a draw to win a bottle of rum with which to toast the new year.

It was a great start to the new season.

See you Sunday for the Jack Landon Race. Strong winds are again forecast. Those with boats who embrace stronger breezes have a chance to excel. (*I think he is talking about you Eric, better be there—ed*)







Hot Rum - 1/1/2020

Start: Start 1, Finishes: Place

| Rank | Boat | SailNo | NHC3 | Start | Finish | Elapsed | Corrected | BCR | Points |
|------|--------------|--------|-------|-------|----------|---------|-----------|-------|--------|
| 1 | Evangeline | | 0.899 | 10:30 | 11:35:55 | 1:05:55 | 0:59:16 | 0.899 | |
| 2 | Radiant Heat | 67901 | 1.013 | 10:30 | 11:33:05 | 1:03:05 | 1:03:54 | 0.939 | |
| 3 | Phoenix | | 0.8 | 10:30 | 12:04:28 | 1:34:28 | 1:15:34 | 0.627 | |