

**Captain Passage Race January 26, 2020**  
**Written by Tony Brogan**

***After the yawn fest of last week's race where even Tony could not find much to write about. He returns in fine form to report on the much more boisterous Captains Pass race. -ed***

For a week I had studied the wind forecasts. Some of the wind models in the three days before the race indicated there could be near gale force gusts around Sunday's start time. By Saturday night there were some indications of relief, and by Sunday morning there were no wind alerts, but forecasts still warned of the possibility of 25 knot plus gusts, along with a steady wind range of 8-12 knots.

I was pleased and relieved to be joined by my two capable crew as we prepared for the anticipated lively winds from the West.

On the dock the instruments only showed single digit wind speeds but out on the harbour little black lines scurried across the water in varying directions depending on which side of the island mountains the wind came around before pouncing on the harbour waters.

The skippers meeting produced just 4 intrepid crews all from low handicap rated boats with Radiant Heat being the "slow boat". (*Phoenix, Second Wind, Battle Axe, others – you can't leave me with this crowd next week! -ed*)

This Captains passage course is adapted with a couple more loops to do before heading home! (*Noticed that, did you? I smirk from Palm Springs – ed*)

The course outlined was :

Start, Batt Rock(P), U62(P), Welbury Spar(P), U62(P), WS(P), Batt rock(S), Finish. 11 miles.  
Time limit 6 hours.

FCR was still off Island, not yet returned from a brief sojourn in a sunnier, warmer climate!!

We made it out on the water with time to spare before the start, spending the time making adjustments to our tangle of sheeting lines. The wind was variable with 5-10 knots from the WNW, W or S or SE.

We debated whether to use the jib or the genoa and decided the the jib made more sense as any gust would overpower the genoa. 5 minutes to the start all 4 boats were cruising for positions on the line in lighter airs, mostly from the south west.

As the start time arrived we were held up by a lull and with Shingebiss to port and Sorcery X to starboard, and as Ogoogo edged into the lead on the left, we crawled through the light air, and lagged behind.

Eventually, we tacked to the right to get clear air and were almost immediately headed and forced to tack back onto starboard to gain the centre of the harbour where we were greeted by the sight of the other three boats, noses down at 6-7 knots, bursting down the harbour like greyhounds at 6-7 knots, already 300 yards ahead of Radiant Heat. (*Welcome to my world Tony – ed*)

My crew were still smiling so not all was lost. We now battled lulls of 3-5 knots of wind in between

gusts of 10-15 knots but the other three extended their lead toward Sisters. Frustrated, we took a calculated risk and changed to the genoa, hoping the gusts stayed below 15 knots. In hindsight it was a perfect day for the 135% genoa, but we never thought to use it. Duh!!

Approaching the anchored Freighter the three boats ahead split on different courses dictated by their thoughts on wind and tide. Ogoopogo took to the left into the Passage, Shingebiss to the right and Sorcery X in between. Their relative positions changed but ours didn't, other than we were now a quarter mile back.

Damian enquired at one point if we would ever recover the lost distance. "We'll see", was the skipper's laconic reply.

Radiant Heat, close hauled on starboard, made it out to the passage to the left of the freighter and took the long tack, until ready onto tack on port towards Batt Rock. By this time Ogoopogo had ridden the mild ebb down to the mark and was already around and now on a beam reach to close hauled course to U62. Shingebiss with Sorcery X a bit behind, were still west of the mark, both fighting the current to the turn.

RH changed back to a Jib in rising wind, completing another of the half dozen changes forced upon this day, but being headed required two more tacks to make it around.

As we turned to U 62, we could see Ogoopogo already on course for Welbury. So now it was a case of doing the best we could and reconciling ourselves to being in last place for the duration of the race. We had the genoa up again, but as we gybed around U62, Ogoopogo was already returning from Welbury, with Shingebiss closing on Welbury spar with Sorcery X closer still.

RH had to avoid both on their starboard tack return to U62 for the second time. Waving as we passed in opposite directions was as close as we would get to the three front runners!!

And so we all made to loop around Welbury, Back to U62 , back to Welbury a second time, and then the beat to Batt Rock for our 2nd visit.

Here we had a little adventure. Deciding to drop the genoa in a rising wind now pushing 15 -18 knots, the skipper decided there was no time to raise the jib before dropping the genoa. The approaching whitecaps looked nasty and sure enough we soon caught in up in a squall of 25-28 knot winds.

Instead of racing forward on the increasing wind, we came to a halt, with your skipper wondering why. Yes, we were under main alone, but RH usually does well under her main. The crew was busily stowing the genoa on the deck. The skipper looked at the rudder to see what was hung up. Nothing to see there. I tried bearing off but the helm did not respond . Now we had a half knot of boat speed in 25 knots and it was time to raise the jib when we discovered the problem. The jib hidden under the genoa had gone overboard at the bow and was acting as a perfect sea anchor.

It took a minute or two for the crew to drag enough sail aboard to dump the water to get us moving and get back to setting the jib. Finally, with the jib hoisted we were once again off to Batt Rock. In the meantime, almost inexplicably considering our challenges, the other boats were still visible, but well on their way home. Two tacks were required to round Batt Rock before we were able set off in pursuit.

A quick glance at the clock, as we rounded Batt Rock, revealed that at this pace, we were a little over a

half hour from the finish line. The wind was brisk from the West providing us a beam to close reach on the run home and we seemed to be closing the gap a little.

And that was it, a breezy day of erratic winds favouring the bigger, heavier, faster boats (Ogopogo excepted, which was well sailed by Paul Faget and guest crew, Douglas Woolcock.). It was a romp around the course with no rain and sunny periods. What could be better on a late January day?

Will the Groundhog see its shadow next Sunday? You will have to join us to see.

February 2 Sunday Groundhog Day

SISC Start

Batt Rk (P)

Martin's Mark (S)

Horda Shoals (S)

Ganges Shoal (S)

Finish

9.2 miles

5 hour time limit.

*It will also be our inaugural use of the Martin's Mark (named for Ray Martin). Seen as the 3S mark at the bottom of the calendar on the website -ed*

## Captains Passage - 1/26/2020

**Start: Start 1, Finishes: Place**

Rank	Boat	SailNo	NHC3	Start	Finish	Elapsed	Corrected	BCR	Points
1	Shingebiss	49077	0.993	10:30	13:10:11	2:40:11	2:39:04	0.993	100
2	Radiant Heat	67901	0.975	10:30	13:23:21	2:53:21	2:49:01	0.918	75
3	Ogopogo	2	1.163	10:30	12:59:45	2:29:45	2:54:10	1.062	50
4	Sorcery X	CAN32	1.125	10:30	13:05:48	2:35:48	2:55:17	1.021	25