

**Shaking off the Doldrums**  
**By Tony Brogan, Greg Taylor, and Bob Jones**  
**Pictures by Peter Toby**

This was a loopy K race with several windward/leeward legs run under the new COVID-19 protocols put in place by the Race Committee. The protocols are designed to enable sailors to enjoy their boats and being on the water, while protecting themselves their fellow racers and their community.

We had a skippers meeting by VHF with 6 boats reporting in, eliminating the need to gather on the dock prior to the race.

Radiant Heat had, according to the previous day's forecast, rigged her 135 Genoa, but on reflection, and looking at the scudding clouds, decided that discretion is the better part of valour, and rigged the 110% jib instead..

The new, never before sailed, K course was:

Start, Duck around 2nd sister into Welbury Bay. Take Martins Mark to(S), beat out (Yes it was blowing from the SSE) to U62 (S). Run back to Martins Mark (S). Beat to Horda Shoals (S). Run to Welbury Spar(S), Beat back to Horda Shoals (S) and then run to the finish. (Notice Gyle – no Ganges Shoals – ed)

Got that!! The course suggested a lot of spinnaker work and bag packing, but as most boats were single handed, or short handed, and the wind exceeded the forecasted 10 Knots by at least 50%, the spins were mostly left untouched, except for the formidable Ogoogo, whose spinnaker was seen several times taunting us from the distance.

Prior to the start, there was 8 knot SE breeze verging to the south. As we were short handed, and adhering to social separation protocols while aboard, Damian was dispatched to the mid-deck and the foredeck, while the skipper showed off his single handed sailing talents: handling the sheets during the tacks, as well as the helm. Not that the foredeck as not kept busy, making sure the jib cleared the mast and the safety lines, and leaping from side to side as we tacked to keep us flat. The wind picked up to 10-14 knots of apparent wind so there was enough going on to keep us both busy. Thus we made several practice tacks up the harbour.

Turning back for the run to the start line, the apparent wind dropped to 4 knots, but we maintained a good water speed of 4 knots as well. We noted our competitors were shaking out their rigs, all flying full mains and genoas.

As the start time approached, Oasis was observed skulking among the moored boats in Squalor bay, examining the feasibility of a starboard tack run to the committee end of the start line. Others were cruising back and forth. In the last 3 minutes we fell back to the very position Oasis vacated, and turned for the line with just a minute to go. Oasis was 10 boat lengths ahead flogging her genoa to slow her approach to the line. Most of the rest were toward the pin end where Ogoogo and Sorcery X made excellent starts, getting away briskly. Oasis was over the line on time, and Radiant Heat was 5 boat lengths back and slightly to windward but briefly in some bad air. Shingebiss and Skeena Cloud were further back and slower to the line. *(Skeena Cloud showed her single-handing talents by immediately putting herself into irons on the first tack of the race, requiring her to do a pirouette, before following the rest of the fleet like a chastened dog - ed)*

On the first tack back from the Chain Islands, Sorcery X and Ogopogo passed ahead, and then Oasis squeezed across our bow by a boat length. With the wind to the right the Starboard tack was favoured, so we stayed as long as we could before going to Port tack back across the harbour. *(Skeena Cloud enjoyed the presence of Shingebiss for a short while, once tacking close under her stern. But this didn't last long as I watched the other boats, one by one, slip out of view behind Second Sister as they dipped into Welbury Bay. I had gone back home that morning to get my 135 genoa. Thank goodness I did, even if meant getting ready in time a little stressful, as the wind steadily picked up as we worked down the harbour. It was past time for me to reef, but doing well over 5.5 knots, and needing to tack, organize after the tack, prepare for the next tack, all while trimming for speed and avoiding too much weather helm and heeling, left little time for anything but steering to the tell tails – ed).*



The two lead boats played out their lead as Oasis and Radiant Heat battled each other for supremacy, until finally on a reach, Oasis took the lead for the rest of the race, and then, inch by inch, increasing the distance between us.

Turning from Martins Mark towards U62, the wind grew stronger, into the high teens (apparent wind) on the beat. As we converged on the mark, Sorcery X announced withdrawal from the race due I think to higher wind concerns. *(It was more about Greg docking his boat single handed in what looked like an increasing wind, than the actual conditions, that decided the issue – ed)* Ogopogo was around, hoisting her spinnaker. *(That was something to see - ed)*. Shingebiss was some way back from us with Skeena Cloud further back still.

*(Shingebiss too retired. She said she was already DSQ because she missed the Ganges Shoal Mark. He was told later he missed it only because it was never a mark of the course! But alas, it was good that he did, it being Sam's birthday – ed)*

*(Skeena Cloud's second big mess-up of the day – I no longer bother to count the innumerable small ones – was mistaking a crab trap for Martin's Mark and sailing much too low. For this, there is no excuse, as I had written to someone the day before who had been asking where the Mark was, and provided him a detailed description, along with a warning not to confuse a crab trap with the actual Mark.*

*My only excuse, is that I had just glanced up towards the Channel Islands, only to see a ominous black wind line slowly, but relentlessly, churning towards us. Being the wind was already 10+ knots, it was a sphincter tightener.*

*I answered Sorcery X's call on the VHF informing us of his retirement, knowing he was in, or right adjacent to the wind, by asking, 'should I retire too?' I know, stupid question. Right after that Shingebiss retired. What do I do know?*

*I figured I was doing okay, having the boat reasonably balanced, and figured, if a throw in a reef, I can handle what's coming. And if it got really bad, I could also reef the foresail. Impressed at my reasoning? Don't be, it was actually, 'it's much to early to drink beer, so I might as well continue to forge ahead' – ed)*

Thus the race continued. Ogoogo impressing everyone by flying her spinnaker several times, Paul hiked out, looking as calm as he might be in his easy chair at home, beer in hand, his crew (was that you April) gamely struggling to keep the foresail from blowing overboard.) Oasis was next. And then Radiant Heat. Her crew banished to the mid and foredeck. I hope Damian had gum boots on as he spent a lot of time with his legs hanging over the side. Skeena Cloud was a distant last.

*(I was heading to Horda Shoals for the first time, only to see all the boats fly by downwind. I was surprised that they were all gybing well away from Welbury Spar. What were they doing? I then realized, to my chagrin, and some disgust, that they were all heading home. They were all one complete loop ahead of me. I still had to finish getting to Horda Shoals, return to Welbury, beat back to Horda Shoals in the increasing wind, before I would also be able to head towards the finish line. It says something about the breeze that Skeena Cloud's finish time was as close as it was.*

*I felt a little lonely, but looking around, there were three other boats about. Two, including Minke, returning to the Club, and a large ketch heading somewhere south of us – ed.*

Oasis held her lead over Radiant Heat down the harbour as both periodically flew white sails wing on wing. *(I need to ask them about this. The breeze diminished a little mid harbour for me. I could do 4.1 knots WoW, but 5.2 to 5.4 gybing 35 degrees off the wind. Am I doing something wrong or is Skeena Cloud's fat butt – or mine in the stern – too much of a handicap? In any event, the wind picked up as I neared the line, and Skeena Cloud gybed crossed at well over 6 knots. It was then I realized just how close the boats in Squalor Bay are now to the line. By the time I rolled in the genoa, I was among the boats, still doing 4 knots. I got turned around, turned on the engine, and idled into the wind as I sorted things, but found myself being blown backwards into the boats. Deciding the heck with this, I dropped the main onto the deck, and motored into my spot, where Tony and Damian kindly met me, and helped me land. – ed)*

Although, with adhering to our new protocols put in place due to COVID-19, we had no gathering, we did have a good day's sail. Not much sun, but plenty of wind with a high of 24 apparent at one point on Radiant Heat. It is said that exercise and some sunshine will cure most ills! It certainly worked today, as it lifted the doldrums and relieved our pandemic related anxieties for awhile.

We look forward to the next sail in 2 weeks as we race Round Prevost Island. We encourage you to join us. It's a enjoyable and fun way to escape our current challenges and have some fun together, alone. There are few other sports that offer us this.

**And now, a insightful report from Oasis:**

Oasis spent some time organizing herself to comply with the new protocols. The boat was alongside F dock, having made a epic single handed voyage from Walter Bay. Toby and Ray boarded about 0940 and were sent below to wash hands in hot water, (I had the water heater on at 0830 from shore power). Ray was, as usual, committed to the space behind the wheel, and Toby & I were assigned to Port & Stb. jib sheets. I was responsible for the main. We all wore gloves. After the race we berthed at the Marina. Adhering to protocols, none of the racers congregated at the picnic tables. Ray, Toby & I enjoyed hot Chocolate with a dash of rum while sitting well apart in the cockpit.

*Now my (Bob's) race report:*

The VHF skippers meeting was fine however it was a good job the FCR published the course earlier and we had it printed out. We enjoyed the race, it was Oasis's wind. We did not reef at the start as we knew we had an off the wind leg after Second Sister. In retrospect this was a mistake, In 8-10 knots of true wind, we make too much leeway with a luffing main, with the result that Radiant Heat was a boats length ahead of us at Martins Mark.

In Welbury Bay the wind eased a little, Oasis got into her stride and moved ahead of Radiant Heat. However, Radiant Heat was sailing closer to the wind and we just got by her as we crossed tacks north of the Welbury Bay reef.

We made a good call on the ebb tide and rounded U62 about 100 yards ahead of Radiant heat. By this time Ogoopogo was well on her way back to Martins Mark flying a spinnaker. Our failure to reef was now mitigated and we enjoyed a 8 knot ride most of the way back to Martins reef.

Greg on Sorcery X advised on VHF that the was retiring. We figured that handling a full main in that wind was problematic, but upon seeing Greg at the dock putting the boat away, he said he was more concerned berthing the boat if the wind continued to increase.

After Martins Mark the second time around we did acknowledge the increased wind and put a reef in the main. The boat applauded our concern for her welfare and sped off to Horda Shoals a knot faster, carrying her crew in great comfort.

After rounding we got the main back up and ran for home. The wind eased and we were fearful that Radiant Heat would hoist a spinnaker, there were a few fearful glances astern. We crossed the line at a little over 6 knots and returned to the breakwater.





PHRF	Club			Finish	Corrected	Rating for	
Rating	Rating	Boat	Skipper	Time	Time	Place	Next Race
120	179	OASIS	Jones	12:53:58	02:13:52	1	179
186	337	SKEENA CLOUD	Taylor	13:36:48	02:21:41	2	337
114	50	OGOPOGO	Faget	12:37:02	02:24:52	3	50
138	135	RADIANT HEAT	Brogan	12:56:57	02:25:50	4	135
87	65	SORCERY X	Slakov	dnf			65
86	134	SHINGEBISS	Keating	dnf			134

Scoring by Paul Faget