

Dash to and Fro 'K' Race

May 31st, 2020

Written by Greg Taylor with lots of help from my fellow racers

Gyle Keating, as we posed nudes after the race, rightly described the race as, "a typical day sailing around here".

And so it was, we had lots of wind at the start, which almost immediately declined to next to no wind, then just enough to maintain steerage against the current, being stalled at the mark by current, a glorious spinnaker run with current to the next mark, some thrilling upwind work to the third and final mark, and a final downwind run to the finish: U60 to Martin's Mark, to Horda Shoals and the Club.

Tony told me he needs to go back to the Tony Watchman's strategy, "I point the boat in the direction I want to go and wait for the wind to come to me". I am unsure how many times Tony changed sails, jib to genoa, up spinnaker, down spinnaker, repeat. And he still came in near the bottom of the pack. I told him, with all the sympathy I could muster, "it just proves you are human".

Just to make things a little more interesting, Martin's Mark was new to many. Racers had to begin looking for it as they regrouped from a spirited downwind run, getting their spinnakers down, lines organized, and plan for the first upwind tack in the 10-12 knots of true wind. Tony radioed Shelley to tell her he thought she likely missed the mark. Shelley described the mark she went around, white (check), red stripes (check), upright (check), flag on top (gong).

Poor Ian on That's Life had a good half race. He got off to a fine start as we took off in a stiff NW breeze, hung in through the dropping breeze, stayed close to the leaders, even as they had to rely on the unpredictable wind shifts to get them to U60. But a 52' boat in little breeze having to sail upwind against almost a knot of current, in the middle of a bunch of smaller boats going every which way, all within about 100 square meters of water, must have been trying. From afar, it looked like a litter of puppies dancing around their exasperated mom. He eventually had to set the 'iron jenny' to reverse out of the way, and, unfortunately, was done for the day.

Right after charging across the line in a shifty, gusty breeze that would have required me to reef if it was upwind start, the breeze dropped, and we progressed slower and slower up the harbour, spinnakers were set as we tried to capture what little breeze remained. What first looked like a romp to U60 was beginning to look more like a test of endurance, patience, good strategy, and some luck. I caught up to Martin and began to wrestle with my spinnaker. He advised me to let my main well out. I said it was as out as much as it would go. "What", he exclaimed incredulously. I told him of my rig's B&R set up, with its swept back spreaders. "What should I do", I inquired. "Buy another boat". I started to make up the story in my mind of how I would make his case argument when I got home. Then decided I like Martin too much to pass on his recommendation.

The other piece of advice he gave me was, “whatever, you do, don’t go over there”, pointing over to Sorcery X, who looked like she was resting on her very own round mirror. After getting my spinnaker sorted I looked around and the mirror was closer. Yikes. I looked up ahead and saw my nemesis: Batt Rock. I have been stuck there too many times in no breeze. I could see the glassy surface growing around it.

Forget that. I looked to my left to see a bit of breeze towards the Prevost shore. Good strategy until the breeze died half way across and I found myself in the grasp of the flood tide. The patchy breeze shifted more to the SSE. Every time it came up, I gained a few meters, and when it quit, I lost all my ground, and then some. I finally closed with the Prevost shore and some tide relief and there was Tony just ahead of me.

It’s never a good sign to find yourself catching up to Tony. It rarely has a happy ending, as he can sail faster, and closer to the wind, even when there is no wind.

At the same time, I couldn’t believe my eyes as I watched my colleagues sailing on the Salt Spring shore sailing towards U60 under spinnaker! Across the Pass they had entirely different wind. This gave them a critical advantage as they approached the mark from above, allowing them to use the current to their advantage.

Those below the mark had to contend with the aforementioned adverse current. Why, oh why, don’t I just buy myself a pair of binoculars and follow Keith or Ole around like a dog on a very, very long leash? Poor Shelly and Simone, I am unsure how many times they took a run at the mark, almost make it, and lose ground. If it lasted any longer Shelley would be renaming Karisma, ‘Sisyphus’.

I don’t know if you have noticed Battle Axe this season. I have. She is sailing up a storm, near the top of the pack in corrected time most every race. Battle Axe can struggle a bit in very light airs, but Jim gets the most out of her, but in any kind of breeze at all, Jim is getting her to fly. There was a time when Battle Axe was the one boat I thought I might beat on any given day. That’s history.

And speaking about doing well this year, Evangeline is rocking it, and yesterday, took advantage of Oasis’s absence. Poor Bob called me in the morning just before I left for the Club apologizing because, for the first time in about 20 years, he had to miss a race due to ‘being sick’. He had pulled a back muscle.

But the day really goes to Sam Keating and Doug Manton. Sam because she tended the helm as Gyle took a knife to his main before the start. Although they were 10 minutes late getting over the line, Shingebiss completed the race thanks to Sam steering him around in circles as he got things sorted.

And Doug Manton, on Star Gazer, what can I say? As a new racer myself, I know the trials and tribulations of trying to make your boat go as fast as it can in a direction it doesn’t necessarily want to go. But to do it on a day like this with all that was thrown at him, and complete the race says we have a new, budding racer in our midst. Well done!

Now, just to check if you are paying attention, here are those posed nudes



Club			Finish	Corrected		Rating for	club
Rating	Boat	Skipper	Time	Time	Place	Next Race	points
193	EVANGELINE	Sutton	14:32:13	03:40:49	1	193	100
345	BATTLE AXE	Raddysh	15:28:20	03:44:11	2	345	92
322	SKEENA CLOUD	Taylor	15:29:33	03:51:15	3	322	85
150	SOUL THYME	Simpson	14:32:17	03:55:03	4	150	77
100	CALIENTE	Andersen	14:25:30	04:06:54	5	100	69
134	SHINGEBISS	Keating	15:15:09	04:43:24	6	134	62
132	RADIANT HEAT	Brogan	15:15:23	04:44:30	7	132	53
300	STAR GAZER	Manton	16:03:00	05:31:59	8	300	46
200	KAY D	Herbert	dnf		9	200	8
195	KARISMA	Lipke	dnf		9	195	
171	RAMPART	DeRoos	dnf		9	171	8
100	THAT'S LIFE	McAllister	dnf		9	100	8
65	SORCERY X	Slakov	dnf		9	65	8
53	OGOPOGO	Faget	dnf		9	53	8

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