

## **Wednesday Night Race: July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020**

**Written by Tony Brogan**

*Before I pass you over to Tony for another of his excellent reports (This one of a race all of us will remember for some time); we need to stand together in virtual acknowledgement of Heather Sloat. Us men think of ourselves as keen sailors. That we are tough. That we have salt in our veins. But believe me, we are mere pikers compared to Heather.*

*On Tuesday, June 30<sup>th</sup> Heather left her car in Fulford, got on the ferry to Vancouver, and finalized, over some beers, the purchase of a Martin 242. The purchase arrangement included a tow to Salt Spring the next morning. So, at 09:30 July 1<sup>st</sup>, Heather climbed into the open cockpit of her new boat and threw a tow line to a 40+ ft. Beneteau. So began a lumpy, cold, windy, 6 hour open tow across the Straits.*

*Heather, a bit green around the gills, struggled to keep the 242 from shearing back and forth behind the towboat. At one point she spied a log outside Active Pass. The 242, seeming to have a death wish, careened towards it out of control. Heather closed her eyes, desperately trying to recall if she actually signed the insurance papers.*

*Sometime around 15:30 outside Ganges Harbour, the Beneteau cast her loose, and Heather sailed her new boat into the Club, tying up just after 16:00.*

*Climbing out of the boat, stretching her sore, stiff, cold muscles, she spied me. Grabbing her bag she said, "need a crew?". After doing all this, and then apparently winning the race on corrected time, you might see why – knowing that Heather will soon be reading the final results at the end of Tony's report, that I feel it necessary to avoid the Club (and Heather) for some days.*

*So please join with me and welcome a new boat to our racing fleet. And, if you are ever out on the course, and think you can out tough Heather, give it another thought!*

*And quickly, speaking of new boats to our racing fleet, I reached out to find out what Damian is up to, and if everything is okay. He replied from Winter Harbour. I wasn't able to get any details other than he is on his boat and learning how to fish. We can expect him to rejoin our ranks later this summer. - FCR*

Now onto Tony's report:

It was a blast in more ways than one. The wind was a pleasant 7-10 knots at the dock but after the course Ganges Shoals (P), U62 (S), Batt Rock(S), Ganges Shoals(S) and home was announced and we headed to the water, we found a steady 10 knots plus. As we were raising the main I noted a dark patch of water halfway down the harbour dotted with white caps and coming rapidly closer: "Careful John it looks like 15-20 is on its way".

Within seconds the front arrived and as the main was raised, 18 knots of wind was recorded. Up with the jib and we decided a reef in the main to be appropriate as did the majority of the 6 boats out.

With 12 minutes to go to the start we ran down the clock by staying back from the line away from other boats and luffing into the wind to slow the boat. The wind was now a basic Southeaster at a steady 14-18 knots. We sidled over to the Starboard end with 3 minutes to go. Turning toward the line with 90 seconds counting down, we looked to be clear and headed. Oasis closed in to the line ahead with 30 seconds, but as she was early, she ran the line. We were now close hauled and picking up speed. We were over 10 seconds behind Oasis, but she was now to the lee of us.

Busy enough on the helm to not look around, I could see we were pointing higher than Oasis, but then became conscious of the noise from the bow wave of the onrushing Rampart, rapidly closing with us on the windward side.

With Radiant Heat holding course it was an imposing site as the sprit of Rampart was alongside your skipper, a mere 6 feet away. But we held our course and Rampart was forced to head up enough to stay clear and she slowed and fell back. (*And we almost ran up her stern – FCR*)

Rampart decided to tack away. Meanwhile Oasis had run to the Chain Islands and flipped to the Port tack and had passed almost unnoticed to our sterns. We now made the turn to Port tack in the lead and in clear air.

Rampart and Oasis were now in a duel that flowed back and forth until the finish line. We noted Skeena Cloud making good time up the channel, again showing that she has legs. Greg was happy to have Heather as crew in the brisk conditions.

John pointed out that That's Life was yet to start and they seemed to have had issues to resolve before clearing the line 5 minutes late.

Radiant Heat tacked across to the right and ready to tack back to the Sisters. We looked in vain for the Ganges Shoals mark as it was camouflaged by the dark waters, choppy seas and the plentiful whitecaps. The two big boats, although both faster through the water, were now 2-300 yard back. Radiant Heat's ability to tack through 75-80 degrees was a clear advantage in velocity made good.

We finally spotted the GS mark, and tacking across, we laid the mark perfectly. Upon rounding we made course for the U62 mark on the Prevost shore over a mile away. The two following boats having their own private battle were now well back.

We knew the current was ebbing and so we did not want to be below the next mark and fighting current to get up to U62. So we stayed on our starboard tack at 60 degrees magnetic and noted we were headed just inside of Welbury spar.

As we approached we sensed the ebb current helping us to the right and with a slight wind lift were now well outside the Welbury spar. Oasis and Rampart were both moving at speed but falling off. They were inside the spar but clearing the reef. (*This was a tough one for Skeena Cloud. We couldn't point quite high enough in the wind to overcome our leeway and had to duck the reef. – FCR*)

Radiant Heat moved into Captains Passage but found there was little current until well across toward Prevost and now we were carried a little toward U62. Both boats behind had to tack away from Scott point and going out further than we had thought they would, appeared to have lost more distance.

Meanwhile That's Life was showing to be full of life and with its sailing ability, had closed the gap considerably. Fast and able to head up well on a beat she had followed Radiant Heat's track . As Oasis and Rampart moved across from Scott Point they found That's Life passing ahead of them. Nice recovery!

Getting to the Prevost shore Radiant Heat made two short tacks to clear U62 and set for Batt rock to the south. We found we could let off sail ease the helm and with some current assist were doing 6-6.5 knots over ground touching 7 knots occasionally. (*Even Skeena Cloud – as Heather can attest – touched 7 knots more than once – FCR*)

The wind was easing to some 10-12 knots, so we slowed a little approaching Batt Rock. That's Life was close enough to have us wonder if she would overtake us but we rounded Batt Rock 5- 10 boat lengths ahead.

As we rounded to head for home, Oasis and Rampart were several hundred yards back with That's Life close on our tail. We decided to use the spinnaker as the course gave us a deep starboard reach and the wind was manageable.

There was still enough wind to give enough wind pressure that the spinnaker needed a winch to get it aloft. However we were doing a good 6 knots downwind and the boats behind were slower getting sails up and we were widening the gap.

Here we had a good down wind run, at times dead down wind. The wind stayed steady at 10 knots or so.

Again it was a problem finding the Ganges shoals mark but 200 yards away 5 degrees to starboard we spotted it. (*I didn't have the same problem finding Ganges Shoals on the return at all. I never looked for it – FCR*)

The run continued to the finish line. We were 7-8 minutes ahead of second place Oasis still under headsail, Rampart and That's Life.

Twenty minutes back we saw the blue spinnaker of Skeena Cloud, who was still in contention for a podium place. (*Actually SC would have won should she have bothered*

*to look for Ganges Shoal, but don't tell Heather – FCR*). Stargazer had retired and was spotted coming down the harbour wing on wing.

It was certainly a sailors evening. Those who complain of not having enough wind to make their boat go had no excuse tonight.

We all had a brilliant sail and thoroughly enjoyed a nearly 2 hour robust sailing experience. One to remember!

<b>Club</b>			<b>Finish</b>	<b>Corrected</b>		<b>Rating for</b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Boat</b>	<b>Skipper</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Next Race</b>
123	RADIANT HEAT	Brogan	18:32:40	01:33:41	1	120
195	RAMPART	DeRoos	18:43:33	01:34:08	2	195
152	OASIS	Jones	18:41:00	01:37:42	3	155
316	SKEENA CLOUD	Taylor	raf		5	316
300	STAR GAZER	Manton	dnf		5	300
148	THAT'S LIFE	McAllister	dnf		5	148

Note: That's Life finished seconds behind Rampart, but forgot to record his time. Ian and I could have a beer sometime, but it will never likely happen, as neither of us seems to have much of a memory.