

Wednesday Night, July 29
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Additional video and content by Drew Stotesbury

Wednesday night's forecast for the 5th and last July series was light airs. However, at the skippers ch 72 roll call the wind was a steady 4-6 knots from the SE. The fleet Captain called the ambitious course to U62 (P), Horda Shoals (P) Ganges shoals (S) (also the short course) and finish. Time limit 1930.

Confident that light airs would prevail, we set the 155 Genoa. It's wind speed is limited to a maximum of 10 knots before being overpowered and starting to stall.

Having practiced our approach a couple of times to be get our timing down perfect when on the final run away from the line we were intercepted by Oasis, and being forced to duck her, lost a valuable minute. Gybing around for the line we found another boat (who knows who? Evangeline?) on our line and being faster than her, were in her bad air. We did a quick tack to the right, and then after 3 boat lengths, another tack back to the line, thus avoiding Oasis on our starboard and also attaining clear air.

It is worth noting the agility of the Johns aboard Radiant Heat. Both Starboard John and Port hand John were in fine form as crew with the result that our tacks were seamless and efficient all night long, even with the overlapping genoa, that has a tendency to hang up either on the shrouds or the safety line stanchions.

Skeena Cloud saw that 2/3 of the 10 boat fleet was bunched near the starboard end of the line, with the other 1/3 focused on the left side, leaving the middle open. We ran to the starboard end on port tack until just over a minute was left on the clock, flipped around, and now on starboard, under partially furled genoa, ran the line on a close reach. With 1 second to go we turned for the line, unfurled the genoa, hardened the sheets, and were off. Best start ever.

But good things never last. Skeena Cloud paced Oasis for a time, trapped to leeward, waiting for the wily Ray Martin to tack away, hopefully before running Skeena Cloud onto the Chain Islands.

Upon being released by Ray, I put forward my best Paul Faget impression and searched for wind in the faltering breeze. I only succeeded in going from one of the lead boats to last. Meanwhile, the real deal, Ogopogo, unerringly hopscotched from wind patch to wind patch out to Second Sister. At one point I called out to Second Wind, becalmed beside me, 'I can't even change the tonight's course to Ganges Shoals return because there goes Ogopogo around the corner'.

The rest of the fleet, in various stages of drifting with intention, stretched from near Second Sister back to me, at Deadman Island. Slowly, many of the boats gained

Second Sister, and disappeared behind it, leaving Oasis, Evangeline, Skeena Cloud, Second Wind, Yolanda, and Phoenix, in that order, to slowly, ever so slowly, exit the harbour. At this point exited stage left, deciding fun took precedence over perseverance, hoisted her spinnaker, and enjoyed a downwind return to the Club.

As Lisa on Phoenix describes it, 'Phoenix held her own with the tacking pack in Ganges Harbour until the fleet caught wind and worked the current running east at Second Sister and took off.

I followed Oasis on the right side. Second Wind was near Second Sister, and Phoenix between and 150 yards behind. Those 150 yards would define her night.

Just in front, between us and Oasis, was Evangeline. Here she showed why Tony gives her the compliment he does below. Between us and the promised land of wind beginning near Welbury Point continuing in a tight band to U62 was a desert. So much so that I wondered if the far off wind line was a mirage. Looking across this vast no-man's land I expected to hear the famous them music from the Good, Bad, and the Ugly.

The only break in the mirrored sea was the wake of large power boats roaring through us, shaking what little wind there was out of our sails. I wondered if there is a separate chapter in their manuals describing how one can act as a \$#% amongst sail boats.*

Back to the Evangeline and her desert crossing. Evangeline tacked over onto starboard and began what appeared to be a hopeless journey. I followed Oasis out some ways further, where Oasis tacked and began her journey into 'no-man's land'. I made it to where Oasis tacked, but no further.

Meanwhile, Evangeline, inching her way across, began picking up some speed, until we saw her gain the other side, tack onto port, and roar off towards U62. Nicely done!

Meanwhile, the three of us remained. Second Wind, near Second Sister, did a slow pirouette, described by a somewhat insolent Paul, 'we passed Eric just outside of the sisters on our return (italics are mine), his bow was pointed to the club so I thought he had quit, but he was just doing a slow circle in no wind with no steerage. I felt sorry for him, so opened another beer in his honour.'

Finally, Second Wind and I felt some zephyrs, our sails filled, and we began to move, both making our way towards Scott Point. Pretty soon we were moving well in 5 or 6 knots true. Those same zephyrs took a few minutes longer to reach Phoenix, still slightly behind us. Those few brief minutes would prove fatal.

Back to Tony

The wind was already showing light patches and so were along with Imp, Ogopogo and Ptubodactyl short tacking and staying to the centre right.

Ogopogo extended a long lead and disappeared around Second Sisters. Ptubodactyl found the first of several holes that impeded her progress and Imp and Radiant Heat played footsie loosie with each other all night with first the advantage to imp and then to Radiant heat.

In the meantime Evangeline put in a couple of challenges and twice on Starboard tack as the windward boat was forced to tack away from Radiant Heat. Ben is sailing well and Evangeline is slowly showing her true colours as a competitive boat and thankfully from my perspective reducing her handicap!!.

The trip from sisters to U62 was fraught with bits of light air interspersed with little to no air but there was a dark line further to the SE that may or may not reach us with wind, offered some hope that we may yet finish the race.

Ogopogo "reported" for the benefit of current less Greg Taylor that it was Flooding! out past Horda Shoals. But then again, was it?

We spent some time in a near hole in flooding current watching Ogopogo round U62 after several tacks and watching Pturbodactyl escape a hole yet again and shoot off in a private section of approaching wind, watching Imp from behind us move into some wind and pass us but then we too were "in it".

After several faux tacks, that produced nothing as we searched for air, we were off on a starboard tack left of the mark and Horda Shoals too. The apparent wind suddenly was 16 knots and we had a 30 degree lift that closed us to the mark.

As we got closer to Prevost the tide changed to Ebb. (Get that Paul?) and were carried below the mark for an easy clearance as we were able to ease sails on the final approach of leaving U62 to (P). Imp passed across our bow to round ahead of us and made the gybe around and headed back for Horda Shoals under spinnaker.

At this point, Second Wind and Skeena Cloud had entered Captain's Pass where they converged to set a course towards U62. We then had some exhilarating sailing. The wind had come up to 10+ knots true and we raced, side-by-side, hard on the wind. In the past, with my big genoa up, Skeena Cloud would have been over canvassed and slow. But by employing some of Paul's tricks, I kept her on her feet, matching the bigger Second Wind in speed and angle to the wind.

I had to wait for Second Wind to make her final tack towards U62 before tacking myself. Eric tacked, but me being smart, and having read the tide book, knew the tide was flooding, so waited 60 seconds longer, thinking the tide would force Eric to pinch and allow me to hit the mark perfect. But the tide was ebbing at U62! Second Wind made a clean turn on the mark and was away. By the time I got to the mark I was going faster, but had to sail further, on a close reach, and rounded well back of Second Wind.

Upon rounding, the wind was already beginning its descent back down to nothing. I grabbed the spinnaker halyard and began to hoist away. It seems the halyard should actually be attached to the spinnaker before one begins such a maneuver. Sorting that out gave Second Wind a lead, but with the breeze steadily dropping I caught up with Eric ½ mile short of, and what might as well have been a hundred miles from, Ganges Shoals. We drifted with intention, first with under spinnaker, and then under headsails for the mark. We were almost side-by-side crossing the line, with Second Wind maybe 2/3rds of a boat length ahead, and I was still 2 minutes behind her. That's how slow it was.

Meanwhile, Phoenix, once she was able to get free of the doldrums near Second Sister, set a course up the middle, instead of over to Scott Point. The wind was not as good, but she cut out a lot of distance. It was the smart move and she made up a lot of time. But being behind rounding U62 meant she encountered the dying wind upon setting her spinnaker. Whereas Second Wind and Skeena Cloud kept in the breeze for awhile, allowing us to make Horda Shoals and get near Ganges Shoals. The breeze had already left Phoenix. Those 150 yards had come back to haunt her. Life is unfair.

Back to Tony

I noted Evangeline not far back, and Oasis was in sight, but for others I am sorry to say I was too busy to look around.

A casual glance at the plotter shocked me to see we were not leaving Horda Shoals to(P) as planned . The current was sweeping us to the left. I thought Imp who was 5 boat lengths to our Port and that much ahead was in trouble. Then suddenly the current reversed and we were pushed to the right and easily clear. Imp although closer to Horda received the same grace and passed by.

We now set for Ganges shoal in good breeze on a port hand reach and followed Imp wherever she may lead. Firstly Imp knows where she is going and secondly we may get close enough to slow them down. But as often observed Imp is a match for Radiant Heat on all points of sail in moderate air and she kept her lead.

The wind lightened and we grew closer to Imp. Boats behind with asymmetric spinnakers had less of an advantage and were kept at bay.

Boats ahead were past the Ganges shoal within the time limit but stalled in light air in the harbour. Radiant Heat was breathing down the neck of Imp but Imp's skilful maneuvering kept her just ahead as we both hunted down the mark.

Finally we passed Ganges Shoal marker. The time limit was expired and the full course yet to be completed and so the short course was the timed event.

Our buoy maintenance people may have noticed that Ganges Shoal has sunk, weighted down by growth. Time to organize a work party.

Looking back the remaining boats were in non-existing breeze and eking out their remaining distance with filling and then collapsing sails.

They had a 2 hour extension of time to finish the race by 21.30. There was an honour (I am not a quitter) at stake to do so, and a finish is the only way to get a handicap adjustment in their favour!

In terms of Second Wind I think it was hard headedness. Neither was going to quit before the other.

The results suggest that this extra time was needed and used as there were 8 finishers out of the 10 starters.

All In all it was a pleasant evening to be out on the water. I was in T-shirt and shorts and never chilled! The scenery was ever changing and the current puzzle I'll comment upon.

I cannot find any commentary currently but years ago I remember reading a government publication of the Estuarine influence of the Fraser river. A synopsis goes like this.

At the time of the Fraser river is in greatest flood the water spills in volumes into the Straits of Georgia,. There is a tendency for this water to head south toward the ocean rather than north. It is affected by the ebb and flow of the tidal movements. As it is fresh water it tends to float on the surface of the saline sea water as brackish water.

When the Fraser water flows are light during the winter there is less effect. When the snows melt in June, and with the spring rains added, the river spates, and at times, heavily floods.

The freshwater forms its own river on the ocean water . It may be spread out and only a few feet deep but in narrow passes that can change to greater velocity, and deeper flows.

Such a place is Captain's Passage where the water 'escapes' through a bottleneck and squirts down toward the Channel Islands from Nose point. I read the other day that currently the volume of water passing through Hells Gate is 65% above normal for the time of year.

So this water will give a surface ebb flow even as the water rises below may be on a flood tide. Thus we have a called for flood in places out of the "stream" but an ebbing current where the stream is located. In Captain's Passage last night it was a light flood

but overpowered in several places by the ebbing flow of the waters from the Fraser river. So now you know!!

RH had headed for the proper side of U62 after all. It just didn't seem so until two thirds of the way across!

If you feel you have something of note . please email FCR with the commentary. The more comments the better, so let us hear from you. There is always a story to tell!!

Congratulations are due to OgoPogo for winning both line honours and on corrected time. It was a challenging evening of racing and Rhys, April, and Paul illustrated why they are a threat whenever, and wherever, they race.

Check out the videos and commentary attached below. They are hilarious:

<https://1drv.ms/v/s!AsWmF5N2tuqsgdNpMvghclWYLCzZAw>

<https://1drv.ms/v/s!AsWmF5N2tuqsgdNrEOYN2huth3Om2A>

<https://1drv.ms/v/s!AsWmF5N2tuqsgdNS4cQNRyHJ-2Y0yw>

https://1drv.ms/v/s!AsWmF5N2tuqsgdNTcm4izleM0L_I7g

<https://1drv.ms/v/s!AsWmF5N2tuqsgdNUlqd6wBmhwUolyg>

And a picture that captures the end of our 'race':



Club	Boat	Skipper	Finish Time	Corrected Time	Place	Rating for Next Race	club points
56	OGOPOGO	Faget	19:02:48	02:18:35	1	44	100
184	EVANGELINE	Sutton	19:39:42	02:27:27	2	175	90
141	IMP	Leitch	19:37:43	02:35:06	3	135	80
132	RADIANT HEAT	Brogan	19:37:51	02:37:22	4	129	70
15	PTURBODACTYL	Tulip	19:15:10	02:44:13	5	18	60
158	OASIS	Jones	20:03:53	02:56:17	6	164	50
307	SKEENA CLOUD	Taylor	20:53:03	03:03:10	7	316	40
214	SECOND WIND	van Soeren	20:47:44	03:21:40	8	226	30
372	PHOENIX	Lipsett	dnf		9	372	10
203	YOLANDA	Grange	dnf		9	203	10