

Impromptu K Race: Oct 4th 2020

Written by Tony Brogan (with some help from John Tulip)

The day dawned foggy and grey. An occasional breeze stirred a leaf or two on the Hawthorn bush, but without the force to shake off the dew and fog enshrouding the outside world.!

Damian and John appeared on the dock with smiling faces and we set up the boat. It took 6 tries to start the engine and then we trooped off to see who else was out and about.

We discovered FCR Greg of Skeena Cloud and Keith Simpson of Soul Thyme and so a threesome made a race and off to the water we went. Ben Sutton and Julian Clark decided to join Keith on Soul Thyme. *(I am going to take these two to the horse track with me if we ever get to go again. They can pick winners. Meanwhile, I heard someone asking for the course over the radio. It was John in Mini-Pturbodactyl, who was going to sail/row the course along with us. It didn't bother us at all that he handily beat us all to the first mark. Nope, not at all. - FCR)*

Here is John's report, " I've been wanting to give the little tri a shot rowing in down breeze conditions and today certainly fit the bill. The little boat just does not have the horsepower to go in those light conditions so it was good to get warm and toasty rowing for a few hours. I averaged around 3 knots today over the full route, including breaks for recharging with snacks etc. Hats off to Colin Angus who I believe can average around 5 knots rowing for extended periods - there is lots of room to improve. I did sail for some of it, most memorably getting lifted up in current towards u62 and then needing to be careful staying clear when turning down towards Wellbury. Consider it practice for the no flying sails, cruiser class Round Saltspring attempt. Definitely exercise.

Back to Tony

Visibility rose to 6 miles and the breeze came and went at 4-6 knots . The course was set as Start, U62 (P), Welbury (P) Horda (S), (finish for the short course if not reached by the lead boat by 13.00.) U62(P) Welbury(P) and finish.

The start was commandeered by Soul Thyme and the rest of us followed as Soul Thyme lead from start to finish. RH and Skeena Cloud were at different times closer and then further away. Water was scanned for signs of the now diminished wind and sometimes this boat had the better reading and sometimes that boat.

(Skeena Cloud, who was engaged in a very successful race - if the measure is not hitting anything - yelled at Bob Jones as she sailed by his house. I can't remember what was yelled, something with 'get up, lazy, and sod', in it if I can recall - FCR)

Various sails were tried. The genoas worked as we worked to windward for a while and then spinnakers were unfurled after the roundig at U62. We tried a wind seeker but nothing prevailed.

There was a moment of exhilaration running with the current of 3 knots , down toward U62, as we were over 7 knots speed over ground.

(This was the most frustrating moment of my racing career. I was finally going to beat Radiant Heat to a mark in a race where we weren't all caught and gathered up in a hole for a restart. Skeena Cloud was sailing very well, had played the currents to put her onto the mark with one less tack than RH, and was making over 6 knots. Then, RH was caught up in the U62 'elevator'. Blast! - FCR)

Finally, SoulTyme, reading the wind shifts better, sailing higher to the wind on a beat, and even on a down wind reach extended her lead and made the better speed on every aspect of the race. *(I too take my hat off to Keith, crew, and Soul Thyme for an impressive performance in challenging conditions - FCR)*

We were committed to the full course as Soul Thyme completed the short course before 13.00. Well after 1500, Soul Thyme was well down the harbour a mile ahead when RH had mercy on her crew and we retired. Skeena Cloud shortly after also retired. *(I breathed a huge sigh of relief, and cracked a beer, when RH retired, because I wasn't going to give in before them - FCR)*

Motoring in we passed Soul Thyme in zero wind, a limp spinnaker but still moving. Finally she crossed the finish line under mainsail as it was the only sail on the boat still able to sense any wind puff offered as she came in with the flooding tide.

The next race is in two weeks is the Channel Islands Race as we rest on next Sunday's Thanksgiving weekend.

After a short gathering (respecting our COVID protocols) on the picnic table we were strolling down the dock when we came across fellow member Bo Curtis and his new dinghy/art piece. It is a beautiful hand made creation that proves, once again, that out of challenging times such as this, the human spirit shines through. Well done Bo.



Results are, of course, Soul Thyme wins, garnering 100 points for the K Series, leaving the DNF'ers with 33 apiece.

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