

# Keeners and Fool in the Rain

## *(Ups and Downs Race)*

January 24, 2021

Race Report by Tony Brogan

When last week was a lovely sunny day, and it was thought to run this race a week early, the fleet collectively declined, preferring to take their chances on a longer distance weather forecast that promised wintery weather. *(Actually, only one demurred, and then didn't show up Sunday. Their voting privileges have therefore been revoked for the balance of the year - FCR)*

I spent the week looking at the forecast going from showers to rain to the Saturday forecast of snow for Sunday. That does it, I am not keen enough to go out on a windy, winter day of 2C and wet snow.

Early Sunday a 04.30 peek out the window showed rain and no snow. The temperature was holding at 3C. Back to bed with the alarm set for 0800.

By 0830 the coffee was brewed and the first cup finished. I contacted John to see if there was snow "up there" and how did he feel about sailing on such a day.

"No snow here" said John, "and I'm up for it".

"Meet you at the boat, and we will see if anyone else turns up".

At 0915 I was looking at Radiant Heat and the green algae showing here and there. "It needs a good scrub" I thought, "but first things first".

The engine started and was warming up. I thought to not deploy any sails until we knew there was an official race as half of me still wanted to not go.

Then John arrived with a cheery smile and a "Good Morning". He sounded keen enough!!

So we switched on the plotter, and waited for the roll call, this time by Acting Fleet Captain, Bob Jones of Oasis.

Another body came down the dock and it was Martin Thorn. He was, for a brief time, a crew on Radiant Heat, but now had his own boat. He was coming out he said at least to start the race, but he feared he would not finish. A brave soul!

We confirmed the race course with Martin and then it was 0940 and on Ch 72 came Bob's "Good Morning, if there is anyone out there?. Roll call in 5 minutes.

0945 Soul Thyme checked in then Fool in the Rain. I think Bob thought he was being had, but what a name to join the fleet on such a day. There were 4 Keeners.

We unwrapped the Jib and the mainsail and left it at that. The wind forecast was for 10-15 knots or more from the east. As we left the slip it was blowing 8-10 knots from the SSE making the Starboard side the preferred end and the starboard tack the preferred tack.

Making a trial run up the harbour with 25 minutes to the start, we soon had 14, then 16, then 18 knots apparent wind, and so we reefed the main.

Soul Thyme was further up making adjustments, Oasis was headed out from her moorage and soon all three were reefed. Martin, single handed on Fool in the Rain, had full mainsail up and genoa as well! *(Oh, oh, we have another keener in our midst. Maybe the next sacrificial lamb to be FCR?)*

A trial run from the anchored liveboards to the starboard end flag showed us making the line in 40 seconds and with that in mind we cruised up and down the start line a couple of times to wind down the clock.

With 3 minutes to go, we ran back to the starboard end and noticed Oasis and Soul Thyme both headed deep in as we moved toward the docks. As we bore off toward the anchored boats both Oasis and Soul Thyme were turning for the start. They seemed a little early to us as we turned with a minute to go. The wind was not quite as fresh and we trailed the two boats who indeed had to delay their approach by falling off down the line a little, while we ended up 7 seconds late.

Soul Thyme was in the lead, Just to weather and a few lengths back was Oasis, and in disturbed air 5 lengths back was Radiant Heat. Fool in the Rain was 10-15 lengths further back and following our track. *(Well done Martin! I crossed the starting line stern first in my first race.)*

As we starboard tacked to the Chain Island side we saw Soul Thyme at a wider angle to the wind than Oasis, while RH was able to edge to weather of Oasis and avoid disturbed air. But we were not comfortable having to pinch up to do so. As we progressed, we made further to weather of Oasis and we could now ease off for additional speed.

Soul Thyme was the first to tack and she ducked Oasis as she crossed well ahead of Radiant Heat by several lengths. Then Oasis tacked across leaving RH to go the full extent on the starboard tack. By the time we tackled to port we were well to weather of Oasis by 10 lengths and could now sail our own course without interference.

*(Martin - remember when I said on the phone that every one of Tony's reports gives a relative newbie like me a learning moment? The whole sequence above is one. As I said on the phone, Tony's past reports are worth reviewing as most contain hidden nuggets that take a little of the steepness out of our learning curves. In terms of racing around these bigger, faster boats, I have learned to think of them as a herd of flatulent cattle, attractive seen from afar, nice to have at a BBQ, but best to avoid being anywhere close to them - FCR)*

The wind was oscillating to the SSe again and there were plenty of white caps. We showed 15-18 knots apparent and now and then over 20.

As we crossed Oasis was closer ahead but we were well clear of Soul Thyme behind us now. Fool in the Rain was now well back.

It became a tacking duel with Oasis. There were several crossings with first one ahead and then the other.

Twice with Oasis on port and RH on starboard, Oasis, trying to cross, had to bear off and take our stern. Then on the next crossing, they were ahead again.

Thus we made our way to U62 with Oasis around first we settled on a downwind leg to Martin's Mark. All three boats stayed with white sails, although main reefs were shaken out as the wind and rain effect was muted. Oasis managed to stay ahead on an

uneventful leg while now on the downwind leg, Soul Thyme showed superior speed, and drew closer. Fool in the Rain could be seen far back coming up from Sisters on the long beat to U62.

At the turn round Martin's Mark we were hard on the wind with a beat to U62 for the 2nd time and again Oasis held the lead by 5-10 lengths as we rounded. This notwithstanding diverse tacks with each trying to gain on the other with little change overall. During this leg we realized the back stay had not been tensioned and put on some bend in the mast, flattening the main and firming the headstay. Immediately, we were a little faster and pointed better and regained some lost distance from Oasis. *(Catch that, Martin? Five years in and I finally installed one. Took me 30 minutes to make one up, and it makes a world of difference)*

It was back downwind after the second turn at U62, this time to Welbury Spar. The same pattern followed with Radiant Heat hanging on to Oasis, while Soul Thyme gained back distance enough to be close behind us.

It was now another hard beat to Batt Rock with the wind strength back up to the high teens. Oasis led the way, Radiant Heat 10 boat lengths back but higher to the wind. Soul Thyme a further 15 lengths back but also off the wind more. As we could not lay the mark we decided on an early tack to the left as we played a wind shift to the south.

When we were headed again we tacked back but were still shy of making Batt Rock. Oasis had delayed a tack and crossed ahead of us when she did but she was closer. Soul Thyme did the same but she had again lost distance on the beat.

RH tacked again on to starboard but 10 lengths shy of the mark and

Oasis was crossing 5-10 lengths ahead of us and I wondered if she would make a rounding. Well yes and no! Oasis had had to head to wind to round, almost tacking, but with just enough momentum to scrape by the mark. We were now 5 lengths aft as we rounded the mark.

It was now the final run home and we were making no headway on Oasis. What about the spinnaker? Can we fly it in this wind (10-12 knots)??

In answer, volunteer John set the spinnaker bag, deployed the sheets, and eased the spin halyard out around the head sail only to have it hang up on the end of the batten on the sail luff.

After a bit of fiddling with course direction we got the headsail to flip over without gybing the main and made the halyard good. Then up with the pole, stretch the lines and haul the spinnaker up. There she blows and speed was up to 5-7 knots.

Meanwhile Oasis under head sail decided not to fly the spinnaker. Even so we took plenty of time to overtake Oasis who was doing well under white sails. Soul Tyme had deployed their asymmetric and as the wind varied to the South often were making good use of it. With a full sized sail they had lots of horsepower and rapidly closed the gap, overtaking Oasis near Sisters.

RH had to adjust the pole many times to accompany the variable wind strength and direction and Oasis steadily closed the gap, but we were safely over the line well ahead.

Although the weather was mean, we had a good sail and as is usual it was enjoyable once out on the water and almost match racing . I imagined myself, for a moment, in the Prada Cup.

Fool in the Rain came in 90 minutes later but avowed it a great experience and a steep learning curve. He had tangled sheets and the travails of single handing as well as sailing alone. Well done Martin.

Next week we expect more company both with the bigger boat and the slower boats. Fool in the Rain needs your competition. *(And so she will have it - FCR)*

See you for the Groundhog Day race next Sunday.

*(Remember, it is a pursuit race. Paul will provide us our start times later today - FCR)*

<b>Club</b>			<b>Finish</b>	<b>Corrected</b>		<b>Rating for</b>	<b>club</b>
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Boat</b>	<b>Skipper</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Next Race</b>	<b>points</b>
156	RADIANT HEAT	Brogan	13:24:20	02:47:38	1	150	100
158	OASIS	Jones	13:28:00	02:50:39	2	155	75
144	SOUL THYME	Simpson	13:26:05	02:52:22	3	147	50
300	FOOL'N IN THE RAIN	Thorn	14:55:00	03:30:04	4	306	25