

New Year's Day 2021 Racing

Racers must have been too traumatized by 2020 to begin 2021 by being buffeted about some more, especially without the usual annual Hot Rum Luncheon as incentive after a race. That is, unless you are Tony Brogan and Martin Herbert. Both may have grasped the real lesson of 2020—that memories are chiseled out of challenges, overcoming adversity, and even a little bit of suffering.

In any event, Tony, along with stalwart crewman John, were the only two to show up at the skippers' meeting on what turned out to be a nice morning on January 1st. (At least it was at 09:45; later the sheets of rain belied that statement.) But in arriving at the dock to fulfill his duties as FCR, Greg Taylor enjoyed presenting Tony with an award from SISC for winning the 2020 Total Points Trophy—a new sailing bag and some sail ties made up by friend Nelson in Ottawa. Inside the bag is the bottle of rum for 'winning' the New Year's Day Race. So it's true, if you show up, you're a winner! Congratulations on all of it, Tony.



New Year's Day 2021 Racing

A bit later, Martin Herbert showed up on the docks, armed with his IOM boat. Here is his account:

This New Years Day it was my intention to watch the start of the race from my rowboat before having a row around the harbour. Seeing the wind at home, I threw my IOM in the car as it looked a better sailing day than rowing. When I got to the club at 10.00AM there were five cars in the parking lot. I saw Tony down at his boat but not much other activity. The wind was coming down the harbour at about 12 knots with some glimpses of white caps over by Goat Island. No rain. I carried my boat down to the dock and assessed the wind. It was top of A rig (the big rig) in the gusts, so I went with full sail.

By the time I was rigged and tuned I looked around and was surprised to see no Tony. Well if the oversized boats were willing to abandon then perhaps the International One Metre could step in. I set a course of 12 laps, windward leeward using the club orange marks with the start and finish line between the dock at the picnic bench and the permanent IOM mark just off it.

After a conservative start I worked to windward with some of the gusts laying my boat over at a 50 degree angle. I was sailing with a flattened mainsail (tight outhaul) and slightly more backstay than usual to flatten the top of the mainsail and dump extra power in the gusts. The boat was behaving well and I was able to tack even in the gusts with this set up.

But at the top of A rig it is going downwind where you can run into trouble and sail the bow under the waves until the rudder comes out of the water and the boat rounds up into a broach. There are some techniques to counter this and half way down the first run I had to use the most popular, which is to sail by the lee and blanket the jib with the mainsail. This effectively reduces your sail area by 40% and is a useful technique in high winds, however it does dictate which direction you are sailing and this time the start mark was close by. I clobbered it with my jib boom, fortunately no damage and fortunately the mark was not in play so no penalty turns needed.

By the fifth lap the wind had backed and the club was no longer sheltered by the spit and as a result the waves tripled in size and the wind increased. My boat was now surfing down the face of the waves with the hull and booms disappearing from sight in the troughs.

This was exciting sailing and I had to run down the dock to keep up with the boat. By lap eight the wind had clocked back and I got a bit of a breather, but it was gustier and on the run I laid her over on her side as she rounded up out of control. She popped back up and I struggled her back onto the run. On the beats I had been close tacking her up alongside the dock to get in a bit of extra tacking practice in high winds. Most boats need to be tacked differently in changing wind and wave conditions, so when it gets into this tricky condition, I like to get in a little training.

On the eleventh lap the wind clocked even further and the wind lightened and the last lap was done in light wind and left over waves as it started to rain. The boat was safe in the car before the heavens opened and I was home for a late lunch. It was a great sail and the New Years Day race is always special.

New Year's Day 2021 Racing

No pictures today but here is one I took yesterday when I got out for a splash in B rig.

