

Loopy K Race
Report by Tony Brogan
February 7th, 2021
Pictures by Bob Jones and Jim Raddysh

Ten boats turned out for a mid-winter summer sail.

The frost on the deck belied the summer greeting as we prepped the boat before roll call but the rest of the day was sunny with a gentle breeze and not at all cold. A good day to soak up a ray and to top up the Vitamin D.

The forecast said 4-8 knots from the West or NW. It was therefore no surprise to any us experienced with local forecasting when the actual wind was 4-6 knots from the South South West, later moving to the East or NE.

Opting for the 155 genoa we cautiously had the 135 available but we never saw more than 11 knots apparent and so the 135 stayed in use all day.

Today's course was the Loopy de Loop one. Start, Horda Shoals(P), Martins Mark(P), U62(P), Welbury Spar (P) Horda Shoals(S) finish 11.00 miles time limit 1600. (plus 2 hours for late finishers if the first boat finishes before the time limit expires.

The start was a spectators delight with 7 or 8 boats turning for the line together and running toward the line with 90 seconds on the clock. Most were a little early and RH at the starboard end a little less so.

We planned on luffing head to wind to slow us . I noted that most boats were not doing that but rather bearing off to run down the line a few seconds before crossing. But a boat came in from the starboard side on a beam reach and was blocking our luff attempt. We, as leeward boat, had right of way but taking that course would have resulted in a T-bone collision. As we still had good speed we bore off clearing the bow of the intruder. We found the nearest boat to leeward was 3 boat lengths and so we too ran the line for 5 seconds before close hauling to a good start in clear air and starboard of the fleet.

Thus was our start. This is the 3rd or fourth time with such an intruder over the last 6 months or so and as such. We didn't raise our protest flag, but we collectively need to avoid a nasty collision in the future by adhering to the rules in the pre-start period. (*Battle Axe sent an apology to all for its errant start – FCR*)



The boats to the left side at the start were the first to turn right onto port tack and there were assorted boats crossing ahead or ducking behind the starboard boats. Sorcery X started well and moved smoothly into the lead. We were lifted and stayed on starboard tack to the bitter end and when we finally tacked most of the fleet was to our right but Kay D flitting back and forth was always just behind us.

We have not a lot of detail to report as we rode the lifts and found them on both sides of the harbour. That kept us away from the fleet who were mostly across "the other side of the harbour" but we inched toward the second place.

Getting past Sisters we were in centre of the channel on port tack while most of the fleet were closer to the Salt Spring shore. Oasis was the leader of the pack with Soul Thyme and Evangeline in the mix.

We were gradually lifted left toward the Horda Shoals. Sorcery X was a quarter mile ahead and getting the same lift. 100 to 200 yards abeam was Oasis, Evangeline and there again was Kay D in between. We all were getting the lift but we were on the inside of the lift with a little advantage there.

This was a long tack and we were conscious of the fact that the current in Captains Passage may be ebbing rather than the advertised flood and so we wanted every lift to the left we could get.

Oasis tacked across behind us. We covered and then tacked back to the mark to meet Sorcery X already around and heading for Martins's Mark. RH made a smooth rounding. We sensed that the current was ebbing but could see no water passing the Buoy as we rounded. The wind now more from the east was showing a close reach to a beam reach on the new leg.



Oasis was now a little further aft and we noted Sorcery X was sailing upright in less air. We were tracking her but not gaining. The fleet were or seemed slower getting to the mark. Perhaps as they approached from further out in the channel they were fighting that mysterious ebb current.

We followed Sorcery X still 300 yard ahead. We had stronger air and hung closer to Welbury to avoid a wind hole. We noted Kay D not too far behind as if appearing from nowhere also playing the wind shifts and currents.

The wind was moving aft of the beam now and then. Could we fly the spinnaker in the lighter air. Kay D seemed to think so and so we did.

Sorcery X was still moving nicely and approaching the Martin's Mark. We were 200 yards behind now and suddenly it was urgent to have the spinnaker down and the Genoa back up. We were closing fast.

Lickerty split the genoa was up. John doing the hauling and the helm steering with his knees while tailing the halyard.

Momentarily leaving the helm the skipper released the guy and then the halyard. John stowed the sail in the hatch. The mark was 50 yards ahead. "John, the pole. I can't gybe with it up". Smartly the pole was unhooked and stowed in the boom sleeve and simultaneously we gybed around the mark and set sail for U62.

That was lucky. It would look good from the shore as if we practiced that all the time.

Sorcery X had extended her lead. Kay D was close. There was Oasis. We threaded the oncoming fleet as we passed Second Wind and Evangeline. We noted Shingebiss and Soul Thyme further back and having a private duel further back yet were Battle Axe and Fool in the Rain.

Sorcery X was taking the straight line near close reach to U62. RH followed but took a course to the left of the new mark close to Welbury spar and out across the passage. Kay D was 200 yard back further again to the left and crossed over the Welbury Reef closer to Scott Point. Most of the fleet following took the more direct route to U62 but as we got into the channel there was indeed a stronger ebb with a good 10 degrees of leeway. Oasis was too close behind for comfort but still not gaining .

As we approached the mark we eased off with a smooth rounding of the mark and we headed back for Welbury spar. Those boats taking the direct route to U62 now found they were below the mark and fighting against the current to make the rounding. They were suddenly a lot further behind.

Sorcery X had kicked up her heels and taken off again and was already rounding Welbury coming back to Horda shoals. We had put some distance between us and the next boats. Again we headed up left of the final mark, Horda Shoals, and in good breeze again stayed high to allow for the current which brought us around and passed . We estimated a 1.5 knot ebbing current here.

We set course for home and to pass Sisters island. It was still a close reach with the wind from the easterly. We trailed Sorcery by a quarter mile again and we lead the fleet by a stretch. Then we saw Oasis separate from the fleet and speed down behind us rapidly closing the gap.

Our wind instrument said we had 10 knots of apparent wind but we only had about 4 knots of boat speed. Oasis had 5-6 knots boat speed and rapidly close the gap. Did we have a crab pot or something else? We will never know . Oasis arriving on our windward hip just 3 boat lengths away suddenly slowed to the same speed as Radiant Heat. It seems they had had their private wind as nobody else came with them.

We tried to prevent Oasis from passing as they still had the edge in speed. Approaching Second sisters we hardened up as leeward boat to prevent Oasis from going by. We were now 30 degrees high of our course and Oasis fell back a little. She now ducked behind and fell off to Leeward but was still in our dirty air not getting past.

We stayed wide of Sisters light hoping to avoid the wind shadow there. Oasis was closer to the island on our windward side again but seemed find no shadow. We dogged and weaved down the harbour in this manner until Oasis broke the cycle and escaped on the windward side . We were now 200 yards from the finish line and 3 lengths back.

And so Sorcery who had finished maybe 15 minutes earlier could watch as Oasis cruised over the line ahead of RH by a minute or two.

The fleet was now 10-15 minutes back lead by Kay D who sailed very well. Then came the parade of big boats, and then the wind died. After putting Radiant Heat to bed we saw Second Wind struggle in. Then came Soul Thyme . We did not see Shingebiss but she was there too.



I sat on the dock to eat a late lunch and watched the smooth water and relaxed in the sunshine. Kevin Vine went out for a gentle sail on Deryn Mor as I waited to cheer in Battle Axe and Fool in the rain.

Alas they still did not show as the sun cooled and I decided to head home. They were still out there determined to very end.

It was a lovely summer day in the remnants of winter. How lucky we are!!

In two weeks is the McMillan Trophy race. See you all out there. If you do not come all you will miss is a good time!!



Club Rating	Boat	Skipper	Finish Time	Corrected Time	Place	Rating for Next Race	club points
164	OASIS	Jones	13:25:30	02:46:47	1	152	100
95	SORCERY X	Slakov	13:11:09	02:50:19	2	86	90
153	RADIANT HEAT	Brogan	13:26:36	02:50:34	3	147	80
194	KAY D	Herbert	13:39:31	02:52:32	4	191	70
187	EVANGELINE	Sutton	13:47:17	03:01:23	5	187	60
211	SECOND WIND	van Soeren	14:04:03	03:10:20	6	214	50
143	SHINGEBISS	Keating	14:10:00	03:35:41	7	149	40
153	SOUL THYME	Simpson	14:19:39	03:41:48	8	162	30
309	BATTLE AXE	Raddysh	15:49:24		9	321	20
318	FOOL IN THE RAIN	Thorn	dnf		10	318	10