

Shake off the Doldrums Race

Report by Tony Brogan with help from Martin

Pictures by Anthony and others

We had a reverse handicap race Sunday, March 7th, otherwise called a pursuit race, where we did indeed shake off the winter doldrums, and then some. Start times were calculated for each boat according to their handicap ratings and time on distance format. Hence the pursuit moniker. The boats starting later goal is to pursue, and pass, the boats who started earlier.

(Thus the boat with the highest handicap (330) started first and at allotted times the rest followed, with the boat with the lowest handicap (9) starting last. This is useful to consider when checking out the finish times. The FIM system developed by Paul, with help from Greg S, had the 14 boats, with this huge range in ratings, all finishing within a few minutes of one another. Proving, once again, that our system welcomes any club member into our race program, allowing any participant the opportunity to podium should they sail well relative to their handicap – FCR)

The forecast was for boisterous winds from the South with 6-12 knots and gusts to 20 knots. And that is about what we got.

Radiant Heat had time to while away and so set sails for a trial run up and down the harbour. Experiencing 12-14 knots we opted for the 110 jib and then with higher wind we reefed the main.

One after another boats started with Fool in the Rain showing the way, followed by Battle Axe. The last boats were Oasis, Radiant Heat, Sorcery X and then the Tri, Ptubodactyl.

Just as Radiant Heat turned to approach the line, our wind died to a mere 6 knots apparent. Oasis's start was just 30 seconds ahead of ours, but by the time we crossed the line we were a minute late and Oasis was that minute further ahead.

The wind lulled and then blew for us and then backed to the Southeast. We tacked on the header but soon it veered to whence it came from. Oasis tacked wide on the shifts and riding a lift to the left side of the harbour made it past the Second Sisters Island. By the time we poked our nose around the point of the island, she was already nearly to Martins Mark.

Our wind remained light. We were on a broad reach so decided to switch up to the 135 Genoa and shake out the reef. We were slow across to Martins Mark but those ahead had stronger winds and were well on their way to U62. We noted Sorcery X was having similar lack of wind problems and not gaining on Radiant Heat.

When we were about halfway to U62, we met the lead boats heading back to Martins Mark. Battle Axe and Fool in the Rain were vying with each other. Soul Thyme, and Kay D were close up as was Poco.

After this, we battled winds up and down the scale briefly seeing 20 knots plus going to weather and as low as 4 knots while off the wind. Radiant Heat boat speed ranged from 3 -7.5 knots.

Rounding MM again, we headed for Horda shoals, soon ducking and weaving our way through the oncoming fleet. We seemed a little closer but nothing to measure it by.

Around Horda it was across to Welbury spar. This time we were on Port tack as we met most of the fleet heading for the 2nd rounding of Horda. Being on Port tack we were obliged to duck/avoid the flotilla boat by boat.

Just a short leg and we were around. Still, Sorcery X had gained little on us and Pturbodactyl was not far back now. Also, in view ahead, were Battle Axe, Fool in the Rain and Cool Runnings and further out to the left was Skeena Cloud. .

Around Horda the second time we could see those three boats closer now, and the reach to sisters was fast for all boats. Slowly we gained. Before Sisters we passed Fool in the Rain. At Sisters we finally passed Skeena Cloud. Then there was a crescendo of water noise and passing both boats to weather at 15 knots was my guess went Pturbodactyl leaving us feeling as if we were stationary rather than the 6 knots we were doing!

(John on Pturbodactyl told me later than they clocked 16.5 knots as they swept by Skeena Cloud at Second Sister. I, like Tony, heard a noise – it sounded to me like a giant had shipped a very large stone down the length of the harbour – searching around, Pturbodactyl appeared beside me looking like some wild looking craft from Star Wars, half in the water, half out, John and his crew looking more like pilots, than sailors, as it skipped across the harbour. A phenomenal sight - FCR)

Halfway down the harbour we passed the newest member of our fleet, Cool Runnings. And finally we were hunting down Battle Axe who was just too far ahead for us to catch before they were over the line 2 boat lengths ahead .

And up ahead of us later comers, Martin describes an exciting finish, “Great day for a sail today and we had a dandy one. Really glad to have Tony Meek along as his skills are great and his attitude joyful. We had some yummy gusts and got to 9.5 knots with the spinnaker up. Soul Thyme sailed a splendid race and got a much deserved win. The race to the finish for second place was a nail biter with Evangeline hunting us down in the lulls and us planing over her in the gusts. The patient and wily Poco was soaking down to leeward and came in hot to snatch 2nd from both of us. I couldn’t tell who won third but Evangeline claimed the spot so we will take our place in line. - Martin

It was a boisterous sailing day with brief lulls, a rain shower and sunshine. The 14 boats out sailing deemed it worth the effort and they are raring to have at it again in the Walker Rock Race two weeks from now.

(I want to take my hat off to both Julian Clark and Martin Thorn, our newest members of our racing team, who both sailed very well in challenging conditions. Although they did have an unplanned 'meet and greet' the second time around Martin's Mark. Fool in the Rain found that a life ring hung off the side of the boat can indeed be, if not a life saver, at least a protector, of sorts. As Martin said later, "Nice to finish within sight and sound of much of the fleet! (Even if I did lose a winch handle, a life ring, and my racing virginity today.) I will have to ask the Race Committee if the Broken Tiller Award can be won by two racers. I should also say, that although both were a bit shaken by the incident. They understood it was indeed an accident and both responded like the gentlemen they are)

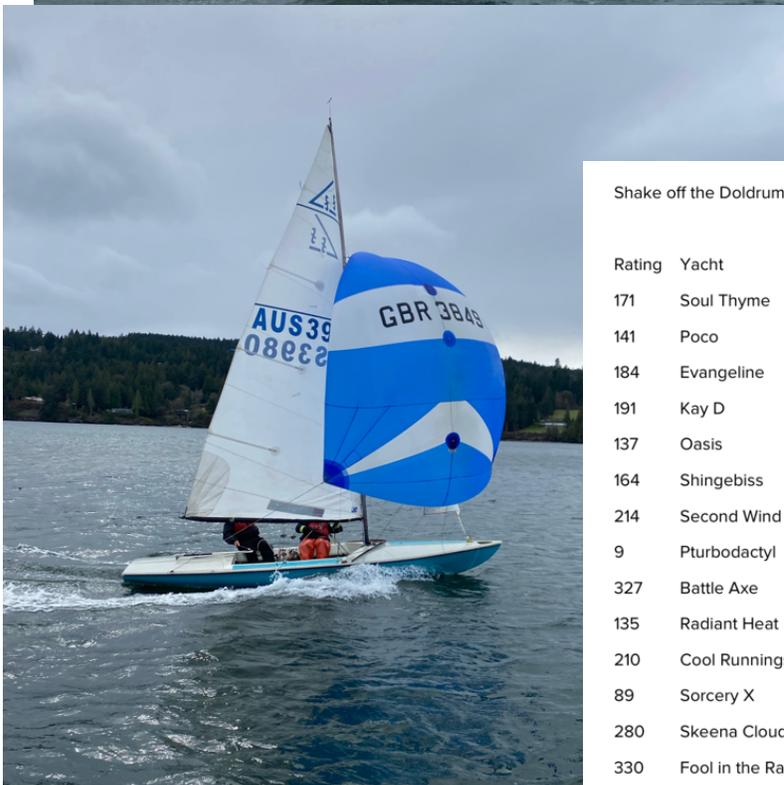
And there are some terrific pictures from the exciting racing:



A bit tight at the marks at times



And Martin and Tony get a page of their own...



Shake off the Doldrums

7 March 2021

Rating	Yacht	start time	finish time	corrected time	New Rating	Points
171	Soul Thyme	11:00:29	13:05:20	1:32:04	150	100
141	Poco	11:06:14	13:09:29	1:36:13	123	93
184	Evangeline	10:57:59	13:09:30	1:36:14	169	86
191	Kay D	10:56:39	13:09:31	1:36:15	179	79
137	Oasis	11:07:00	13:09:36	1:36:20	128	71
164	Shingebiss	11:01:49	13:10:54	1:37:38	158	64
214	Second Wind	10:52:14	13:10:55	1:37:39	211	57
9	Pturbodactyl	11:31:32	13:12:00	1:38:44	12	50
327	Battle Axe	10:30:35	13:16:29	1:43:13	333	43
135	Radiant Heat	11:07:23	13:16:30	1:43:14	144	36
210	Cool Runnings	10:53:00	13:16:58	1:43:42	222	15
89	Sorcery X	11:16:12	13:19:05	1:45:49	104	18
280	Skeena Cloud	10:39:35	13:19:35	1:46:19	298	14
330	Fool in the Rain	10:30:00	13:23:00	1:49:44	351	7

