

**Impromptu K Race on the Fly**  
**Report by Tony Brogan**  
**Pictures by Todd Brett and Drew Stokesbury (and they are beauties) Greg Taylor**  
**April 18, 2021**

*Begin with a terrific picture of the whole fleet – save Pturbodactyl by Drew*



I started the day thinking I would likely be at the back end of the fleet as I planned a NFS race as I was without John as crew who does all the hard work aboard as I just, usually, steer the boat. I could pad my handicap higher.

But ending up near the lead, ahead of the big boats, my innate desire to do the best I can kicked in, and I found myself rigging the spin bag and lines while sailing downwind towards the finish line, ending up putting additional distance between RH and her followers, I didn't mean to win but you see what happens when there is no crew !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!, sometimes one gets lucky. *(Lucky? None of your team mates have any doubt how you, an Englishman, became the Irish boxing Champion ☺ – FCR)*

For the most of the week prior, the forecast showed warm sunny skies and light to non-existent winds. The Planned 15 mile course was to round two marks , Deep Ridge buoy and Ben Mohr rock in any order and any direction. Complicating the plans was the extended ebb until after 1530 in Captains Passage which currents could take us to Sidney.

The Fleet captain was left with the unenviable task resetting the course to something we would finish before nightfall (*or the next day -FCR*)

Thus at the 0945 Ch 72 roll call we were asked to approve the alternate. It was a Wed night sail, around the harbour style, with a port hand rounding of Ganges shoals, return to the finish line gate and round Ganges Shoals a second time if the gate turning was completed by the second boat before 1200.

A few minutes into the race Ben on Evangeline proposed a course extension to round Martins Mark near Welbury Bay. It was approved by the fleet captain without dissenting voices.

Soon we were on the water with a coming and going of a 2 knot breeze from the Northwest. Radiant Heat deployed the 155 genoa.

We cruised up and down the line with both directions giving a beam reach or closer. On one pass Radiant Heat, on a starboard tack, was met by Ptubodactyl in the opposite direction, and assumed she was on a port tack. Having a "chat" as we passed each other, it was seen that Ptubodactyl was also on Starboard! How could that be?

A few minutes earlier we had seen a wind front slowly advancing toward us from out of the harbour and so it seemed to have arrived, sort of, on one end of the start line before the other. We had the remnant of the Northwester while they had the beginning of the Southeaster. Who had the right of way??

With 5 minutes to the start the SE wind had arrived at the line but not deep in the harbour, but with two minutes to go most of the 8 boat fleet were close to the line one way or another.



RH turned for the line. 90 seconds to go. Soul Thyme was to windward and astern, and Fool in the Rain to Leeward, Ptubodactyl at the outer end and Skeena Cloud close to the pin end, obviously planning to approach on port, and flip over on starboard at the start, staying clear of the big boat's wind shadows. (*Starting behind, or within, the larger, faster boats on light wind days is like sailing in a moving hole, until you drop out, far behind -FCR*)



Radiant Heat was early and footed off . There was room As Fool In the Rain did so too. 3 seconds to go and RH hardened for the line leaving Fool in the Rain astern. Skeena Cloud started well and was a length ahead of RH and a length alee. RH trimmed the main and gradually overhauled SC while staying clear. Over to the right side was Oasis, Soul Thyme and Evangeline coming fast. The wind had freshened to 4-7 knots apparent. Oasis tacked out Soul Thyme fell astern and below . RH kept the long tack and finally Port tacked over to the right side of the harbour.

This too was made a long tack and by this time the other boats were on their third tack and RH was out of sync. Going to the right shore RH tacked back on to starboard. The Lazy sheet hung up on the foredeck and I could not trim the genoa. I went forward leaving the helm . (where was the crew when they were needed) (*welcome to my world Tony – FCR*) The helm was dampened by the tiller

tamer attached and the boat held its course still doing over three knots. Then was spotted a 30 foot hefty log broadside to my course.



*Pturbodactyl off to a lead she would not relinquish*

It was then I got lucky. The wind switched to the south more. The boat headed up and we were past the log. The genoa was trimmed and we were picking up speed. The boats on the other tack were set ,we were lifted and we passed ahead. Despite the slow tack we were ahead of all except for Pturbodactyl.

Two more tacks and we were round Ganges Shoal and headed close hauled to clear Second Sisters fearing a setback as the wind switched back to SE.

The wind was lighter but we followed the Tri 300 yards back and were followed by the big three, some 150 -200 yards astern.

Slowly we wended our way in relatively unchanged positions. The last portion of the approach to Martin's Mark was closed hauled and still we made a wide turn as the wind direction forced RH away from a close rounding.

*I can hear Ray at the helm hollering orders*



Returning to round Sisters the fleet passed each other and noted Cool Runnings sailing a good race, well in touch. We trailed Pturbodactyl who took a wide course around. The wind was less than 2 knots as we arced around into the harbour. The fleet behind were a little closer but now they found the lighter air.

*(Cool Runnings is a good tactical sailor. I thought I had him beat to Ganges Shoal. Nope. I thought I would be on top of him at Martin's Mark. Nope. Although taking pictures didn't help my cause. I only passed them on a close reach in some light, fickle winds because of Skeena Cloud lighter weight, and love of that wind angle. Notice I don't claim any credit, because when Julian called out to me upon passing, "turn off your engine", I was busy, head down, trying to untangle spinnaker sheets in preparation of hoisting it. – FCR)*

There was a patch of breeze showing a hundred yard ahead as we passed the island and finally RH was there and boats behind were still behind but trying asymmetric spinnakers in a down wind breeze. The tri was moving away down the harbour.



It was at that point that I could not bear the thought of being overtaken and decided to rig the spinnaker. There was not enough wind to fly the Genoa . Leaving the helm to the tiller tamer which can be accessed from anywhere on the boat, (except down below), I went for the Spin bag, walked forward to attach to the pulpit, back for the Halyard , snake it over and ahead of the Genoa. Then gather the sheets, deploy through the blocks and cleats, tie to the sail, pull out the spinnaker pole from the sleeve on the boom, adjust the topping lift , ditto the down haul , open the bag and loosen the sail, reset the course three times with the line on the tiller tamer, raise the halyard, set the pole, adjust the sheet. Free up and loosen the genoa halyard, go forward and haul down the sail, tie down the headsail to the stanchions and lifelines, return to the cockpit and review the fleet. (*Whew, I am tired just reading all this -FCR*)

No change. They were still behind. They were reaching off to the Saltspring side of the harbour. The wind was from that side a little to the South and Radiant Heat was on a deep, deep reach on Port tack.

Half way down the harbour We gybed the spinnaker as the wind went more easterly and then 300 yard from the line gybed again back to the port tack. Radiant Heat expanded her lead but did not gain on Ptubodactyl.



*(Skeena Cloud gybed down the harbour with the wind on the beam. My question is always, 'is the extra speed worth the additional distance sailed?' I watched Cool Runnings behind me under white sails get closer on one gybe, then drop behind on the favourable gybe. I noticed that with the wind at 90 or 100 my speed was 1 to 1.5 knots faster than when it was at 135. Was it worth it. Well, I was 11 seconds behind Tony on corrected time. Could I have made that up sailing more direct to the finish, or arrived even further behind? Not sure. But it was sure fun approaching the line at almost 4.5 knots when I heated it up. - FCR)*

In these conditions the tiller tamer is more useful than the autohelm as with the tiller tamer I can adjust the course, if required, without having to go to the cockpit to do so.

Despite the relatively short sailing time, with most boats finishing before 12.30, it was an enjoyable day on the water.

*(And a shout-out to Martin for placing fourth – 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>
150	RADIANT HEAT	Brogan	12:06:01	01:33:09	1	138	100
307	SKEENA CLOUD	Taylor	12:28:45	01:33:20	2	298	88
166	EVANGELINE	Sutton	12:18:36	01:42:54	3	160	75
369	FOOL IN THE RAIN	Thorn	12:51:00	01:43:06	4	366	63
6	PTURBODACTYL	Tulip	11:54:45	01:44:44	5	9	50
135	SOUL THYME	Simpson	12:15:45	01:44:57	6	141	38
110	OASIS	Jones	12:15:38	01:48:59	7	119	25
222	COOL RUNNINGS	Clark	12:38:44	01:52:46	8	234	13