

Dancing with the Devil
February 6, 2022
Report by Greg Taylor, photos by April Faget

There is a legend that the brilliance of blues guitarist Robert Johnson sprang from selling his soul to the devil. I am coming to believe that our new FCR has made a similar deal. What else could explain what Heather and I witnessed this past Sunday?

But I get ahead of myself. Sunday was supposed to be a pursuit race with staggered starts based on a boats rating. We abandoned the idea based on forecasts indicating next to no wind. Instead Heather and I executed a staggering start.



The course chosen, 'was Batt Rock, Martin's Mark, Welbury Spar, short course finish line'. A devilishly difficult thing to do in the forecast conditions.

My last start as FCR was, at least memorable. Ogopogo, Shingebiss, and Radiant Heat were to the right of us as we all prepared for the downwind start. They were all on starboard. As was Oasis, who was to the left of us, but further behind the line. We were on port tack, drifting along parallel to the line, turning up just before the start. But to our horror, we hadn't counted in current. Our speed increased as we very slowly, but inexorably, ate up distance faster than the seconds on the clock ticked by.

Oasis, who was now to leeward of us, also on port tack, was also over not only early, but because we were drifted not only forward, but closer to the flag by the current, forced to cross on the outside of the flag.

It took us 18 minutes to come around and cross the line properly. Meanwhile, the rest of the fleet had leaped ahead of us by anywhere from a few hundred meters to 2/3 of a mile, with Ogoopogo and Shingebiss in the lead, followed by Radiant Heat under white sails.

Heather and I gybed the spinnaker from one side of the boat to the other again and again, attempting to catch the fickle, almost non-existent, breeze. We finally got to the point where we decided to count to 10 before doing anything. Often, when we decided gybing was in order, we would call out the count in tandem: one thousand, two thousand, three thousand.... And, most often, once we were done counting, the wind would have changed again, and we could avoid having to do anything that might interrupt our pleasant chat.

Our sailing eventually dissolved to this...



But from here we had perfect seats to witness the otherworldly, or should I say, 'underworldly', events that were to transpire.

The four other boats, led by Ogoopogo, followed by Shingebiss, Radiant Heat, and Oasis (yes, guys, or ears were burning from what you were saying about us because of the start'), eroded into the glare from the bright sun, before slipping behind the freighter. We could see that at least Ogoopogo and Shingebiss made it around Batt Rock in the fitful breeze, but knew it would be impossible for them to complete the race before the 13:30 cutoff.

But, we didn't reckon with any nefarious dealing, as there was Ogoopogo, flying above a sharp, defined strip of breeze, not much more than 50 meters wide, drawn by a ruler unknown in nature from her bow, directly to Martin's Mark.

There was not a breath of wind on either side of this dark, sinister looking stripe. This was an impossible intervention.

Ogopogo, heeled over, a bone in her teeth, ran down this strip laid down her her in one unerring tack. We watched the tip of their mast whip around Martin's Mark with a snap, and said, 'enough of this sorcery', and went home. But not before watching Shingebiss following on Ogopogo's track like Wile Coyote trying to say on a bridge that was quickly collapsing behind him.

Both sailed brilliantly. Well done.

Let this be a word of warning, better not mess with the new FCR. Either that, or invite him aboard as crew. Me, as his new underling, will be treading carefully, tugging my forelock as required. One doesn't want to get burned.



Wrong side of the line...

Club Rating	Boat	Skipper	Finish Time	Corrected Time	Place	Rating for Next Race	club points
35	OGOPOGO	Faget	13:21:07	03:20:24	1	32	100
128	SHINGEBISS	Keating	14:21:08	03:51:51	2	131	80
274	SKEENA CLOUD	Taylor	dnf		3	274	20
138	RADIANT HEAT	Brogan	dnf		3	138	20
138	OASIS	Jones	dnf		3	138	20