

The Club Round Saltspring Race from the cockpit of Kay D

by Martin Herbert

OR

"Two great days of sailing and a free concert, what could go wrong?"

Here is a one sided view of the event from the point of view of the smallest boat. Other boats will have interesting stories and I hope they share them.

Kay D was totally overpowered on the beat to Beaver Point, traveller dropped off to leeward and the main sheeted in hard with a big calm bubble taking up most of the sail. I have learned to live with my "old guy" hiking skills and just wiggled my butt over the gunwale and leaned back slightly, watching as one by one the fast guys passed me. Half way to Beaver Point it was the two Martins holding down the tail end of the fleet, when Oasis did an interesting manoeuvre that involved a pirouette with jib aback and segued into a spinnaker overboard adventure. Not being second-last made me hike a bit harder.

At the right turn off the beat I was looking forward to a bit of a rest, but no, the wind was strong enough I had to old man hike all the way to the Fulford Hole. By then the wind had come around to a beam reach. I have been working on my single-handed spinnaker technique during the WNRaces and had promised myself that if I thought I could then I should. So with Oasis grinding me down, I went for it and hoisted. It was tight and back to old man hiking for me, dumping the entire main in the gusts, but I managed to hold Oasis off. Then the wind increased and backed and the Kay D picked up her skirts, hitting 8 knots in the gusts. The three single handed gybes were exciting but controlled as we raced down to Sansum Narrows closing with the pack. We were bringing the wind and Invictus was stalled on the Saltspring shore, showing where we didn't want to be. Evangeline and Kay D cruised over to the big island side and passed one on each side of the big boulder that was not shown on my hand drawn chart. Tony Meek tells me he has caressed that boulder in Minke, with a bunch of Junior Sailors aboard. Just at the narrow opening with Burgoyne Bay to the right, the wind went snaky and light and we had three rapid fire wind shifts, the kind that the Kay D can react to but larger boats can't. In the unfair world of club racing this meant that the Kay D was shot into the next wind and Evangeline was not, which converted into a 500 yard lead. Second Wind was just ahead and we had her in our sights, all the way to Southey Point, without being able to gain an inch on her, even with some lucky breaks. Well-sailed, Eric.

Also well-sailed was Slippery When Wet, with Ole Andersen and Tony Meek on board. Special shout out to John Tulip for single handing the "evil pickle fork" with no auto helm, being spotted on the bowsprit mending the roller furling and taking line honours.

Approaching Southey Point on a screaming two-sailed plane, I looked up to see Second Wind heeled well up and sails slatting wildly, telling me there was a lot of hiking in my future. It was a hard upwind slog to Fernwood dock and I was being ground down by both Evangeline and Invictus and they both passed me just before the Short Course line off Fernwood. It was brutal with wind against tide making it quite choppy and I was only making 4.7 knots. I did the math in my head and realized I would not be able to make

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the 9:00 cut-off for racing and would have no place to anchor if the wind went lighter. Plus I was getting pretty tired, enough so that I was in the “mistake zone”, so I took my time at Governors Rock mark and peeled off for Wallace Island. Sunday’s winds were predicted lighter but the adverse tide was also much weaker, so I was ready to call it a day and take my chances.

A group of friendly power-boaters greeted me but they seemed unwilling to believe that I intended to “sleep in that thing” and anchored out to boot. There is room to lie out flat in a Flying Fifteen if you remove all the sail trim rigging from the starboard side. Despite looking cozy (see photo below), I can guarantee that this is not comfortable, but it makes for an early start That evening the guitars came out and some songs wafted across the water to lull me to sleep.



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The next morning this was the wind.



I paddled out to Governors Rock and waited for the breeze to fill in. By 7:23 the breeze arrived and I had a lovely sail home with no other racers in sight. As the day progressed the wind built enough to feel like I was racing and by Welbury Spar I was hiked out on a spinnaker reach doing seven knots.

I love the format of this race and the endless tactical challenges that it presents. Next year come along.

The winners (on Club Handicap) were:

*First: **Second Wind** (Eric van Soeren)*

*Second: **Slippery When Wet** (Ole Andersen and Tony Meek)*

*Third: **Sorcery X** (Greg Slakov)*