

MacMillan Race, Sunday February 23, 2020
By Tony Brogan

All week the forecast had indicated a blustery if not violent wind for our Sunday excursion.

There were thoughts of cancelling the race but in the last 24 hours there was a moderating of the forecast gusts while the steady winds were likely to be 15-20 knots from the South with a veering westerly bias in the afternoon.

With some engaged in vacation land and others shunning the weather there were but four boats represented at the skippers meeting. The course was: Start, Batt Rock (P) Ben Mohr (P) and finish. 10.6 miles.

Although the wind seemed to lessen, and the water was quiet, little black lines scurried around showing the wind puffs. Then a big black cloud came from the west and it poured with rain but in 5 minutes it was clear again only to be followed by another longer rain period as boats headed out to the start line.

Out early was Ogopogo, Oasis was on the dock, Battle Axe was prepared and Radiant Heat with three stalwart crew backed out of the slip to open water. Winds were a comfortable 10 knots plus or minus and soon all mainsails were up shortly followed by various sizes of genoas but Radiant Heat opting for a jib.

The start came with the wind constant but with ebbs and puffs and Ogopogo was first over near the pin end, followed by Radiant Heat a little inside. Closer to the Club docks was Oasis also smartly over quickly followed by Battle Axe.

The wind was now still tending to the south giving us longer starboard tacks.

Ogopogo slowly eased ahead and by dint of higher heading ability stretched her lead as we approached Sisters. Radiant Heat and Oasis were in a tacking duel with the advantage first to one and then the other. Oasis was faster but sailing lower and squeezed ahead while falling to our lee before eventually crossing our bow giving us dirty air in the process. But RH held her course, and sailing higher, was soon inside the wake of Oasis, who upon having to tack back from Chain Islets, passed astern .

Then RH, upon also having to tack, found herself astern of Oasis as we passed. Outside of Sisters we had the ascendancy but Oasis again was catching us from astern and to weather. Here the wind gusted into the 20's and we were rounded up into the path of Oasis but she was still clear but closer. Here it became a matter of rules. Overtaking boat must stay clear. But the boat ahead cannot suddenly change course so that the overtaking boat cannot stay clear.

Does an overtaking boat have to anticipate a round up of the boat ahead having seen a couple of such events already? Does an inadvertent round up constitute a move by the boat ahead preventing the overtaking boat from staying clear? Bearing in mind that the boat ahead has luffing rights?

All these thoughts were crossing my mind as we made the decision to ease the main and bear off rather than discuss who was right or wrong while we attached ourselves to the hull of Oasis. (*With age comes wisdom* ☺ - ed

Oasis then tacked away and we put a reef in the main. By this time Ogopogo was around Batt Rock well ahead while we were passing the Freighter. We waited a little longer before tacking to Batt Rock and noted we crossed Oasis several boat lengths ahead before we both were swallowed by the proverbial Batt Rock wind hole and shifty wind direction and instead of a smart tack to the mark we were down to 1.5 knots headed in the wrong direction.

Meanwhile, Oasis on the other tack was advantaged and slowly slid by Batt rock a few boat lengths ahead of us! That was the last time we played tag with Oasis as now on a reach for the rest of the race she used her greater waterline length for greater speed and gradually stretched her lead. As we headed up into Captains passage the wind was now a broad reach or Dead down wind and it began to pickup with significant whitecaps.

At one point, while wing-on-wing, we saw over 8 knots on the speedo while reading 12-14 on the anemometer giving us a good 20 knots of true wind. Notwithstanding this, Oasis stayed well ahead even if occasionally we thought we were clawing back some distance. Thus we blew through the passage into Trincomali where the wind went southeast and we had a close reach to Ben Mohr.

The wind was strong approaching Ben Mohr. Ogopogo was well ahead and almost through to Captains Passage on her way home. Now Oasis was around on a gybe and headed back. We made several decisions each cancelling the one before. Shall we gybe or chicken gybe. Yes , no, yes , no.

As we arrived the wind was 12 knots on the beam and we were halfway around and the decision made. Gybe ho! and around we went, the mainsheet handled by the helmsman and the sheet changes by the crew. Perfect. Very efficient. Well done all!

It was now a beam to close reach through the passage. Battle Axe appeared as she made for Ben Mohr. We were passing Welbury with Oasis maintaining her lead while Ogopogo was glimpsed already inside the Sisters.

Now the wind was more westerly and we reached up the harbour at good speed. The wind softened for the last ¼ mile before crossing the finish line. Oasis was heading for the dock as we finished, Ogopogo was already docked while the game Battle Axe was back there in the wilds of Trincomali and Captains Passage, As Battle Axe reported later, they were slowed by easing winds as they came in.

We gathered aboard Oasis for chats, reminisces and other tall tales of daring do on what turned out to be a great day's sail with clear skies and some sunshine.

McMillan Trophy - 2/23/2020

Start: Start 1, Finishes: Place

Rank	Boat	SailNo	NHC3	Start	Finish	Elapsed	Corrected	BCR	Points
1	Oasis	421	0.933	10:30	12:33:41	2:03:41	1:55:24	0.933	100
2	Radiant Heat	67901	0.965	10:30	12:40:00	2:10:00	2:05:27	0.888	75
3	Ogopogo	2	1.128	10:30	12:26:50	1:56:50	2:11:47	0.988	50
4	Battle Axe		0.808	10:30	13:42:00	3:12:00	2:35:08	0.601	25