

SFS Race Report Sat 13th March 2021

by Bob Chapman, 15 Mar 2021.

Race 20 of the 2020-21 Season and Race Four of the Autumn Point Score. Seven skiffs were on hand for today's race with some missing regular crew or sailing short of their usual crew number and/or crew-weight, hence affecting their choice of rig. Not a lot of breeze on the Kirribilli side of the harbour while the skiffs prepared for the day's racing with the breeze expected to fill-in from the NE as the afternoon progressed with no.3 rig the popular choice and a couple of skiffs under no.2 rig.

The skiffs had a slow trip across to the start area hampered by the light wind on the northern side of the harbour, with some struggling to make it to the start on time. In addition, the start area off Double Bay was being used for a number of other events – the Etchells were running a series of sprint races, Double Bay S.C. had their usual fleet of Lasers racing and the Modern 18s (with supporters / spectators, etc) would start Race 8 of the J.J. Giltinan C'ship at 2.45 pm. In addition, the navy had decided this section of the harbour, adjacent to Clark Island, was a good place for HMAS Choules to drop anchor – with an LOA of 180m, not a small issue, and a rather imposing presence.



The Race Team preparing to deal with an unusual situation (courtesy of Phil)

The race got underway after a short delay from a handicap start off Double Bay on the no.1 NE course into a moderate and puffy NE breeze of around 12-15kts, at the end of a run-out tide. Unfortunately our start team was operating under some duress in attempting to co-operate with the other events in close proximity and the very limited space due to the big ship. Britannia was first of the limit skiffs away, with Tangalooma and Aberdare missing their start by 4 and 5 mins respectively. Next skiffs due to start off 13 mins were Top Weight and Scot, but they also missed their start by 5 and 10 mins respectively. Australia IV was away off 6 mins then Yendys off scratch. As the skiffs made their way down harbour to the Beashel Buoy the breeze began to pick-up, but progress was hard going with very bumpy water from the run-out tide and the many other craft out on the waterway – plenty of activity on the pumps as the skiffs approached the top mark.



Meeting of the skiff fleets at the Beashel Buoy (courtesy SailMedia)

Britannia was first to round the Beashel Buoy for the square run to Shark Island followed by Tangalooma 2½ min behind and just ahead of the approaching fleet of Modern 18s. Aberdare was next to round in company with the leading M18s, then Australia IV, Top Weight (with a M18 crewman dangling from their boom), Yendys and Scot. Needless to say, it was a busy if not hectic time at the Beashel Buoy, great for the on-water TV coverage by SailMedia (and thanks for the pics). Britannia stretched their lead down the run to turn first at Shark Island for the run to Clark Island, no change in order, with Australia IV and Yendys having made up time under spinnaker.



A poorly considered high risk maneuver produces the outcome it deserves; but it could have been much worse, fortunately the innocent party was not adversely affected. (courtesy SailMedia)

Britannia was first to round at the Clark Island mark (ie just off the bow of the big ship) for the beat to Chowder Bay with a 2-3 min lead from a close group of skiffs in Tangalooma, Aberdare and Australia IV, then Yendys, Top Weight and Scot. The breeze had freshened somewhat at this stage providing more hard work for the skiff crews as they battled upwind in the bumpy conditions. However, as the skiffs approached Chowder Bay the lead group had compressed significantly making for an interesting race for the final two downwind legs.

Britannia was first to round at Chowder Bay for the run to Shark Island followed by Tangalooma, Australia IV and Yendys then a gap to Top Weight, Aberdare and Scot. Britannia carried a balloonier down this run, with Yendys making up a lot of time under peak-head spinnaker. There was plenty of wind and wash as the skiffs approached the Shark Island mark, where Yendys gybed their spinnaker to round first followed by Britannia who executed a round-turn, then Tangalooma and Australia IV who gybed their spinnaker but a subsequent lee-cloth issue brought their race to a soggy-end. Plenty of action at this section of the course where the M18s were gybing to set-up for their final run to finish off Double Bay, just in front of the ship.



Action from Chowder Bay (courtesy Phil)

Unfortunately with all the activity at the finish for the M18s with ferries, spectator craft and the big ship, the finish line for the SFS H18s was unsighted. Yendys decided on a course to sail above the activity and clear the bow of the ship before bearing away to run to the usual location for the finish – it worked, but not without some drama when after clearing the ship they discovered the finish boat was not in its usual position, but anchored further “up-course” than usual, not far from the stern of the ship. After an awkward (dodgy) run by the lee, Yendys crossed the line in first place followed by Britannia who sailed a lower course behind the ship, then Tangalooma, Aberdare, Top Weight and Scot.



Yendys off Double Bay heading to pass to windward of the ship (courtesy SailMedia)



Britannia sails a direct course to the finish (courtesy Phil)

With thanks to our on-water support team of Barley, Suzie, Chuck, Glen and Stu, with Michael's excellent commentary on the Regal, along with COVID Marshalls Tomoko and Suzie; Team Britannia on the Bar-B-Q, specifically Nathan and Katherine, raffle tickets by Marion. With mark rounding details and on-water observations provided by Peter Notley. Also to Tomoko for her efforts with the merchandising and as guest operator of Phil's camera. We look forward to seeing you down at the Squaddie next week – just 2 more races to go till the end of the season.



Thank you ladies, Tomoko and Suzie (courtesy Phil)

Results for Sat 13th March 2021.

| Race 20 | 13-Mar-21 | | Hcp Start | NE Course | NE | 12-20kts | | |
|--------------|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|-----------|------------|----------|-----------|
| Skiff | Skipper | Race Hcap | Start Time | Finish Time | Race Time | H'cap Time | New Hcap | Ring tail |
| Yendys | P. Barnett | 0:00 | 14:34:00 | 16:06:55 | 1:32:55 | 1:32:55 | 0 | |
| Britannia | I. Smith | 0:15 | 14:19:00 | 16:08:04 | 1:49:04 | 1:34:04 | 15 | |
| Tangalooma | J. Lewis | 0:15 | 14:19:00 | 16:10:31 | 1:51:31 | 1:36:31 | 15 | |
| Aberdare | J. Tickner | 0:15 | 14:19:00 | 16:13:08 | 1:54:08 | 1:39:08 | 15 | |
| Top Weight | D. Swales | 0:13 | 14:21:00 | 16:13:25 | 1:52:25 | 1:39:25 | 15 | |
| Scot | J. Watt | 0:13 | 14:21:00 | 16:20:14 | 1:59:14 | 1:46:14 | 15 | |
| Australia IV | T. Stewart | 0:06 | 14:28:00 | DNF | | | 6 | |
| The Mistake | | 0:01 | DNC | | | | 1 | |
| Myra Too | | 0:07 | DNC | | | | 7 | |
| Alruth | | 0:15 | DNC | | | | 15 | |
| Australia | | 0:06 | DNC | | | | 6 | |

| Skiff | Season Point Score | Autumn Point Score | Ringtail Point Score |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Aberdare | 47 | 11 | 0 |
| Alruth | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Australia | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Australia IV | 66 | 12 | 15 |
| Britannia | 40 | 11 | 9 |
| Myra Too | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Scot | 50 | 16 | 0 |
| Tangalooma | 34 | 8 | 0 |
| The Mistake | 54 | 2 | 12 |
| Top Weight | 28 | 10 | 3 |
| Yendys | 52 | 20 | 14 |
