

First, on behalf of LOOR let me thank all you SOLers who have so enthusiastically joined us in the Lake Ontario 300. We are certainly indebted to RainbowChaser and SOL for their efforts and flexibility in helping us bring this partnering about. *Scooby* was registered on SOL so that I could observe all of you but I did not race because I was on *Katbird* participating on-the-water. Here is how things went from our perspective.

Normally we would have been at Port Credit Yacht Club on Friday evening before the race, chatting with old friends who might also be competition. Of course, this is no normal year and so *Katbird*, a Dufour 34, picked up her crew in Toronto Inner Harbour on Saturday morning and headed directly for our 12:25 (-ish) start off PCYC instead.

Again, normally we would have the whole of Lake Ontario to choose from for our upwind leg to Oswego on the south east shore of the lake. Some would stay north, some would cross the lake immediately, some would play the middle, and gains or losses could, and often did, result. Instead we were restricted to Canadian waters which meant that the fleet as a whole stayed tighter than normal. At least on the upwind trip to the east end of the lake at mark M9. There were a few soft spots on the way, but for the most part we were able to keep moving.

I had traded a few emails with SOLer *Satori* a bit earlier and it looked like we were going to round M9 at the same time both on the water and on SOL. *Satori* was also good enough to inquire as to the state of our stores, but there was no fear there. One does not want for victuals aboard *Katbird*.

On the way back to the far western end of the lake it was downwind the whole way. Or should I say 'hole' way. Again, there were a few soft spots on the way back to the Ajax Weather Mark, but it was after that, on the way to Burlington Weather Tower, that *Katbird* managed to find every hole on that end of the lake. I'm not much for sleeping on a boat, especially during a race, but I did manage a bit of rest during the lull. When I went back on deck as the sun rose, it appeared that a fog had developed to add to the no wind situation. It wasn't the densest fog, what with visibility limited to 100 feet or so, but we did lay in a shipping channel so there was some concern. A freighter sounding its horn somewhere behind us didn't help. Fortunately, the freighter was bound for a port we had already passed and was not an issue, and the fog eventually lifted, though still no wind

At one point, with near 0.00 showing on every wind instrument and speed log on board, we dropped the main and eked out a little progress under spinnaker alone thanks to the occasional zephyr and some left over wave action. Unfortunately, this was not enough speed to dissuade the lake flies.

Ah, the flies. If you have had the misfortune to be on Lake Ontario with no wind for a noticeable period of time you will know what happens. First, the Lake Ontario dumb flies arrive. They are called such due to their lack of any instinct for self-preservation. You can actually step on them and they won't move. I believe they are there solely as fish food and weren't given even the most rudimentary brain. However, the biting flies arrive next, and they are quick, cunning, and close to lethal. They have large fangs (or so it seems) developed so that they can pierce the skin of floating fish, which is what they eat when they can't find unwary sailors to dine upon.

Needless to say, floating at a near standstill while being eaten by flies while your competition catches up is not the high point of the race... but it is part of the Challenge!

Finally, the wind slowly built and we made our way to Burlington under a decent breeze. After rounding the Burlington Weather Tower it was a fairly normal trip back to the finish at Port Credit... except for a squall that fortunately stayed over the land but gave us the gift of a 20 knot breeze and hull speed while wing-on-wing for a little while. Once that was past we popped the chute and crossed the finish line under spinnaker and just kept on going - back to Toronto Harbour, another LO300 under the belt.

—Scooby

July 2021