

Waglan Series 2019-20, Race 7

It was a crisp 23-degree sunny Sunday morning on the 5th of January 2020 when race officer Chris Pooley, commodore of the Aberdeen Boat Club, dropped anchor in preparation for the start of Race 7 of the Waglan Series 2019-20, and the first in the six-race mini-series for 2020. He was careful to avoid the squid boats bobbing about nearby and placed the committee boat between Repulse Bay and Round Island.

A windward mark was laid towards Repulse Bay at 60 degrees into the 16- to 22-knot breeze with gusts recorded of 36 and even 39. It was going to be quite a day!

Given the conditions, Pooley opted for course 17A for IRC (about 20 nautical miles) and 17B for HKPN (14.6 nautical miles).

This included, for both, rounding the windward mark before heading for Chesterton Buoy and passing the Tai Tam Club Mark. IRC then headed for Sung Kong and Shek O Rock whilst the HKPN fleet rounded Fury Rocks. Both fleets then returned passing the Tai Tam Club Mark, Chesterman Buoy and crossing a finish line east of Round Island.

In lively conditions, the three IRC 1 and six IRC 2 boats all got away at 1100 in a clean combined start, with *Blackjack* and *Juggerknot* leading IRC 1. *Ding Dong* galloped ahead in IRC 2, with *Crystal* a late starter. The three boats in HKPN A, and three boats in the B division followed again in a combined start. *Five O One* led the fleet at the gun closely followed by the brave and solitary J-80, *JeNe PaBe*.

Blackjack led at the Tai Tam Club Mark but, on the downwind homeward leg, having released its reefed main, was caught out badly rounding the Chesterton Buoy and broached. *Neo One* went on to take line honours by 48 seconds in a time of 2:49:41 but *Blackjack* still hung on for handicap honours ahead of both *Juggerknot* and *Neo One*.

Over the line, *Ding Dong* led *Crystal* by 38 seconds to claim both line and handicap honours in IRC 2 in a time of 2:59:54, but *Legende* slotted in between the two in 2nd on handicap.

Although in different HKPN divisions there was close racing between *Five O One* in HKPN B and *Generations* in Division A. *Five O One* was in front approaching the Tai Tam Club Mark but was overhauled by *Generations* which then blew its lead with *Five O One* winning the duel.

However, *Generations* took top honours in HKPN A in a time of 2:33:26 after both *JeNe PaBe*'s early retirement and subsequently *Vixen*'s, having realised they had missed the Tai Tam Club Mark on the return leg and opting not to correct their error.

Five O One took line and handicap honours in HKPN B in 2:31:04 with *Boss* 2nd and *Shun Shui* 3rd, finishing almost one hour behind the leader.

With boats having averaged between 6 and 7 knots for the race it was back to the appropriately-named Waglan Bar for an early prize-giving of bottles of wine for the class and division winners, with refreshments washed down with sponsored Peroni and Kraken Rum and coke.

Given the recent holidays, the 14-boat turnout was better than expected, particularly since some crews opted to prepare for next weekend's Beneteau Four Peaks Race instead. A pity, as they missed a great day on the water . . .