



The Around Mud Islands Passage Race Jan 7, 2012

A race around the lower bay!!

This race day is a regular event and in the past has seen near 70 participants from around Victoria work their magic around the lower reaches of Port Philip Bay.

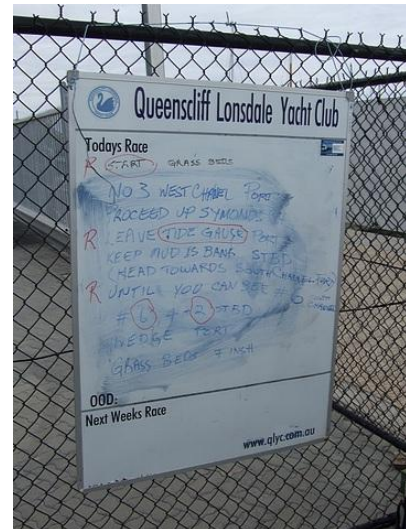
This year we are reminiscing of the past and seeing a much smaller fleet participate from our club only.

At an early briefing of 10.30am we see some good work by John Barry with a hydrographic representation of the water depth around the Mud Island group courtesy of our friends at DPI to assist with negotiating these strange waters!

Our Club Captain in Ian Curtis, leads the discussion on the route to be followed and the OOD in Ian Lee explains the components of the course of some 25 Nms clockwise around the isles.



Entrants are Rosie, Tiercel, Nereus, Wave Dancer, Sundance, Zen and Chinon with 3 divisions with a different mix of crews to support the skippers.



The start is Grass Beds with the course to No.3, the Tide Gauge, to the Symonds Channel, then No.6 thru No.4 South Channel to Wedge and home.



We can see by the looks on the faces of our captains of racing, Ian and Ian, that we are facing a serious challenge around the isles this day....Ian and Ian enforce the safety rules and radio checking as the fleet progress around the course.

Good work and positive actions.



And now it is all up to the skippers and crews!!

The seas are a little choppy with the start of the ebb tide and a northerly across the top but all yachts are keen and take turns at accessing the start with a fishing boat sitting right in the lay line of the start ...even confusing some with his own barging buoy set off his vessel...good work!!

The wind is around 10 knots and Div 3 look for a start...albeit only Rosie ...but they are away and take a good line on No.3 as they head off.



Div 2 is a little more interesting and with 80% of the fleet involved it looks a little confusing....but ...Zen takes a serious tack and starts right on cue with Chinon and others following.

Zen is our prediction for this race with tree tried and tested crew and skipper who have done this race many times and having trophies under the belt. Ian, Bob and Peter are our tip!!

As can be seen from our view, Zen is well across the line and leading the charge.

At Div 3 Sundance jumps the line on the gun and makes a great start but needs to up the ante to make the distance to our lead competitors.



The fleet are now well on their way to No.3 but Rosie has made a leap to take to the West Channel rather than make the distance to the closer northern bank....

Going well beyond No.3 all yachts tack back and make the channel avoiding sand banks along the way to the Tide Gauge at the top of the channel and the turning mark.

At the Tide Gauge it is Zen easily tacking first although appearing to take a quicker manoeuvre than the rest with Chinon second and Sundance third followed by Rosie and the rest of the fleet.



Radio communications were difficult at times but between the yachts themselves each was able to manage reporting in even by relay to Swan Rescue at the four points required around the course.

At the South Channel it was a procession of yachts with the same places as previously through No.6 and down to No.2 before easing sheets and pointing toward the Stones in Pope's Eye.

A quick tack, managed better by some, saw a heavy ebb tide take most of the front runners by surprise in attempting to negotiate a port hand on the Wedge Mark. Two tacks were the order of the day!!

At the finish it was a comfortable win by Zen with Peter at the helm, just ahead of a fast finishing Sundance and Chinon 14 minutes in arrears of her to make third on the line. Rosie was the only other competitor to make the full race distance after battling for 5 hours....well done!!



Other competitors could not manage a finish with the tide and a dying wind the combination to make most try but fail to gain marks of the course!!

DNF's took out Nereus, Tiercel and Wave Dancer.

Wave Dancer we here tell.... took at least 5 tacks at making the Pope's Eye stones without success...!!

At the end we congratulate Zen (Ian McKenzie, Bob Mayne and Peter Norman) with handicap honours of 2 Hours 11 mins over Chinon by 7 minutes and Sundance 3rd by 11 minutes.

A champion day in which we all had fun...suffered Mud Island again and enjoyed the experience.

Well done to all competitors.

Watch out next week is the Lady Skippers race!!