

**Channels Race 4 November 2017**

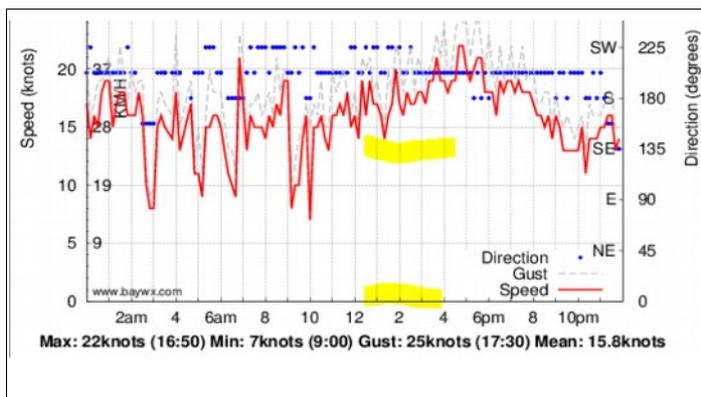


Wavedancer on a roll

With a forecast of SSW winds of 17 knots, the skippers of six vessels fronted up for briefing, with few words necessary to augment the written course provided by Club Captain Steve. This was the usual Channels course: up the West Channel and across to St Leonards then back by the Coles Channel. However some vessels were short of crew and made their way to their craft with some trepidation as to the work ahead. In some, a mind-set developed of 'no kite flying today' which was at odds with the actual conditions at the start. Had it remained a day of gentle breezes, Kinsale3 with only 2 POB might have been round the course and onto the post-race beers, with the rest of us drifting and watching the last mark disappear up-tide - but the reverse was the case with a brisk wind coming in and giving short-handed boats some hard work. Tiercel had a last minute reprieve from shortage of crew, with extra crew arriving at the wharf.



Kite on the line



A

Boomaroo keeps the red flag flying.

Lonely Wavedancer got away in Division 1 at 12.30 and the four Div 2 boats, namely Valentine, Kinsale3, Boomaroo and Tiercel avoided any stress in the down-wind, down-tide start. Valentine flew the kite within seconds of crossing the start line while others thought about it. Tiercel opted for a compromise of getting out the blooper but could not hold it in addition to the jib and dropped the jib. Boomaroo seeing the action got up their spinnaker and drew ahead. Kinsale3 was further up ahead with Valentine. Tiercel's skipper and a crew member shared boom-to-skull contacts during an involuntary gybe but hopefully with know laaasting affekts.

With wind and tide solidly behind the fleet, there was rapid progress up the West Channel, with Imagine overtaking the back markers. Kites of whatever nature were dropped at the W. Channel Pile for the reach into St Leonards. By this time the breeze was distinctly fresh. After rounding the St Leonards Pile for the long beat home the freshening breeze gave some vigorous exercise for the lighter or more short-handed vessels, and Tiercel started to catch up to some extent, with predictions that it would be a close race on handicap.

With no room for tactical or strategic differences it was a routine, though hard, slog back to "The White Lady" and round Swan Spit for a close reach back to Queenscliff. Well-earned drinks and chips at the Clubhouse rounded off another very successful day. Calculations confirmed a close race with the last-over-the-line Tiercel just a nose ahead of Wavedancer on handicap, followed by Valentine, Boomaroo, Imagine and Kinsale3.

For verily I said unto you "the first shall be last and the last shall be first" and so it came to pass. That's what the system is for!

Thanks to Ian, Bev and Jock for OOD duties. Next week an informal cruise (No briefing, start 11.00) to seek out but not harass the Goorangai racers.



Should have had kite up and head down!



Imagine passes Boomaroo approaching St Leonards