



Queenscliff Lonsdale Yacht Club....

The Around Mud Islands Race Sat February 25, 2017

A big day and a wonderful weather forecast for this race!

As with this race each year it begins early but always promises to be another fabulous race and an even better day given the weather forecast for the race along with tides and breezes to suit!



At 10.30 in the harbour skippers and crew assembled having been emailed with information in NOR and Si earlier with a weather report that showed us just what a perfect place we were in to take on a full day race alongside the SSCBC large Couta Boat fleet.

The opening comments by Club Captain Brian Golland challenged the skippers and crew to this special race and thanked Sorrento for their assistance and providing facilities to manage the race.

It was disappointing that this year QLYC could not field a Couta Boat in the challenge.

However, it was a short and sharp briefing with some questions but all was provided and commented upon to ensure all skippers and crew knew the drill for the starting of four (4) divisions in:

- 12.00 Div2 - Small Couta Boats,
- 12.10 Div 1 – Medium Keel Boats,
- 12.20 Div 1 - Large Couta Boats, and
- 12.30 Div 2 – Large Keel Boats.



It was off racing, under the guidance of our OOD's Ian, Bev and Jock Lee with Commodore Jill Golland aboard to capture some of the action.

It was a great sight for all as skippers saw the assembling fleet arriving both out of the Creek and from Sorrento filling the entrance and Grass Beds with a myriad fleet of almost 30 boats.

As the Noon race start approached it appeared that anxious skippers and crews hovered very close to the start line which was set perfectly by our OOD's but quite crowded under the circumstances.



At 12.15 the start signal for Couta Boats in Div2 saw the smaller Couta pack in the fleet passed through the line with C70 Jennifer, C127 Matilda and C134 Leeuwin going at it out front whilst for safety sake C305 Kate hung back just to make a race of it and followed the field toward No3.



At 12.15 the first of the keel yachts in QLYC Div2 took to the line...with Kinsale3 with skipper Doug Curlewis leading across the line followed by Boomaroo with Tom Hinton and Valentine skippered by Steve Lee making up the team.

It was noted that Tiercel whilst not competing saw out the start of the race from a spectator's point whilst showing visitors the start of the race.



By 12.25 it was the Couta Boat main fleet in Div1 going hard and steady at the line.

The leaders pushed down the line from the Committee Boat "Swan" with jostling and a few heated outbursts of the others with questioning each one's tactics before the leaders passed the line and majority of others quickly followed.

Each looked to gain an advantage on the other and windward boats obviously doing better in the push toward No3.

At 12.35 it was the last division away with QLYC Div2 and the two traditional rivals in Imagine and Sundance taking to the line with Imagine taking the higher line and edging Sundance down and making toward the trek to No3.



By this time, it was the Div2 Couta's having a great time out front heading north east and closing on No3.

The Keelboats in Div2 of QLYC were at that time well placed in catching and partially overtaking the Div2 Couta Boats as they headed down the Symonds Channel toward the pile marking the channel, passing the Orange Buoy 100 metres to the east.

Back in the fleet in Div3 Keel Boats it was Imagine who had it over Sundance as they came up from No3 going well toward the east before heading toward the mark and raising their spinnakers However, in the rush for the kites Imagine got it slightly wrong and while this occurred it was Sundance that hoisted hers and took the lead in a matter of minutes. Sundance continued this procession through the and round the orange top mark.

At this stage, it was Doug Curlewis in Kinsale3 that surged to the front tacking quickly toward the south west with Boomaroo close at hand and Valentine following.

The Div2 Coutas were spread around the front of the fleet at this point and tacking in a number of directions and looking for an advantage.

The Div1 Coutas were flying and catching up with their cousins in Div2 as the QLYC Div 3 keel boats came upon the back end of the fleet.

All boats were now all heading back home and toward south west sailing toward the orange mark at the north-east end of the Pinnacle Channel.



Again, it was a tacking duel with all boats making the best of very good conditions whilst the wind took turns of some gusts and slight variances keeping the trimmers busy.

A few loud calls could be heard from the fleet as these changes took place but all went well as the back markers worked their way through the fleet.

The larger yachts took a wider passage through here as the shifting sands at the gauge can make life difficult.

The Div1 Coutas were flying and were working on the front markers who now took a number of tacks making their way toward the orange buoy, situated almost southerly direction from there.

Whilst QLYC's Kinsale3 seemed to be still holding court to Boomaroo... Boomaroo as does Tom in his cunning fashion had taken a wider tack to the east and as the fleet headed toward the South Channel mark No6 it was Boomaroo who had made it to the front position ahead of the fleet.



Sundance had maintained her lead over Imagine making good time on all these legs whilst holding position.

The fleet had spread out across the channel but in approaching the Gate at South Channel No.6, it was the consolidation of yachts preparing for the SSCBC Couta Boat finish boat sitting to starboard of No.6 that had the fleet managing easily.

The appearance of the French Naval vessel had a few on edge with her sporting a decent anti-aircraft gun on the foredeck as she punched her way down the South Channel.



The QLYC fleet had moved through the Couta fleet in their march from

Symonds to the Pinnacle Channel and approaching the No.6 mark and gate with Sundance now making a run for the front although it was Boomaroo in a mighty effort that hit the gate first ahead of Sundance whilst Kinsale3 made it first three boats over the line at No.6 were QLYC boats.

With the QLYC fleet now on their own, it was Sundance that took the lead from Boomaroo and Kinsale3 ahead of Valentine heading down the channel to No.4 were SSCBC had laid an orange buoy inside the mark to aid our transit along the channel which all vessels passed well within despite the presence of the French Navy taking some wind out of our sails (in the nicest sort of way!).

Further down the Channel it was the fleet passing around No.2 as the last mark to be passed in the South Channel before the fleet turned for home and toward Queenscliff and Grass Beds finish.

The weather had assisted the fleet with the wind and ebb tide making life all that better as all but Boomaroo threw the spinnaker to the wind for the easy ride to the finish.

Whilst Sundance headed the fleet it was the tussle between Boomaroo and Imagine that caught the eye of all as they ran down abreast to a nose whilst Boomaroo seemed to have second place sown up.

Sundance finished in first across the line and took a line back toward the fleet to watch as these two made their run ... right on the line it was Imagine taking second place, a whisker ahead of Boomaroo and within a few minutes Valentine also finished as back marker in the QLYC fleet.



On handicap, it was Valentine with Skipper Steve Lee and crew who took the honours for the day ahead in second place Kinsale3 with Doug Curlewis and crew and finally in third position was Tom Hinton with Boomaroo.

And following these was Sundance just ahead of Imagine by just over a minute in corrected time with all five yachts finishing within five minutes after a race of three and half hours.

Well done to all who competed and took time out to enjoy the surrounds of Mud Islands.

Our thanks to the SSCBC committee and volunteer crews for their assistance and commitment to holding this race and assisting with laying buoys and manning committee boats.



**Next Club Racing start:
SAT Mar 4 for the Commodore's Cup Race which will
be a Stern Chaser....**

**Meet at the harbour outside the QHPL Shed.....at
Midday....And following the race at the Club House the
Commodore's cocktail party will be observed in traditional
style...be there!!**

**Note to all: A number of Skippers are looking for Crew and if you would like to
be part of our unique racing in this part of the Bay ...call us or
email via the website ...or contact us via "Facebook"**

**Special thanks for photographs of the competitors and their
vessels to OOD and Commodore Jill Golland as part of the
crew of Swan.**



Some more shots of the fleet

