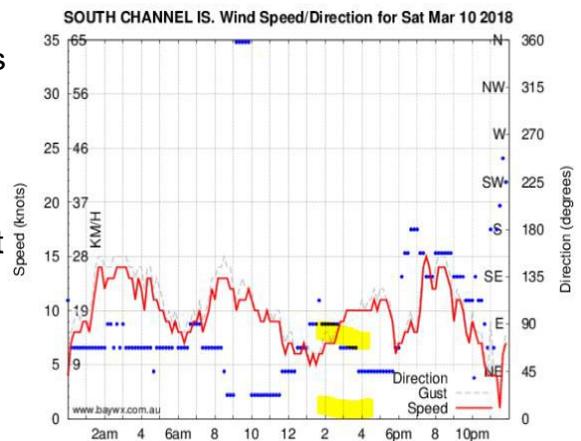


Cec Anderson 5. 10 March 2018

At last the Weather Gods relented and gave us a good day on the water, with 7 vessels taking advantage of it.

Briefing included new (draft) courses and mention of things administrative including (under instructions to Commodore) mention of financial memberships and a reminder to those still not paid up. Crews then repaired to their vessels. Unfortunately Wavedancer was currently in the yard in Geelong and trapped there by the Wooden Boat Festival, but thanks to that, Tiercel thankfully picked up a third crew member. Imagine was also absent owing to Tasmanian adventures. On the water, course 11 (new course) was displayed, involving No. 3 West, Swan Spit and QA..



Hopes that the morphing weather forecast now spared us a flat calm were fulfilled. A gentle NE breeze of 5 to 10 knots (recorded at S Channel Fort) kept everyone moving, though still posing a challenge for the smaller vessels - given the residue of a 5.5 knot ebb tide (at the Heads). This was at its maximum around our start time. In contrast to the last race, it was not the day for the Coutas, this time more understandably.



Div. 1 got away satisfactorily, mostly at the Committee boat end on starboard tack, and with Tintagel the closest of these to the pin, but Warrior sneaked quickly across at the pin end on port. These vessels separated early with Tintagel and Rosie hugging the shore, Drizabone further out but still heading up-tide, and Warrior heading further out again. Tintagel held that tack until well north of No.2 when it was judged No.3 was reachable despite the tide, a tactic putting her ahead of the other Div 1 vessels.

Div. 2 similarly had a divergence of starts with Tiercel coming round Swan to cross on starboard and Valentine manoeuvring at the pin end, but needing an extra tack to make it away - thus, despite starting at the favoured end, she ended up behind Tiercel though further inshore. Both headed up-tide at about three and a half knots.

As Sundance started her chase (following a brave excursion downtide of the start line, but well-timed return), wind was faltering for Tiercel and Valentine, and Tiercel tacked into deeper water in search of more. After 5 minutes, having found some breeze, she reverted to the NE course up-tide. Valentine tacked similarly three minutes later, but maintained the resulting SE course for longer. .

Sundance followed a similar course to Tiercel and was catching her up on the approach to West Channel number 3. This was rounded in short order by Tiercel, Valentine and Sundance. The outa boats were fighting the tide behind these three but Tintagel maintained a lead having gone well uptide whilst inshore.



Valentine's pursuit of Tiercel



Tiercel and Valentine get away.



Convergence at West #3

Kites were flown on the broad reach to Swan Spit, and Valentine did the better job of rounding the mark and gipping her spinnaker for the next broad reach - to QA. She was within an ace of overtaking Tiercel when QA was rounded but Tiercel drew ahead again when hard on the wind. To escape this impasse, Valentine soon tacked back into the deeper water but the tide and wind did not cooperate. On the second rounding of number 3, Tintagel was too optimistic about the tide slackening and spent more time tacking in the current. Tiercel scraped round just before Sundance, who overtook soon afterwards. Valentine paid a price for the gamble of the early tack and followed, but these 3 were now ahead of Tintagel who still led the Div 1 boats.

Approaching QA under spinnakers, some did better than others in seeing the shorten course flag. Tiercel, fighting a jammed headsail, abandoned it to drop the spinnaker, while Sundance saw the flag and crossed the line. Looking back from a "good" rounding of QA,

Tiercel saw flag S and turned back, to recross the line just before Valentine. To be absolutely sure, she then went back around QA and crossed the line a third time. Other vessels were also late to recognise the correct way to cross the line. Given the spread of the fleet owing to tide, the shorten course decision was wise.

Over the line it was Sundance, Tiercel, Valentine, Tintagel, Warrior, Drizabone and Rosie. On handicap, it was Tiercel, Valentine, Tintagel, Sundance (corrected times within 3 minutes) , Warrior, Drizabone, Rosie (corrected times within 10 minutes). So a reversal of Cec 2 where the three coutha boats filled the first three positions.

For those with time available, the Clubhouse saw a most pleasant session of refreshments, with chips and race results provided.