

Variable Winds and Fortunes on the Bay

The forecast was for variable winds to 10 knots last Saturday for the QLYC Festival Race.

Certainly that is exactly what the 5 skippers and crews found.

Course 6 was chosen for the Easterly conditions. This course is a couple of triangles around Grass Beds, No3 West Channel and Swan Spit with a windward and return in between.

There was a reasonable breeze just a little North of East prior to the start but as the three division 1 vessels started at 1330 it began to ease!!

Couta boat Warrior was first across the line followed by Wave Dancer and Tintagel.

Brett Almond in Warrior took a long tack up Swan Island followed by Dave Hatton in Wave Dancer and Colin Bishop took Tintagel out to sea to fight the last of the ebbing tide.

Valentine was the only competitor in division 2 so it was an easy start but she was making slow progress following the Swan Island coast in the fading and patchy breeze.

Wave Dancer decided to tack out to sea to chase Tintagel. This was a successful move as she found a favourable breeze and made slow but relentless progress towards Number 3 West Channel while the rest of the fleet ghosted along with very little wind.

Imagine had also started alone in division 3 and took a long tack up Swan Island.

Wave Dancer lead the fleet around Number three followed by Tintagel, then Imagine chasing down the fleet slowly.

Valentine took almost an hour and a half to get to the first mark No 3a lonely last behind Warrior.

At this stage race leader Wave Dancer had rounded Swan Spit and was powering towards Grass Beds!!

Imagine popped the spinnaker at No 3 but sailed in to a fading breeze as she approached Swan Spit. Valentine also set her spinnaker at No 3 and over took Warrior.

Imagine gybed around Swan Spit after Tintagel which had headed in towards Swan Island to get out of the now flooding tide but sailed in to light airs.

Valentine followed Imagine around Swan Spit and held her spinnaker in the failing breeze reaching towards Grass Beds against the tide.

The shorten course flag was flying at Grass Beds and Wave Dancer crossed the line first well clear of Imagine followed by Valentine.

No sooner had all these boats finished when there was a 15knot squall from the Northeast which brought the tailenders, Tintagel and Warrior home with a rush.

Dave Hatton in Wave Dancer was 1st over the line and on handicap.

The lucky surge of wind brought Brett Almond in Warrior into 2nd place on handicap and Colin Bishop in Tintagel 3rd.

Congratulations to Dave Hatton and crew for a splendid line honours and handicap win for the second week in a row!!

It was certainly an interesting day of racing out on the bay though challenging in the light and variable conditions resulting in a much shortened course.