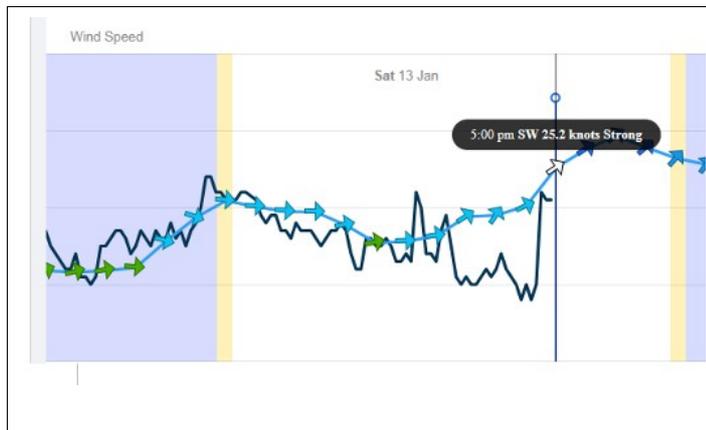


Irwin Trophy, Cole Cup and other sailing. A weekend for true believers.

After three cancellations including the previous two Saturdays, it was starting to look like last summer all over again. And yet again the forecast for 13 January 2018 was looking iffy -



with steadily increasing wind strength during the afternoon towards 25 knots by 5 p.m. However a determination to do our utmost to catch up with two races reaped rewards and both the Irwin Trophy and the Cole Cup were run and finished in the nick of time.

It was a day demonstrating a number of well-known facts affecting racing with a mixed fleet in Queenscliff. For one, Tiercel demonstrated the value of a clean hull (and a pure heart??) after a new coat

of antifouling. For another, the strong tide and sometimes light wind (contrary to predictions) showed the difficulties for the smaller and slower boats in legs against the tide.

Briefing was held at 9.30 for a 11 a.m. start with a planned pause between the Irwin Trophy and the Cole Cup.

Unfortunately, Drizabone could not compete in the first race owing to family commitments and Wavedancer at the last moment had a recurrence of engine problems and could not get out. Tiercel picked up a crew member from Wavedancer and was happy with the extra manpower. Other participants were Valentine, Warrior, Boomaroo and Imagine. Course 11 was displayed ("SW short") taking the fleet a minimum distance from base, between Grass beds, Drapers and Swan Spit. The brisk wind displayed in the harbour seemed to be dropping off and at least one "no. 2 jib" stayed at deck level with maximum sail area being hoisted despite the forecast which was looking increasingly inaccurate.

Warrior had a solitary start for Division 1 and set off against the last of the flood tide. Div 2 vessels (Tiercel Valentine and Boomaroo) made good starts with Tiercel closely ahead of Valentine and Boomaroo not far behind. Fairly close company was held approaching Drapers with Div 2 catching up with Warrior, who had been beating against the last of the flood, particularly in the ten minutes before Div 2 started.

A good run up to Swan Spit, via Grass Beds and the three Div 2 boats were still in close company. A bit of drama at SS with Valentine rounding a fraction ahead of Tiercel and tacking onto starboard in short order. By now the tide had turned, and tacking angles were wide and speeds down-tide about 6-7 knots over-ground. In contrast, after rounding Drapers the second time, speeds were around 4 knots on the run to Grass Beds. With a clean hull, Tiercel was only overtaken by Imagine just before the finish at the shorten course flag. The shorten course decision gave the fleet time to prepare for the Cole Cup starting at 1 p.m.. On handicap for the Irwin Trophy it was Tiercel, then Boomaroo and Valentine (close to each other) then Warrior and Imagine (also close to each other).

In the lunch break the wind got up somewhat and at least some jibs were replaced and mainsails reefed. For the Cole Cup it was similarly close starts, both Tiercel and Valentine being a bit early but with a bit of give and take and spreaders close, both got away right on the 'gun'. Approaching Drapers this time a nasty squall came in with plenty of survival tactics to reduce wind pressure. However, boats held their courses and "enjoyed" exciting

roundings of Drapers pile. Unfortunately at this stage Imagine radioed in a withdrawal having broken the mainsheet traveller (Ben Lexcen theory “if it doesn't break it's too heavy”??)

The wind was dropping off again (“calm before the storm”?) and Valentine's spinnaker went up for the run back to Swan Spit. Seeing this, but with the big kite firmly stowed below deck, Tiercel opted again for the blooper, treated as an asymmetric and shook out a reef – with this arrangement she almost kept up with Valentine for a time and remained ahead of Boomaroo relying on goosewinged jib. The race continued without incident except the increasingly strong ebb tide and decreasing wind brought about a wise withdrawal by Warrior, given the weather on the horizon. At the finish, most eyes were on the weather. All crews were ashore or at least on the wharf just before a huge storm and downpour started. However, Tom was confined to Boomaroo (on the wharf) during the deluge. The after-race BBQ was abandoned by Captain and Commodore with the weather keeping others at home.

So the race program has partially caught up despite some problems from the weather-gods.

No photos from these races, but plenty from two hugely successful Discover Sailing Days.



Thanks to the OODs for the races, and to Geoffrey and all the Sunday helpers for the Discover Sailing days. (And dare I say the Commodore excelled himself in dunking two people in separate capsizes or near capsizes.)



