

Round Mud Island 8 December 2018



Briefing - and new Committee boat (under negotiation ?!) in background

Another day of contrasts. Briefing at 11.30 saw skippers and crew of 6 vessels plus members of Queenscliff Coastguard present for the occasion, with a prospect of steady southerlies around 15 to 19 knots. Briefing included thanks to the coastguards for laying the buoys and standing by on the water and appreciation of Swan crews past and present. Vessels signed on were Imagine, Sundance, Boomaroo, Tiercel, Valentine and Tintagel.



Captain Steve confers with the Coastguard.

On the water it was “where is the wind” with just enough breeze to manoeuvre and allow the tide to carry boats over the line. Some were more careful (or paranoid?) than others about being carried over the line prematurely so some late starts were recorded. In the light conditions spinnakers went up as soon as the angle allowed, generally after rounding West #3.

It was close to the laid buoy at the exit from Symmonds Channel that the divisions converged following the 10-minute separations and, from here on, Sundance clawed back time after struggling on the slow downwind leg. It was also here that the wind got up



Valentine and Tiercel prepared for quick getaway.



Valentine chasing Boomaroo in a light breeze.

quickly to the forecast levels around 19 knots, with relief that spinnakers had just been dropped.

Then it was a vigorous beat down the Pinnace Channel, with Imagine in the lead and Tiercel falling behind the other Div 2 and 3 boats despite having held her own in the light airs. The wind persisted until the faster vessels finished but Tiercel and Tintagel had to cope with another increase to about 28 knots before getting



Imagine and Sundance in the murk



the sails off. Another seaweed / propeller issue afflicted Tiercel off the Cut – just scraping in to the nearest wharf beyond the ferry terminal. By now the ebb tide was setting in (tabulated maximum over 5 knots) which against the wind set up quite a chop.

Over the line, the order was Imagine, Sundance, Valentine, Boomaroo, Tiercel and Tintagel.

On handicap there was a greater spread than usual, perhaps reflecting the unusual and dramatically changing conditions.

For the first half of the race the flood tide probably contributed as much as the sails, clearly disadvantaging the faster boats. Division 3 vessels also spent rather longer against the last of the flood tide and had proportionately less of the brisk winds (perhaps more than counteracting the shorter time in the calm). Coupled with that, Imagine's recent successes including two firsts contrasted with Valentine's less than spectacular results this season which helped to bring Valentine up to be winner on handicap followed by Tiercel, Tintagel, Boomaroo, Sundance and Imagine.

Drinks and chips back at the Clubhouse and thanks to Jennifer, Bob Mayne and Rob Hynam-Smith for OOD duties.