



NEWS RELEASE

8 August, 2015

Airlie Beach Race Week turns on a magic opening day

The sun was on full beam, and a lovely breeze built to 15 knots for the opening day of the Whitsunday Sailing Club's 26th Airlie Beach Race Week, making it a perfect day out, as all sailors attested to on coming ashore this afternoon.

Ray 'Hollywood' Roberts turned up the heat with his Farr 55 OneSails Racing, defeating Matt Allen's TP52, Ichi Ban in IRC Racing Division 1. The Sydney yachts both have the same handicap, but this is the first time Allen has skippered the former Shogun V in race mode since purchasing it recently.

The two boats were literally match raced around the Passage Race that took in Double Cones and Armit Islands. The entire 108 boats competing across 10 classes were sent on a Passage Race that varied from 23 to 30 nautical miles.

OneSails Racing made the best of the start in Division 1. "We got a good break and on the first leg up to Double Cones we got away from Ichi Ban and the rest of the fleet more," Roberts said this afternoon.

"Ichi Ban made a better sail selection at the back of the island and closed in on us and by the time we were around Armit, we were in a loose tacking duel," the Sydney yachtsman confirmed.

"We tried to gas them to keep them behind us, and then we got a little jump towards the end, but they kept the pressure on to the finish. It was fun but very challenging," he said.

Having been away racing in Asia for some years, Roberts has not been to Airlie Beach Race Week for a long time.

"Stunning racing and beautiful scenery – a great regatta. Shame I had to go straight back to work while the crew partied on," he ended.

Two-time Sydney Hobart winner, Bob Steel tested his new Quest, a Matt 1180 and finished an impressive third to OneSails and Ichi Ban. Quest will be worth watching tomorrow when Race Director, Denis Thompson, sends IRC Racing Divisions 1 and 2 to windward/leeward racing, while the rest of the fleet will undertake a Passage Race.

In IRC Racing Division 2, Jason Close's Archambault 31, More Noise (Qld), came up with the goods in Division 2, defeating Roger Hickman's 2014 Sydney Hobart winner, Wild Rose (NSW), by 22 seconds.



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Rob Curtis, skipper of Kerazy, the Ker 11.3 one-design he owns with Glenn Tailby, may have finished fifth in Division 2, but said it was a beautiful day's sail and felt the boat and crew had sailed well.

"The wind was a bit light on at the start and we thought we'd take the tide into consideration, so went to the right of the course, but the reality was, it came down to breeze," Curtis, from the Northern Beaches in Sydney admitted.

"Our crew work was good. We shot up the asymmetrical, as the tide was still south, and ran off to Double Cones – a long leg. The breeze filled in going to the Cones, up to 15 knots.

"We've still got Wild Rose in our sights, but in the meantime, we paced with Tulip (Bernie van't Hof's Swan 45), but when we got around Armit, 45 feet got the better of 37 feet," he said laughing.

In news from other classes, Chris Williams sailed Morticia to a near five minute win over Andrew Stransky's Fantasia in the Multihull Racing class, while John Rae skippered Vivace to a three minute victory over Graham Sherring's Stay Tuned in the Sports Boats.

Drew Carruthers sailed Runaway to a win from Paul Bunn's Christine in Cruising Division 1, while Graham Furtado had the goods in Division 2, sailing Frantic to a win over Sandor Tornai's Skeeter. Division 3 was won by Derek Foley's Wicked, with Greg Hudson's Salty Dog second.

After losing the keel on his Rumgutz in the opening race last year, Peter Harrison was rewarded with a win In the Cruising Non-Spinnaker division aboard his new boat Awesome. Seems the name is working for him.

Racing in the Tropical Festival of Sails continues tomorrow on Pioneer Bay.

Full results and all information on Airlie Beach Race Week at:

<http://www.abrw.com.au/>

All information on Whitsunday Sailing Club: www.whitsundaysailingclub.com.au/

By Di Pearson, ABRW media



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