

## **Bay to Bay 2012 - *The one that got away.***

The fleet was a little down on previous years; 140 was the figure that was being quoted. There was a good roll-up of RL's, twenty 24's and three 28's. Not bad for a 2-speed economy.

The weather bureau forecasters had a shocker.

The 15-20 knot Sou-wester predicted for Saturday was a wimpy 5-10.

Race controller Col Verrall had to make some pretty big calls; his first was to start the multihulls and division 1 boats and move the line up the course for divisions 2, 3 and 4. When you saw how slowly the supposedly quick boats made their way towards Inskip Point, you would have to agree with the call.

When the delayed start eventuated, there was a light Nor-easter, certainly enough to get the fleet moving. After rounding the T1 mark opposite Inskip Point, known locally as Big Mick, the fleet headed for the red S38 beacon, opposite Tinnanbar. Going was goodish for a while until the breeze started to fade. Boats that had headed wide on the course maintained a light breeze and slowly eased away, for a little while at least. With the fleet reduced to drifting slowly with the tide, Col made the call to finish the race at S38. That looked a good call too, until the Nor-easter started to lift again, heavily favouring boats that had stayed close to Fraser Island. And the last shall be first.

The finish line proved deadly; many boats underestimated the strength of the tide and were carried onto the finish boat. This induced a degree of panic for some skippers; one poor soul, realising that he couldn't lay the mark, called "water" and tacked to port, virtually on top of us. It didn't end tidily for him. Surprisingly, there were no cross words or raised voices. We just fended him off, tacked and went about our business. After all, there were no sheep stations at stake.

The best sail was from the shortened finish line to Garry's Anchorage, a lovely 10-knot Nor-easter.

Saturday night was absolutely perfect; almost no wind and a glorious full moon. Under these conditions, Garry's is the perfect place to relax and unwind and what better way to do it than in a raft of 4 RL's? We've been doing this for a number of years, rafts of up to 6 boats off one anchor, a copy of the Bruce anchor. They certainly hang on.

### ***Sunday looked a little better.***

A steady Sou-wester, probably reaching 10 knots at its best, propelled the fleet from Dream Island to the Sheridan Flats. There was the usual mass confusion at the turning buoy at the beginning of Sheridan Flats and also some confusion as to whether all of the channel markers were actually marks of the course (they're not). Loudly proffered advice to observe all the marks was sensibly ignored.

The breeze was reasonable across Sheridan Flats and it wasn't until the fleet reached the vicinity of Wannoolba Creek that problems started to arise. A number of boats, ourselves included, had sailed wide on the course, chasing what breeze there was. Sailing back across the course to get inside the mark "D" proved the undoing of about a dozen yachts, about 5 RL's included. The tide was having far more influence than the breeze and as the mark was approached, it became apparent that these boats couldn't avoid being carried the wrong side of the mark. Most of them made an attempt to get back but with virtually no

breeze and a strong tide, it was hopeless. It took us over an hour to recover the 10 metres that we missed the mark by. By then, it was way too late.

Most of the rest of the fleet made slow, steady progress to the finish line off Urangan. For about 30 unfortunate boats, the almost non-existent breeze wasn't enough to get them to the line by the 3.30 deadline.

The results on the Hervey Bay Sailing Club web site show just how many were disappointed; 40 yachts, including 8 RL24's, failed to finish. We, like so many others, were gutted; our first DNF in 12 B2B's in an RL. Both days we'd been able to get into a strong position, only to blow it.

On a brighter note, the coveted RL Challenge trophy went to a deserving "Charley Brown". Others to perform well included "Goagain" in the swing keels, "F Troop" in the dk's and "Flying Fox" in the 28's.

It's marvelous how quickly one heals. A lovely sail back down the Great Sandy Strait the following day saw all spirits lifted and batteries recharged. Sailing can do that to you.

Just wait till next year.