

44th Bay to Bay Report - Race Officer Colin Verrall ph 0427 628 511

The 44th Annual Bay to Bay Trailable Yacht Race attracted 101 entries.

There is a mixed bag of reasons why trailable yacht owners participate in the forty four Bay to Bays to date from strictly racing all the way to an organized way to cruise from Tin Can Bay to Hervey Bay through the largely wilderness area of the Tin Can Inlet, Wide Bay Harbour and Great Sandy Strait the details of which will never be fully told, known or understood.

Despite all I have said below, except for a couple of self-interested comments about PBH ratings and combining Careel 18s and Careel 22s for the purpose of inclusivity for the Careel Class trophy all those who have contacted me or I have contacted have heralded the 44th Bay to Bay a success with typical comments such as 'Great event, brilliantly organised and thanks for the message with my result' 'Just wanted to congratulate yourself, volunteers and race committee on a brilliant weekend, in trying conditions.'

Attention was drawn to the hazards that might be faced during a Bay to Bay, the serious uncontrolled consequences and the obligation of the skippers and crew to decide whether to race or continue to race and the absolute obligation to control those risks to an acceptable level, the fact that the Bay to Bay is a passage event through a largely wilderness area, , the requirement for each competitor to wear a personal floatation device adequate for the conditions, the absolute responsibility for the safety of the boat and its crew, the AS Racing Rules of Sailing Basic Principles, AS Special Regulations Part 1 1.02, the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, The Queensland Recreational Boating and Fisheries Guide, etc was clearly made in the Notice of Race, Sailing Instructions and Check List and at the Competitors Meeting. Skippers and crew were specifically asked to personally assess the conditions, adverse or otherwise that might be faced and make their decision whether to start the race or continue to race, if necessary to reduce sail or drop sails in a timely manner taking care to not leave their decision too late.

Make no mistake the circumstances particularly on Leg 1 Saturday certainly challenged the Race Officer's decision making on whether to abandon or sail Leg 1 in particular and the challenges faced by the fleet and the fleet of no less than 5 HBSC safety patrol boats and 2 Tin Can Bay Coast Guard boats for Leg 1 and Marine Rescue Hervey Leg 2 and 3 Mark rounding surveillance boats on each day as the wind strength varied from about 10 to 15 knots, rising to about 20 knots and gusting to about 25 knots on my wind gauge during the 45 minute starting period and as the fleet approached Mark A, sailed on to Mark B and decreased to about 10 knots or so from Mark C to the finish Leg 1 and less during Leg 2.

Despite some very anxious moments during Leg 1 Saturday according to the Overall finishing sheets of the boats that started Saturday 43 of the 53 Type 1 Monohulls that started Saturday, 13 of the 16 Type 2 Sports Boats and 9 of the 9 Type 3 Multihulls were given a finish time overall.

There was some reasonably consistent sailing within 6 or so percentage of CBH ratings among the first 10 of the Type 1 monohulls, and 7 or so percentage of the first 4 Type 2 Sports Boats CBH ratings and within 8 or so percentage of the OMR ratings of the first 4 Type 3 Multihulls Saturday, Sunday and Overall

The weather forecasts for the 44th, physical fitness and medical challenges of skippers and crew, soundness, fit for the conditions, maintenance challenges of boat's trailers, hulls, cabins,

centreboards, rudders, rigging, sails, equipment safety and generally etc. posed serious, significant decision making challenges with 14 skippers withdrawing from the event before Saturday registration, 4 boats registered but Did Not Start Leg 1 Saturday and 12 boats retired from Leg 1 Saturday.

Illness saw one boat stay on shore at Tin Can Bay, the crew got a ride to Hervey Bay with a HBSC support boat trailer driver, drove back to Tin Can Bay and retrieved the boat.

Illness of the crew of another boat saw an ambulance called to Tin Can Bay, the crew taken to Gympie hospital then transferred to a Sunshine Coast hospital where she stayed for several days. The skipper of that boat elected to sail from Tin Can Bay to Hervey Bay under jib alone.

Uncontrolled broaches in heavy winds in the vicinity of about Inskip point saw the skipper and crew of one boat fall heavily into the boat with the crew sustaining significant injury to the ribs and the skipper a badly bruised bum. That boat returned to Tin Can Bay where the person with rib injuries was taken by ambulance to Gympie hospital then transferred to a Sunshine Coast hospital, with a diagnosis of several fractured ribs and an overnight stay in hospital. The boat was towed in by the Tin Can Bay Chandlery owners Chris and Emma Rippon who arranged a mooring for the boat whilst the crew was transported to Hervey Bay to pickup the tow vehicle and trailer by a HBSC club member.

At about the same time and location the skipper and crew of another boat fell overboard (perhaps due to a broken leaning strap) and were quickly picked up by a nearby Bay to Bay safety patrol boat and returned to the unmanned boat and they retired and sailed on to Garrys Anchorage to spend the night and sail to Hervey Bay Sunday.

One Sports boat had a stay break free from the deck resulting in the mast falling, and in the standard and sports monohull fleet two or more other masts that came down resulting in retirements. Failure of the rudder blade, rudder box and tiller saw three more Type 1 monohulls retire to Tin Can Bay on Saturday.

Several boats probably mainly Type 1 monohulls elected to put reefs in their sails, sail under jib only and either sailed to the finish line or retired to Garrys for the night and return to Tin Can Bay or other convenient landfall or sail on to Hervey Bay Sunday.

Despite all of that with the process of Registration, Sign On Snapper Creek, Sign Off southern Entrance to Garrys, recording boats rounding Mark B, sailing through the Finish line, a couple of hours of making VHF radio calls, phone calls to event mobiles, emergency contact numbers there was a high level of confidence Saturday afternoon, evening that all skippers and crew were accounted for and safe and all boats except the swamped Type 1 monohull that was left overnight on the sand bank on the eastern side of the Tin Can Inlet about opposite the Teebar Creek safely returned to landfall or overnight anchorage Saturday. The owner, crew of that boat admitted they did not have the centreboard pinned down so the boat was not properly ballasted at the time of an uncontrolled broach, knock down, the centre board fell into the boat, the boat did not self right but rolled upside down however the boat remained on the surface due to sufficient, watertight buoyancy, however when the boat was eventually righted the cabin was awash with water in the cabin and cockpit up to the companionway into the cabin, attempts to pump the boat out were unsuccessful. The owner and crew elected to leave the boat anchored on the sandbank overnight. They returned on Sunday, bailed the water out with two two gallon buckets, towed the boat back to Tin Can Bay and the boat was seen in the boat, trailer, car park safely on the trailer on Sunday. The wallets, mobile phones etc. were not in a waterproof satchel resulting in major inconvenience.

Several boats elected to cruise the area before and after the event with one boat returning to Tin Can Bay Yesterday Sunday 11 May.

Despite the inclement weather, only two thirds of the fleet recording a finish and the late relocation of the presentation held at Kondari it was well attended despite the rain. George Duck and Gail Ciavarella from the boat club presented the majority of 66 trophies that were awarded to the winners. There were several highlights one being Harken Kids on boats awards where 4 lucky children from participating boat won a water proof bag containing Harken goodies like sun glasses, gloves, etc. Another highlight was the sportsman ship award presented to 92 year old Felix Napret. Felix was the forward hand on his sons Happy Wanderer during the race. Several volunteers from from the TCBYC and HBSC were presented with whale watch vouchers. The presentation ended when the raffle was drawn, a Lismore man Sonny Garady won the Bay City Marine Mercury, he was so excited he kissed the motor. Congratulations to the other Raffle winners.

Until Next Year Col