



ROLEX SYDNEY HOBART YACHT RACE

NEWS RELEASE

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Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race: Last minute checks – then they're away

The dock at the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia is teeming with spectators and competitors this morning as the crews load up their supplies and make final adjustments before what is expected to be a fast start to the Rolex Sydney Hobart starting at 1pm.

Sydney Harbour will be at its sunny best when hundreds of spectator boats will line the race course to the Heads, and tens of thousands of onlookers will cram the foreshore to watch the yachts start in a fresh nor-easter.

They will fly down the coast under spinnaker this afternoon, in strengthening northerly winds before a southerly change moves through Bass Strait and up the coast tonight, according to the Bureau of Meteorology's latest forecast.

The good news for the skippers and navigators at the final weather briefing this morning was that the southerly change will be lighter than expected, around 10 to 15 knots, and on Tuesday winds will back around to the north again, earlier than the models were forecasting before Christmas.

In the race for line honours, conditions seem to favour the slim Wild Oats XI, but David Witt, skipper of Seng Huang Lee's Hong Kong entrant, Scallywag, is also delighted with what he heard this morning.

"If I had to write a forecast for us, it would be this one," he says. "Light air just forward of the beam really suits us."

Witt believes Scallywag could easily break Wild Oats XI's race record. "Our routing puts us at the Iron Pot (at the mouth of the Derwent River) in 1 day 11 hours. That gives us 7 hours to do 14 miles and beat the record."

Rival skipper Anthony Bell on Perpetual LOYAL is less joyful. His beamy, powerful super maxi wanted as much time to windward as it could get. He does not need a short lived southerly – more a nice long one.

"We'll have to be a lot more tactical and bear more risk to use the better points of our boat. We'll have to sail away from the fleet to find more power reaching that will give us better boat

speed.”

The hardest part of this race for every boat this year will be the Tasmanian Coast and the notoriously fickle and cruel Derwent River. There is a lot of light wind down there and potentially windless holes that could park a boat for hours, while her contemporaries sail through with breeze.

Line honours and the overall winner could both well be decided in Storm Bay and on the Derwent.

“Back when we won in 2011, the front boats showed us where the holes were and it was pretty simple; we just had to sail away from that,” Witt ended.

The start of the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race will be broadcast live on the Seven Network throughout Australia.

Mobile phone/portable device: If you are out and about, you can, in Australia, stream the broadcast of the Rolex Sydney Hobart LIVE on the PLUS7 App, available at the App store and via Google Play for android users.

Webstream: There will be a stream of the Channel 7 live broadcast available on the Rolex Sydney Hobart website. This will not be geo-blocked, therefore international viewers should use this to watch race start.

Additional ways to watch the start: Fox Asia will be live broadcasting, check local guides for details.

Once the broadcast concludes at 2pm EADT, you can follow the race via the yacht tracker on the Rolex Sydney Hobart website. After the conclusion of the live Channel 7 broadcast, it will be available for viewing later through the race website.

By Jim Gale, RSHYR media

ENDS

Photo Captions & Credit:

BOM's Jane Golding giving the final race briefing at the CYCA this morning - credit ROLEX/Daniel Forster

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