



## **ROLEX SYDNEY HOBART YACHT RACE**

### **NEWS RELEASE**

**27 December, 2016: 1800hrs**

#### **Act 1 builds to a climax in Rolex Sydney Hobart**

Less than a day and a half after the fleet left the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia in Sydney to begin the 2016 Rolex Sydney Hobart, excitement is building as Act 1, the race for line honours, hurtles towards resolution.

The crack crew on Anthony Bell's super maxi Perpetual LOYAL is storming down the Tasmanian east coast, and at this stage looks every chance of smashing her long-time rival, Wild Oats XI's 2012 race record of one day 18hrs 23mins 12secs.

With 130 miles to go, Perpetual LOYAL is 50 miles ahead of Wild Oats XI's position in 2012. At her current 16 knots, Anthony Bell's big black super maxi is set to arrive in Hobart between midnight and 2am. She needs to be in Hobart before 7:23am tomorrow morning to claim the record.

The NSW 100 footer still has to round Tasman Island, cross Storm Bay and negotiate the notoriously fickle Derwent River in the dark, but the forecast is pointing towards a fresh north-easterly breeze throughout the night, even on the Derwent River, which usually shuts down at night.

All the omens seem to be pointing towards a triumph that would wash away the bitter disappointment of Perpetual LOYAL's failure to finish the 628 nautical mile race in the last two years.

Second placed V70 Giacomo is trailing by 16 miles, and will be hard pressed to take much time out of that in the hours remaining. It would seem that all Bell has to do now is to keep his boat in one piece, and pray that the wind gods don't suddenly take a fancy to surprise endings. But he does have six or seven hours to play with for that record.

For the second year running, Perpetual LOYAL lead the fleet out of Sydney Heads, though she trailed Wild Oats XI down the NSW coast in conditions that better suited Bell's sleek, silver grey rival.

However, the accountant and his crew never lifted their foot off the pedal, applying as much pressure on the leader as they could, and this morning Wild Oats XI cracked, forced out with a hydraulic ram problem with their canting keel.

New Zealander Jim Delegat's V70 Giacomo is expected to dock an hour or so after Perpetual LOYAL, also well inside the 2012 record.

Giacomo will become the boat to beat for overall honours as Act 2, the battle for Australian yachting's supreme title of Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race winner begins in earnest.

At present, Giacomo holds a big lead in the overall standings, but Delegat and his crew will have to endure a long wait at the dock, as the mid-size and smaller boats continue to race in Bass Strait and off Tasmania, before they will know if their triumph was more than fleeting.

But all that is for tomorrow - tonight it is all line honours.

Giacomo holds a handy 12 nautical mile lead over third place, the super maxi, Scallywag, which is followed by the Volvo Open 70 Maserati, 80 foot Beau Geste, V70 Black Jack, the Ker 56 Varuna VI and CQS.

Incredibly, it is conceivable that all of these could finish inside the old record. That is how fast this race has been. We will know all in a few hours, but right now we know one thing for certain. Act 1 is Perpetual LOYAL's to win or lose.

**By Jim Gale, RSHYR media**

**\*\*\*Ends\*\*\***

**Photos and captions:**

Perpetual LOYAL is coming closer to her goal – ROLEX/Daniel Forster

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