



## **ROLEX SYDNEY HOBART YACHT RACE**

### **NEWS RELEASE**

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#### **Rolex Sydney Hobart: Adrienne Cahalan makes history with 25<sup>th</sup> race**

Adrienne Cahalan was one of the many history makers in the 2016 Rolex Sydney Hobart, she was the first woman to achieve the 25 Sydney Hobart race milestone when she sailed over the finish line aboard Ragamuffin, the TP52 skippered by Brenton Fischer.

We caught up with the renowned navigator and author dockside after her 25<sup>th</sup> to talk about her achievement and what it means for women in ocean racing.

What would you like to say to young girls and women of any age who have aspirations of offshore racing?

"I think the important thing is to go and tell people and boat owners you're interested, committed and want to give it a go. You need to make sure you tell them your strengths, not your weaknesses, because they will find that out, if they exist.

"The main thing is, you've got to persist, whether you're male or female. It can be difficult to get in, especially if you're cold calling and trying to get into it, like I did. But sailors are very friendly and they always want to help and they love having enthusiastic crew members.

"Sailors need to be team people, you don't need to come in early on and put your stamp on things. When you come into it for the first time you just need to sit back and listen, take it all in, and then hype up when you think it's the right time. Don't try to be everything to everybody. You're part of a team, so you just do your job to the best of your abilities.

"And don't be discouraged, because everyone makes mistakes, and that's how you progress. One thing you always try and do is sail with people who are better than you, then you try and rise to their level. They will bring you up and sweep you up with them.

"Women, we're not physically as strong, I mean some women are, but generally we're not. So you just have to show your other strengths and show them your confidence. Having women in crews shows a lot of diversity and a different perspective - and we're nice people."

On the race:

"This was so totally different to any other race we've done."

"I was happy when I left the dock (discussing the north-easterly winds). The first night was pretty rough though, particularly in Bass Strait - there was a bit of current there. It was quite bumpy.

"We had a bit of everything in this race, we were stopped and then we were racing downwind, flying down at record speed. It was quite a mixture. And then the Derwent was a chance for everybody, I think.

"When you're going across Bass Strait, at 12-15 knots downwind, it's pretty nice conditions.

"We missed the first transitions, we fell off the back of the pack, which we were really disappointed about. The first night we had a blow out – we blew out some sails. So after that, falling off the back was kind of it for us. We did work hard to get back into it; we caught up a few places and so that's always a good goal to get back into it."

On her 25th:

"It was a special moment to get to 25 - I can't believe that I've done it 25 times. But, you know, when I think about all the different teams and different experiences, it does make the Derwent easier. When I was on the 100's (super maxis), when we won the triple (on Wild Oats XI), both times it worked for us in the same way it worked for these guys (pointing to LOYAL). I guess I realised that you can't win every race.

"I think back to coming up the Derwent in 2001 on Nicorette when we got overtaken by Assa Abloy, I used that strategy today when we were coming up the Derwent to get around a few boats. It's just a bank of experiences and memories.

I've had such good runs to Hobart: "2005, 2009 and 2012"

Other standout moments:

"The first one, because it is the first one. There is something about getting here for the first time. We got here on New Year's Day and it was a really tough race. Then 2000, line honours. That was a really big moment to cross the line with Ludde Ingvall on Nicorette.

"Then in 2005 to win overall and take the triple – record, line honours and overall win."

First ride, what was it, how did it come about?

"It was on Mystic Seven an SNS36, there were only six of us on board, it was Neville and Val Chidgey - who I spoke with again when I came down here to do my 25th. They had done eight or 10 Hobarts between them with paper thin wet weather gear. So it was a very different experience. We only had six on board then, this year we had 15 on Ragamuffin.

"One of the greatest things about this 25 years has been all of the teams I've sailed with. You make lots of friends. One of the funny things is, some of those are on the winning boat and others are on the losing boat. We've all had different shared experiences of winning and losing."

How did you get the first ride?

"1984, I just hung around the yacht club until someone would take me. And I think someone pulled out at the last minute, so I got my first ride a couple of weeks before the start. I was very determined and that's what you've got to be.

"The technology has changed quite a lot with electronics. There were no computers, everything was done with compasses and headlands. And then the material of the sails, the types of boats and what we wore."

As predominantly a skipper and steerer, when did you start navigating and why?  
"I was always interested in navigation," the Maritime lawyer says.

"Actually, in 1984 I was doing courses at TAFE and so I kept in touch with my navigation teacher until he passed away. I have always had an interest in that, it's just that my first opportunities weren't in that position. I had been a helmsman before a nav opportunity opened up.

"Since then, I have sort of been labelled as that since 1992-3, but it's very enjoyable.

"I still steer. On the 100s I don't, but that's one of the enjoyable things about being on the 52s and smaller boats, because you get to do a bit of everything."

**By Di Pearson, RSHYR media**

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

**Photos and captions:**

Adrienne Cahalan – a history maker – credit ROLEX/Daniel Forster

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