

2022 Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race

Race report – James Dagge (Navigator, Overall winner *Celestial*)



This race provided some of the best downwind conditions we have seen for a long time. From a few weeks out, the main models were threatening a sled ride and we weren't disappointed.

There was a weak southerly change that passed through late at night on 24 December, which paved the way for a persistent left shift to a building strong North Easter.

Whilst the predominant models were very stable with the forecasted direction, there was a 13 knot split in the max gusts forecasted, ranging from 40 to 53 knots.

The upper atmosphere was quite stable for the initial portion of the race, and given the wind favoured a very large range of the fast yachts, oceanography and staying in the strongest current was likely to be the key to winning.

There were several corridors of strong southbound current, which really helped to keep the sea state manageable given the strong breeze.

Managing the current transitions was very important and the top TP52s all played the game very well.

A strong front was due to approach Tasmania on the afternoon of 28 December, so the key was to get to the corner before it arrived.

Unfortunately that was not an option for the smaller boats, with much of the fleet experiencing a very strong headbutt along the Tasmanian coast.

The River Derwent, as usual, provided some of the hardest sailing of the whole race, with 45kt gusts of cold air coming straight down Mt Wellington, and given the narrow width of the river, it meant there was little in the way of forewarning before those squalls hit.