

GANT



GANT Portsea Cup – Saturday 5 January 2019

The GANT Portsea Cup started with its breakfast for sailors, with John Bertrand AM and Andrew Plympton AM holding a very insightful discussion, including the history of the race that dates back to the 1980s when the movement to restore these traditional working boats started.

As insurance against adverse weather, (there was a Gale Warning the day before), the race was initially scheduled at 1200hrs. With suitable conditions predicted for a traditional 1400hrs warning signal, the race was rescheduled.

Across at Portsea an 8-12 knot southerly was oscillating 20 degrees right and 20 degrees left combined with a 1.3 knot flood tide at race time.

Racing off Portsea is pretty compact. The Race Committee laid a mark off Portsea as close to the pier as possible and then set the start line as far away as possible, while leaving a prestart lane that was clear of the shipping channel. This gave a 0.75 nautical mile first beat with a 0.22 nautical mile start line. We had the course boat Davey going to all sorts of positions to see what we could fit in and determined we could drop the leeward mark in below the start line to give a 0.78 2nd beat and we laid the wing mark on that basis.

A course axis of 180 was set, from *Volunteer* this meant the top mark was on a bearing of 165, and from the pin it was 185. That gave us a balanced, tide compensated first beat. We still had to bias the pin end up to allow for tide at the start, so it was set 110.

At the prep signal, the breeze was in the right-hand phase and reading 200 and felt like we were heading for the first start as a general recall but it swung back to 185 just before the start and only two boats were OCS. *Lisa* had been clearly OCS for 15 seconds and *Jocelyn* just pulled the trigger a couple of seconds too early. The rest of the fleet spread evenly along the line.

32 Couta Boats to battle the shifts, splitting pretty evenly to the left and the right a third of the way up – which was the right call?

Div 2 were right up to the line, but in smaller boats and with only 18 of them there was more room for everyone.

Rhapsody read the first leg the best and lead around the wing and down to the bottom, while *Morning Star* was shining in Div 2.

It was pick-a-side again on the second beat and with a bit more left only a few boats came out on the port gybe of the first run.

A new top mark was laid at 195 and signalled from *Volunteer* down the bottom, initially with a numeral 1, then just the C and green and finally with a numeral 2 when transferred to *Red Ron*, as the boats on different laps rounded the mark.

Rounding the bottom mark, it looked like *Nepean* had gone a bit wide and left a gap for *Jocelyn* on her stern to sneak through. She hadn't - it was just a good tactical rounding. International Judge Paul Pascoe was umpiring the mark and tracked the incident until the boats luffed and the gap closed. *Volunteer* was right in the gap when the boats luffed and reported the light contact and red flag displayed. We're pretty sure this is the first time a Cheviot 32 from the Wooden Boat Shop has been used as an umpire wing boat. It was found to be quite comfortable and with coffee machines and fridges on board it could become a new favourite of the Umpires!

Jocelyn took her second penalty from the race officials for the day (OCS is a penalty) and set off again upwind on the snakes and ladders course.

The tide had changed by this stage, so the old and new marks looked quite close – with the tide change in the deep water with a long warp, the original mark had travelled 7 degrees to the right. This race had everything; no two legs were the same.

The new mark position meant the run was pretty straight and boats were polling out on both sides, so it was a really tactical run this time. The final triangle was a pretty odd sight as the tide was really starting to ebb and we had the most unusual image where boats on each of the reaches were polling out.

The finish line was offset a bit to the right and above of the windward mark because we needed a bit of runway after the finish before we got into the Bertram Mooring field and once again the breeze was swinging 20 degrees left and right with some really soft patches of breeze littering the final work. The tide was also ebbing at 1.6 knots, just for an extra challenge.

In Division 2 it was an epic match race between *Morning Star* and *Aliscia* for Line Honours with *Aliscia* just holding on through the soft patches to take the gun and then *Jocelyn* charged in to take the out Division One, having picked all the ladders after her initial setbacks.

With no two boats the same in the historic 50 boat fleet, the GANT Portsea Cup is all about the performance handicap result.

Mid-fleeters *Darney* and *Harriet* had picked the ladders too. *Harriet* came charging to the line with her new starboard tell-tales proudly streaming. Had they been declared as new equipment? Fortunately, yes and the Handicap Committee, after initially publishing a 0.020 handicap increase, had given her the all clear with no adjustment. If the sailors are out for fun, why can't the Officials have some fun too?

Darney had been up there all day, and back at the Club the word on the deck was that *Darney* had to have the win.

The Portsea Cup has been running a simple limited umpiring system which still allows protests for incidents not seen or signalled by an umpire, and has developed to become very effective in reducing damage and incidents since its inception 5 years ago.

Final Results

LINE HONOURS

Div 1

C2014 *Jocelyn* - Mal Hart

C2013 *The Barra* - Howard Critchley

C86 *Wagtail* - Nick Williams

Div 2

C33 *Aliscia* - Michael Cantwell

C157 *Morning Star* - Rhys Tucker

C1922 *Jessamine* - Nicki Liemant

HANDICAP

Div 1

C03 *Darney* - Wayne Parr

C70 *Jennifer* - Mark Waterworth

C2013 *The Barra* - Howard Critchley

Div 2

C125 *Harriet* - Sean Chalmers

C135 *Waltzing Matilda* - Matthew Jones

C99 *Joan* - Rob Tucker