



Ensign Yachts QLD Beneteau Cup - Brilliant finish to light weekend

Like



'Gary McCarthy and his Brilliant Pearl team celebrating first place - Ensign Yachts QLD Beneteau Cup' Tracey Johnstone ©

Consistent sailing in the light conditions of this weekend's the Ensign Yachts Queensland Beneteau Cup has delivered Mooloolaba's Gary McCarthy and his Brilliant Pearl team their first regatta win.

A second in the passage race yesterday, a disappointing fourth in the first windward/leeward race today, but then a firm third place in the second race later in the day cemented the team's place on the podium.

'The second race today was good. We had a great start and an excellent first work as the breeze steadied to seven knots,' McCarthy said. The only trouble in the race for the team was when crewman, Sue Rasmussen, fell down the front hatch at the end of the second spinnaker hoist and hurt her ribs.

'Our new Quantum sails worked really well in the conditions. I also feel very proud of my team and what they achieved this weekend', an excited McCarthy said on hearing the overall results.

Finishing in second overall was Mark Hipgrave's 36 footer, The Healer. After a fifth and then a sixth, their first place in today's final race ensured they moved right up the ladder.

'The first race was very tricky. At the top mark it was five knots of wind with one knot of tide against us. In the second race it was pretty straight forward. The only hiccup was we put the spinnaker up sideways. I have only myself to blame as I packed it. The courses were good and it was great weekend.

'We had a boat from Hobsons Bay, another from Gladstone and a big fleet. It was a good regatta and professionally run', Hipgrave said.

Greeted this morning with a light cloud cover, flat water and soft breeze out on Moreton Bay the fleet of 25 boats competing the Ensign Yachts Queensland Beneteau Cup were clearly in for a frustrating day.

With the breeze flicking about 40 degrees before race one, race officer Bruce Kellerman held the fleet back for half an hour. Setting up for the start, a short delay was called as another crab pot appeared in the middle of the start line. The pin end boat was called into action and the offending pot dragged away from the line.

Splitting the ten degree difference in wind readings off the start and top mark boats, Kellerman finally sent the fleet off on the first of the two windward/leeward races scheduled today. Struggling with slow boat speed it was Tom Faragher's First 44.7, Ultimate Positioning, with Jane Virtue and Dave Waller's First 50, The Matrix, leading the fleet at the gun. Gary McCarthy's First 34.7, Brilliant Pearl, also found enough speed to clear the fleet, sitting hot on the tails of the bigger boats.

Weight down and out the rest of the fleet drifted gently across the line and up the 1.2 nautical mile track to the top mark. With the fleet tacking several times to reach the first mark, boat speed and picking the small wind zephyrs were critical to stepping up in the fleet.

At the top mark for the first time the brand new The Matrix led, but David Stoopman's First 47.7, Samskara, was only a matter of a few boat lengths behind.

The Matrix continued its lead gaining distance on Ultimate Positioning, who had moved ahead of Samskara on the spinnaker run. Tony Kinsman's First 40.7, Blunderbuss, lost ground on this leg rounding in fifth place.



The smaller Brilliant Pearl was still up with the big boats and looking good for a handicap win. However, a wrong tactical call on the work and then a poor spinnaker hoist cost the team greatly as they slid back in the placings.



The Healer slipping gently around the bottom mark in race one - Ensign Yachts QLD Beneteau Cup - Tracey Johnstone ©

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Race two start for Brilliant Pearl, Ultimate Positioning and The Matrix. - Ensign Yachts QLD Beneteau Cup - Tracey Johnstone ©

As the breeze softened and the time limit of three hours approached some of the back markers retired while 11 boats bravely made it the finish. Greg Egan's Oceanis 50, Sirocco, and Stuart Markwell's Oceanis 423, Alvis, were the last to finish with just over one minute to spare.

At end of race one it was Ultimate Positioning in first knocking The Matrix down to second, Blunderbuss in third and Brilliant Pearl in fourth. This result left Brilliant Pearl in first place overall, three points ahead of Ultimate Positioning. The Matrix moved up to third and The Healer, into fourth.

Fearing another slow race several of the slower boats decided to head for home while the race committee reset the start line and shortened the course to .9 of a nautical mile. With Kellerman looking for a short, sharp race, the fleet were sent off on the second race at 1500 in about 6 knots north-easterly.

Finally, the remaining 16 boats had some breeze to play with. There was a sense of aggression on the start line as small and big boats approached. The Matrix and Ultimate Positioning crossed near the middle of the line while Brilliant Pearl and The Healer aimed for a tight start right on the boat end.

Two hours later the fleet finally headed for home after The Matrix again took out line honours. On handicap it was the 36 footer The Healer in first ahead of Blunderbuss and then Brilliant Pearl. Overall this delivered a first place to Brilliant Pearl on nine points with The Healer in second place on 12 points and Ultimate Positioning in third on a close 14 points.



Ultimate Positioning chases The Matrix in race two of the series - Ensign Yachts QLD Beneteau Cup - Tracey Johnstone ©

Ensign Yachts QLD Beneteau Cup overall results for top 10 boats:

Place	Ties	Boat Name	Skipper	From	Sers	Score	Race 3	Race 2	Race 1
1		Brilliant Pearl	Gary McCarthy						
S	9.00	3.00	4.00	2.00					
2		The Healer	Mark Hipgrave	S	12.00	1.00	6.00	5.00	
3		Ultimate Positioning	Tam Faragher	S	14.00	5.00	1.00	8.00	
4		The Matrix	Dave Waller	S	19.00	8.00	2.00	9.00	
5	2.0S	Blunderbuss	Tony Kinsman	S	22.00	2.00	3.00	17.00	
6		Alvis	Stuart Markwell	NS	22.00	9.00	9.00	4.00	
7		French Bee	Robert Greasley	S	26.00	6.00	7.00	13.00	
8	4.0S	Tuan	Brad Barker	S	28.00	4.00	10.00	14.00	
9		Samskara	David Stoopman	S	28.00	7.00	5.00	16.00	
10		Euphoria II	Marc Stuart	NS	30.00	11.00	8.00	11.00	

Other regatta results

Winner of the SeaSpray Dulon Polish prize was Brilliant Pearl.

Full results at <http://results.rqys.com.au/10-QBC/01RGrp31.htm>

by Tracey Johnstone



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