



Ensign Yachts QLD Beneteau Cup: Small is big in French fleet results

Like



'On the start line in the race day one passage' Rebecca Williams

in the 17 nautical mile passage race.

'She went like a rocket ship. We had a small problem at the leeward mark where we had a communication problem. We were working out whether we were bringing the code zero down or furling it. It ended up half unfurled and half down. We lost a bit of ground on Ultimate Positioning. But, we recovered from that, went up wind and off we went again. The boat felt really good.

'Moving from the 42 footer to the 50 has been a quantum leap for us in technique. Bucky and Yancey Smith from Ullman Sails were on board today coaching, trimming and showing us a lot of big boat techniques they know', Waller said.

The overall handicap winner of the race one in the Ensign Yachts Queensland Beneteau Cup was Rob Smith's Beneteau First 29.5 Lady Jaqualyn. Crewed by team of local sailors with expectations of a reasonable result in today's race, they were elated by their win over the big boats.



Lady Jaqualyn winner of Beneteau Cup race one - Rebecca Williams

Smith said his local knowledge may have helped his result along with having his boat blessed at last Sunday's season opening at his local club. 'We only had a few problems on the course today. One of the crew let off the headsail instead of pulling it on and then another crew member threw our only winch handle over the side. Floating winch handles are really good except when they are floating away from you,' a delighted Smith said on hearing his team's race result.



Race one Line honours winner The Matrix - Rebecca Williams

Second was another small boat, Gary McCarthy's Beneteau First 34.7 Brilliant Pearl with Solo Trans Tasman division winner and local sailor, Jenny Fitzgibbon, calling the course.

In third was the first of the big boats, Peter Brooks's Beneteau Oceanis 47s Neptune.



French Yacht Challenge winner, Flight Deck - Rebecca Williams

There was clearly a sense of satisfaction on the faces of The Matrix team as they crossed the finish line first in the Ensign Yachts QLD Beneteau Cup and French Yacht Challenge.

Launched a week ago and with only one training day, Dave Waller and Jane Virtue's brand new Beneteau First 50 powered ahead of the fleet to take line honours

In the French Yacht Challenge it was Michael Schmidt's little Jeanneau Sun Odessey 32 Flight Deck taking out handicap honours ahead of Bruce Moore's Jeanneau 45 Encore with Lady Jaqualyn finishing in third.

'We really enjoyed today. The regatta is a great initiative. We dressed up in the tri-colours and got into the French spirit today. And, there really is nothing better than beating a Beneteau,' Leeanne Schmidt said. Co-owner Michael Schmidt concurred. 'We had a wonderful day out there. It is great for the Beneteau group

to include other French yachts in the event.'

Heading out to the course area on Moreton Bay, competitors in the Queensland Beneteau Cup and French Yacht Challenge looked like facing a slow, long day.

As Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron PRO Bruce Kellerman set the course inside Green Island, between avoiding the odd crayfish pot buoy and the shallower water on the western side of the bay, the breeze steadied to a pleasant 10 knot north easterly.

With a mix of racing and cruising boats; Jeanneaus, Beneteaus and Dufors, many of the skippers chose to take a conservative approach to the start line. Dave Waller's The Matrix led the fleet across the line. Close on his heels was

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Stuart Markwell's 42-foot Alvis, Arthur Vinton's 40-foot Ocean Blue and Peter Brooks's 47-foot Neptune. Unfortunately Markwell's confident start was dealt a blow with the race committee calling him back on an individual recall.

At the clearing mark The Matrix had streaked ahead of the fleet leaving Tam Faragher's First 44.7 Ultimate Positioning and the first of the Jeanneaus, Bruce Moore's 45-foot Encore, in its wake. Fourth around the mark was Gary McCarthy's First 34.7 Brilliant Pearl and Mike Gibson's 46-foot Curlew. As the smallest of the Beneteau's First fleet, Brilliant Pearl went into the next and longer leg south down the coastline, right on the tail of the bigger boats, pushing them hard.

Cracked off and powering south, only a few of the fleet members chose to pop a kite. Those that did added stunning colour to the fleet. As they approached the finish line, which was moved out of the bay to keep the fleet clear of the inshore dinghy and Etchells fleet racing, the fleet were well spread out.

Alvis, after its disastrous start, did well to catch up, finishing fourth on handicap.

The Beneteaus return to the water tomorrow to compete in two further races on a windward/leeward course.

Race results can be found at <http://results.rqys.com.au/10-QBC/01RGrp31.htm>

by Tracey Johnstone



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