

I have been keen to sail one of the new high res races so I looked forward to the weekend of sailing in what is literally my home waters. The Great Sandy Straits are the front door step of my fishing shack, and where I regularly sail my 20' sharpie, and the Bay to Bay race is the annual sailing highlight. This year some 84 boats raced the Bay To Bay making it one of the largest regattas in Australia. It's a pity we didn't manage that number in SOL, especially given that we normally outnumber the real races in terms of entries.

Though we had a big low here last week, with gale force wind warnings for the area, things definitely returned to normal for the weekend. With winter approaching and the SE/NE trades swapping over to lighter winter westerlies, this race can typically involve lots of reaching and some large wind shifts as the morning turns to afternoon.

Unfortunately I took too casual an approach to Saturday's racing, and with guests in the house who needed entertaining, I barbecued just as a wind shift and new WX came in, and dropped places badly at the end.

For Sunday's race I stayed near the computer, and was lucky to be joined by other top racers like Winston who share with me a manual/visual approach to buoy rounding, ie, stay a little clear of the mark, and wait until you see your boat past the mark before pressing the 'send' button! As a result we had great close racing up the coast of Fraser Island with some small chances to play tiny shifts up a couple of the first legs.

As long as the westerlies are blowing, the key to this race is the tack around Big Woody and the run to the line. Timing of this is critical and with the shifting breeze, can involve a lot of luck as well as judgement. The high res winds are a real bonus in this regard.

All I can say, looking at the results, is that I somehow got pretty close to a good tack and final mark rounding, and in the increasing breeze, just managed to hold onto what was in the end a 2 second lead over Neuroman and Winston, with rafa hot on our tails only seconds behind. Congrats to all and well sailed, and thanks to those who made the effort to sail an antipodean race and ruined their sleep as a result!

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