

# Yachting WA Offshore Committee

## *Media Release*

Tuesday 29 November 2011

### Coventry Reef Race confirms Blue Water status

The Rockwater Coventry Reef ocean race confirmed its status as a demanding blue water event when southerly winds gusting above thirty knots and large seas tested many competitors and their yachts to failing point. Thirty six yachts entered the forty eight nautical mile event, conducted by Fremantle Sailing Club, but only twenty five succeeded in completing the course, around the isolated Coventry Reef off Warnbro Sound.

Results favoured the hardened crews, with Paul Eldrid & Scott Disley's B-W 37 pocket rocket *General Lee* scorching home at speeds of up to 24.8 knots to snatch the Overall and Division One IRC crowns for the second successive year. Trevor Taylor's Marten 49 *Optimus Prime*, which leaves this week for the Sydney-Hobart race, was a mere 96 seconds behind, with Gary McNally's lightweight GP42 *Black Betty* surviving the wild conditions to finish six minutes further back.

Phil Childs' Farr 49 *Knee Deep*, which also leaves this week for Sydney in company with *Optimus Prime*, was quickest around the course but penalized three places for missing a radio position report, an error which cost navigator Russell "Yogi" Balding some good-natured ribbing from his crewmates and opponents.

In Division Two, Ian Holder's champion Whiting 32 *Bad Habits* pushed hard for the IRC win, by six minutes from Anthony Kirke's well-sailed Archambault 35 *Archimedes*, which has re-located to Fremantle Sailing Club this season. Bill Henson's C&C115 *Circa* rounded out the top three, with Bryan Thurston and Hamish Maddern's Sydney 36 *This Way Up* fourth and fastest.

Todd Giraud and David "Dubbo" White, sailing the double-handed Jeanneau Sunfast 3200 *Kraken* against fully-crewed boats, produced an outstanding performance to finish fifth on IRC. Todd & Dubbo's heroics included hoisting a spinnaker upon rounding the reef, when most of the fully-crewed Division Two yachts had chosen discretion over valour. Dubbo's double-handed experience includes the 2009 Fastnet and Trans-Atlantic races on a sister-ship of *Kraken*, and he is working to grow the local double-handed fleet.

It was not only the sailors who suffered in the strong winds, with the hardy finishing team of Lana Kaaks and Rosemary Morrow on South Mole getting a tough time from seas crashing over the mole. Their tribulations included a flat battery from excessive windscreen wiper use and the suspected loss of Rosemary, who had, luckily, taken refuge from a breaker behind the lighthouse.

The offshore program now takes a seven week break for the ISAF Perth 2011 Worlds and Christmas, returning on Saturday 14 January 2012 with Royal Freshwater Bay's Bunbury and Return, Dolphin and John Russell races.

-Ends-

For further information, contact  
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*(Three photos below)*

***Rebel with a cause – General Lee is making a strong bid for this season’s Arcahmbault Trophy.***  
*Bernie Kaaks photo.*



*Hobart bound – Optimus Prime is heading East to take on the best in this year's Rolex Sydney-Hobart race. Bernie Kaaks photo.*



*Hard dudes – the Bad Habits crew found the strong conditions in the Rockwater Coventry Reef Race very much to their liking. Bernie Kaaks photo.*

