



# Harbour to Hobart

Over the past 77 years, the Boxing Day to New Year Rolex Sydney Hobart Regatta has become an icon of maritime sport, with the start of the race in Sydney harbour drawing more media coverage than any other yachting event in the world

**B**orn from a healthy Australian-English sporting rivalry, the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race was initially planned to be a cruise over the holiday period in 1945.

Sydney-born Peter Luke and friends had formed a club for those who enjoyed cruising, as opposed to racing, but were swiftly convinced to return to competitive roots when visiting British Royal Navy Officer, Captain

John Illingworth, suggested it be made a race. Luke and his team set a record that year, which still stands today as the longest time to complete the course, arriving in Hobart 11 days, six hours and 20 minutes. In 1969, while Leader of the UK Government's Opposition, and future Prime Minister, Edward Heath sailed his first *Morning Cloud* yacht over the finishing line at Battery Point, Hobart to win the famous race.

The event has grown over the decades to become one of the top three offshore yacht races in the world, and it now attracts Maxi Yachts from all around the globe. Although the Tattersall's Cup goes to the ultimate winner of the handicap competitions (based on the length, shape, weight and sail

**Above: The start of the race enjoys one of the most iconic sporting backdrops anywhere**

dimensions of the yacht), public attention focuses on the first boat across the finishing line, typically the newest and largest Maxi Yacht in the fleet.

Today, the 628-nautical mile course is often described as the most gruelling long-ocean race in the world, a challenge to everyone who takes part. From the spectacular start in Sydney Harbour, the fleet sails out into the Tasman Sea, down the south-east coast of mainland Australia, across Bass Strait (which divides the mainland from the island State of Tasmania), then down the east coast of Tasmania. At Tasman Island, the fleet turns right into Storm Bay for the final sail up the Derwent River to the historic port city of Hobart.

In 2020, the race was cancelled just seven days out ▶



after a COVID outbreak, so the The Cruising Yacht Club of Australia (CYCA) organised the 2020 online Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race conducted by Virtual Regatta. Almost 166,000 competitors across the globe took part in the online version of the 628 nautical-mile race. This marked the largest fleet and most successful virtual Rolex Sydney Hobart to date.

Entrants had to work through navigation, strategy and planning to make sure all weather variables are taken into account with constant monitoring of real time conditions through the day and night. The Individual Race was won by Taberly-TPN, a racer belonging to the eminent TPN team from France. The Boxing Kangaroos, an international team of virtual yacht racers made up of both pro sailors and amateurs, won the Teams event in the virtual Rolex Sydney Hobart in a tightly fought race.

**Top: Fans enjoy the 2014 start**  
**Above: Overall 2019 winner**  
***Ichi Ban* owner Matt Allen**  
**with Rolex Australia General**  
**Manager Patrick Boutellier**



Back on the water, the race has a long and glamorous history, but like many such races, it has its chequered moments. Amid much controversy in 2017, *LDV Comanche* set a new race record finishing in 1 day, 9 hours, 15 minutes and 24 seconds. Nine-time line-winner *Wild Oats XI* had crossed the line first in an unofficial record time of 1 day, 8 hours, 48 minutes and 50 seconds, but received a 60-minute penalty for her role in a near-miss collision at the beginning of the race and disregard of the starboard rule. *Wild Oats XI* is the first boat to have claimed the treble – race record, line honours and overall winner.

With the extension of Government stay-at-home orders until October 2021,

the Audi Centre Sydney Blue Water Pointscore (BWPS) was rescheduled to provide as much racing as possible and allow for adequate boat and crew preparation in the lead up to the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race in December.

Speaking in September, CYCA Commodore, Noel Cornish AM said, “We were so disappointed to have to cancel the 2020 race

due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Of course, we are once again working through a number of challenges as we prepare for this year’s race. We acknowledge that some decisions will be out of our control, but we remain hopeful that the race will go ahead as planned on Boxing Day. The CYCA hopes to see the return of racing in October, subject to the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions by the NSW Government. Our priority will always be to preserve the route that has made the Rolex Sydney Hobart the pinnacle of offshore sailing over the last 77 years. I would like to thank our race sponsor, Rolex, all CYCA partners and competitors for their support and understanding as we navigate these challenges together.” ■

The revised dates for the Audi Centre Sydney BWPS are as follows:

Race 1	Flinders Islet Race	16 Oct 21
Race 2	Tollgate Islands Race	29 Oct 21
Race 3	Bird Island Race	13 Nov 21
Race 4	Cabbage Tree Island Race	3 Dec 21
Race 5	Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race	26 Dec 21