

# offshore

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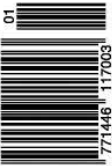
HOW TO READY YOUR BOAT

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Photo: Andrea Francolini/Audi

Quantum Racing took line honours in the Audi Sydney Gold Coast Race.

# 23RD AUDI SYDNEY GOLD COAST HAS IT ALL

The opening race of the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia's 2008/09 Blue Water Pointscore series, the Audi Sydney Gold Coast, sent a strong fleet of 76 sailing up the Australian east coast to Southport in strong offshore conditions, for those crews prepared to venture out.

The 384-nautical-mile race, which set off through Sydney Heads at 1pm on Saturday, 26 July, had everything – a delayed start, light breezes, then a wind change as the fleet exited the heads, strong winds offshore on the first night with bitterly cold temperatures, inshore westerlies and offshore sou'westers which forced make-or-break decisions by the tacticians; stunning lightening shows offshore, wind squalls of 40 knots, and lastly, a fresh west sou'wester which picked up the second half of the fleet and hurtled them to Southport. Whales, dolphins and flying fish provided momentary distractions from racing but the big decision all skippers and navigators had to make was whether to go offshore or stay inside the rhumbline. Those that took the offshore decision were the first home.

The original fleet of 76 representing Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and New South Wales set off with spinnakers hoisted in a blaze of colour and close to 63 hours later, 61 boats had finished. The race also showcased the debut of several new boats including, Chris Dare's *Flirt*, Geoff Boettcher's *Secret Mens Business III*, Matthew

Short's *Shortwave* and Graeme Wood's new *Wot Now*. *Black Jack*, a newly imported Reichel Pugh 66, owned by Queenslander Peter Harbug, failed to make the start line due to a collision with a buoy on Sydney Harbour during rig tuning on the day before the race. Her sistership *Wild Oats X* made the start sporting a brand new rig, but was racing for barely an hour before the bowsprit broke when the bobstay gave way.



Photo: Andrea Francolini / Audi

This then made it a race for *Wild Joe*, the 2007 Overall winner, Ray Roberts' Cookson 50 *Quantum Racing* and a fiercely competitive group of modified TP 52s including Syd Fischer's *Ragamuffin*, *Wot Now*, *Shortwave*, Bob Steel's *Quest* and Alan Whiteley's *Cougar II*, some of whom took the offshore gamble to pick up the pace.

For those that took the offshore gamble they were rewarded with south to south-westerly pressure and boat speeds of up to 20 knots. The lead group on the first night included *Quantum Racing*, *Shortwave*, *Yendys* and *Wot Now*. In the wee hours of Sunday morning both *Wot Now* and *Wild Joe* sustained rudder damage and had to withdraw from the race.

*Wild Joe's* race came to a sudden end when the canting keeled 60 footer ran into a submerged object while running under spinnaker in the darkness. Owner Stephen David reported, "We were surfing off a wave at approximately 1.20am (about 60 nautical

miles offshore) and we had good boat speed of 20-22 knots in 18-20 knots of breeze. We came down off the wave and hit a submerged object. The boat stopped dead and we heard the crack of carbon as we lost the forward rudder. None of the crew was injured and we made it back to Port Stephens.”

By 5am Sunday morning, *Quantum Racing* had taken the lead, where she stayed until she crossed the finish line at 07:19 on Monday morning.

For the twelve crew members onboard *Quantum Racing* it was a tough race. Ray Roberts recalled their race upon setting his feet on dry land “It was a fantastic but tough race. We had a pretty good start and were in a good position with *Quest* and *Ragamuffin* (the early leaders off the start line) and *Yendys*. We continued to battle with the other 50-foot yachts over the first afternoon and evening.”

“During that first evening we had to make a critical decision whether we went offshore or kept inshore. We opted to go with the offshore strategy as we analysed the weather patterns and thought that there would be more breeze offshore. It panned out that we made the right choice early in the race that helped get us into a good position – We needed to continually consolidate our position as we headed up the coast so that when we made our move back inside the rhumbline, we had enough of a lead that if we lost the breeze we would still be able to maintain it.” added Ray.

Ray congratulated his twelve crew members on a great race and also noted that this is probably one of the best fleets he has ever raced against. *Quantum Racing's* crew included Angus Gordon, former Commodore of Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club, Warren Miller, Steve McConaghy, Jack

Newman, Ben De Costa, Stuart Lee, Mark Gorman and Garry Adshead.

Congratulating his crew, Ray said, “The crew sailed really well and tactics that we used made us come out on top. We made good decisions at the right time and it’s not easy to make those decisions as the weather and current is changing constantly so you have to observe the conditions and the long range weather forecast”.

*Quantum Racing's* elapsed time was one day, 17 hours, 59 minutes and 26 seconds for the 384-nautical-mile race.

Bob Steel’s TP52 *Quest* finished second across the line an hour and 11 minutes later after *Quantum Racing*, in an elapsed time was one day, 19 hours, 10 minutes and 35 seconds. Third across the line was Geoff Ross’s Reichel/Pugh 55 *Yendys*, followed by three TP52s: *Shortwave*, *Ragamuffin* and *Cougar II*.

A strengthening southwest to southerly breeze help bring the remainder of the fleet home. The last yacht, Andrew Wenham’s SES *Inch By Winch*, finished at 4.33am Monday morning.

Other division winners were Bob Steel’s TP52 *Quest*, Bruce Taylor’s Reichel/Pugh Caprice 40 *Chutzpah* and Michel Spies’ Northshore 37 *Upper Northshore*.

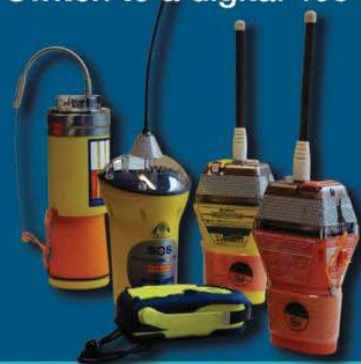
The overall winner of the PHS division was John Simpson’s *Shark Face*, with *Sea Quest* second and *Obsession* third.

In the six-boat Sydney 38 division, *Cockatoo Ridge – The Goat* placed first with Gordon Ketelbey’s *Zen* second and Marc and Louis Ryckmans’ *Tigerspike Yeah Baby* third.

For further information and full results visit [goldcoast.cyca.com.au](http://goldcoast.cyca.com.au) ○

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