



The long weekend in October marks the start of Daylight saving - and also the annual Ladies of the Sea two day Coaching regatta. The LOTS regatta enables women to learn and grow sailing skills and solidify and make friendships in a safe, fun, nurturing and supportive environment. Over 150 sailors, coaches and volunteers representing nearly 30 clubs, 5 states and (even Hong Kong - LOTS is international!) worked together to create magic on and off the water.

The theme of this edition could have been described as "Pivoting and perseverance with Prosecco", a mix of bubbling with fun & learning (and a nod to one of the major event supporters - Mezzacorona - an award winning winery from the Dolomite mountain region of Italy) perseverance to keep on learning and constant "pivoting" to adapt to changing conditions over the entire two days, and the main stage, the ever-sparkling Sydney harbour.

The fun started on Friday evening - sailors, coaches and volunteers were introduced and bonded over special cocktails created by the creative and talented RSYS hospitality team (my favourite was the Limoncello Spritz)! Crews were delighted to receive gift bags containing essential items such as Neutrogena sun cream, Maui Jim sunglass cleaners, sugar free drinks and Marlo snack bars. "First night fever" is always tempting as old friends reacquaint and new friends are made. However, temptation was resisted as two days of learning form part of the fun, meaning an early start on Saturday for Pilates on the lawn led by the wonderful Brittne. Strength and mobility are useful when sailing, and it was fabulous to have RSYS member Brittne Whitelaw not only guide the ladies but suggest exercises to practice at home.

Saturday provided the first opportunity to "pivot and persevere". The sailors split into two groups for coaching: one design and "mixed" (keel boats). During the morning "on shore" briefing then "on water" coaching, the breeze was light from the north west. By the time the morning sessions concluded, mother nature had decided to challenge the crews with a building nor easter! Crews spent the morning settling into their roles on the yachts, receiving coaching, practicing starts and mark rounding's and learning quickly how to look for "signs" of changing conditions and adjust sails or courses to pivot to the new conditions. Many crew remarked that applying the on-shore coaching on crew positions and skills for each position to on-water sailing and racing was incredibly valuable.



The one design fleet returned to the club for an on-shore briefing over lunch whilst the "mixed" division remained on the water. The break provided an opportunity to discuss the importance of all crew communicating information to the skipper in a structured manner to enable the best course to be sailed and in the fastest manner possible (and safest!). Skippers and crews alike remarked how useful these reminders were and the individual observations from each coach as applied to the crews.

The Nor'easter had filled in nicely for the first three races in the series providing a challenging afternoon for some – perseverance was needed! For the one-design crews, decisions included whether to launch spinnakers on downwind legs, noting the importance of the spinnaker trimmer providing information about pressure to the skipper, and importance of one crew calling gusts. Interestingly, some of the crews decided to adopt "safety first", deeming the advantage of a spinnaker at certain wind strengths could be negated in a nano second if mistakes were made! This was another important pivot - whilst it is tempting to launch a spinnaker when allowed by the rules, sometimes the advantages are outweighed by the risks.

All crews excitedly returned to the Careening Cove Anchorage after sailing. After a quick debrief Lisa Blair followed on from her enthralling presentation a few months earlier with an update to the results from all the water testing she performed whilst on her record breaking Antarctic circumnavigation. Lisa's presentation and the excitement of achieving so much on day 1 energised the room. Importantly, the "LOTS signature cocktails and bubbles provided by Mezzacorona no doubt assisted with many stories being told and sailors eagerly tapping into the wisdom and experience of the coaches!

Sunday was always forecast to be hot, sunny and windy – a classic gusty hot dry North Westerly. El Nino at his most powerful. Briefings were held outdoors, reflecting on Saturdays learnings, focusing on rules of racing, optimisation of those roles and plans for the day ahead. Crew reflected on learnings from the day before: such as experiencing a "granny instead of a gybe", a "360 turn" due to the mark mysteriously appearing (those pesky marks moving!) and having to fix a mainsheet block – however the crew was excited to take the learnings into Sunday.



All yachts proceeded to leave the dock in anticipation of a morning coaching, before the remaining three races to be held in the afternoon. However, El Nino had other ideas and after recording consistent wind strength of 25 knots, all yachts were recalled to shore, and the second pivot was needed. Training rooms hastily reconfigured to enable the crews to split into groups, providing opportunities to rotate between sessions focused on foundations (trim, points of sail), seeing & calling (breeze, boats etc), gear failure & breakages, advanced rules & strategy, basic rules, the Sydney harbour courses (and their nuances!), roles on boats at the Start, goose winging techniques, man overboard, and two way communication.

Even seasoned sailors appreciated the opportunity to continue learning. Coaches were praised for their quick pivot, and valued the guidance provided by Coaches. For example: breaking the course into 3 sections: The first third looking for clear air; the second third narrowing the "race track", & interaction of other boats & placement for the final third; approaching the top mark, choosing the best pressure examining the probable breeze for the next leg. A consistent theme amongst all the LOTS participants was a keenness to persevere, learn and keep on learning.

To round out Sunday afternoon, Coaches Bridget Canham and Kathy Veel enthralled the audience with an account of their recent Sydney - Hobart two handed race on Currawong, and their inspiring plans to continue their "two birds" journey - I still feel joy and goosebumps at the footage of their finish on new years eve and pretty much everyone in Hobart cheering them in!

Finally, it was time to celebrate another successful LOTS regatta - switching sailing gear for sparkles and glamour (after a "free salt scrub"!)- celebrating each and every participant, coach and volunteer over a delicious meal and a bit of fun & laughter (trivia - isn't it always amazing how much information we do actually keep in our heads?)?

Coaches and participants were unanimous in their joy after watching so many women continuing learning on their sailing journey whether their aim was to learn to race, or even to build general sailing skills - persevering when challenged and pivoting and adjusting sails to changing conditions (and changing schedules!), learning to sail within their ability, when to push



to the limits (or not) and importantly gain confidence. The joy was captured brilliantly by the official event photographer Marg Fraser-Martin.

Events do not run themselves. Thank you to the LOTS Committee: Catherine Bampton, Alexia Biggs, Karyn Gojnich, Amanda Hicks, Sara Ladd, Kylie Lloyd, Jonathan McCray, Jane McCulloch, Angela Morrison, Jan Newland. The coaches: Lisa Blair, Bridget Canham, Julie Clarke, Annabelle Connery, Nicole Douglass, Karyn Gojnich, Lindy Hardcastle, Nickie Jones, Marike Koppenol, Kristen Kosmala, Peta Noris, Maddie O'Shea, Claudia Thackray, Kathy Veel,

Our volunteer race committee Trish Stanley (PRO), Joanna Love (Timing & Flags training), Kari Svensen, (Flags), David Flakelar, Nina Flakelar and David Ross, (Coxswain). We also had a number of volunteers driving RIBS to transport coaches between boats and also drive our photographer around - thanks to Peter Farrell, Adam Tran, Jonathan McCray and Robyn Tames. Onshore holding the fort we had Alexia Biggs and Jocelyn Webb.

We also had a number of very generous supporters that contributed to the cost of bringing together such a great team of coaches, provided goodies for skipper and crew bags, and prizes for racing and participation. Our Major event supporters were [Club Marine](#), [Sail Racing](#), [Neutrogena](#) and [Mezzacorona](#).

Other supporters included [Maui Jim](#), [Marine Safety Works](#), [Performance Boating Sales](#), [Boatcrewgear.com.au](#), [Marolo Wellness](#), [Diverse Rigging](#), [Boat Books Australia](#), [Hood Sails Australia](#), [Sheets Ahoy](#), [Loulou Bistro](#), [Bamfords Kiribilli](#), [Pademelon Press](#), [Analu - Luxury Italian Interiors](#), [Bloomingales Life Style Store](#), [QE Food Store - Milsons Pt](#), [Pure Pilates - Mosman](#), [Bacari Restaurant Kiribilli](#)

The biggest thanks to rear commodore Karyn Gojnich - her vision in 2019 to hold the inaugural LOTS regatta has expanded exponentially, and as of this year, overseas with representation from the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club! We are looking forward to next year already!

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Ladies of
the Sea