

Race Report – 21 October 2023

First race on the SFS 2023-24 Season from the Australia point of view.

Four starters arrived at the start line off Clark Island and an expected freshening and gusty Nor-Easter. Tangalooma pulled out before the race due to the expected increase in wind strength and the risks involved. Australia arrived at the start line 2 minutes late and after a quick tack and frantic gestures from the start boat, we were on our way.

The small rig proved to be the right choice demonstrating good speed balance, pushing through the dreaded chop caused by the outgoing tide.

It was apparent on the way to Bradleys Head that the tacking angle was indicating the breeze had a lot of north. This leg was not without incident with the starboard Jib block releasing on the second tack, resulting in a quick fix.



After an early challenge by Mistake, Australia hugged the Western Shore to take advantage of the left shift, rounding in the lead at Beashel Buoy ahead of Mistake, Australia 4 and Aberdare. We set our masthead spinnaker for the run down to Shark Island. After the mandatory ‘Granny Tack’, we headed to the bottom Mark retaining the lead over Mistake Australia 4 and fast approaching Aberdare.



On the wind again and the tacking angle was indicating a potential shift back to the northeast. Australia elected to tack early after a Lee Cloth post failed. Once again, a repair took place on the Port tack heading towards Shark Island. Once fixed we were back in the race and headed for Chowder Bay on Starboard, this time staying towards the centre of the course to retain a loose cover on the fleet.



Australia rounded the Chowder Bay mark ahead of Mistake, Aderdare and Australia 4, and headed

for Shark Island for the second time. We elected to not carry a Spinnaker due to the breeze angle, instead working the gusts. Aberdare was closing fast, bringing downwind with them and was 5 meters astern rounding Shark Island.



Australia and Aberdare 'Grannied' simultaneously with Aberdare capsizing during the manoeuvre Australia survived the Granny and proceeded to set the Masthead kite to carry us to the line finishing 1st.

A great race but not without incident with gear failure. All credit to the Australia crew for the amazing teamwork to get us to the line.

