

60th Lexus Adelaide-Port Lincoln Race finish

Scarlet Runner full of beans

Rob Date's Reichel-Pugh 52 Scarlet Runner from Sandringham Yacht Club, with better downwind speed in light and shifting winds off the Yorke Peninsula overnight, was first to finish in the 60th Lexus Adelaide-Port Lincoln race.

Scarlet Runner crossed the finishing line at 0917; nearly an hour ahead of last year's line honours winner Secret Men's Business 3.5 (Geoff Boettcher) from the Cruising Yacht Club of South Australia.

These two biggest yachts in the fleet will probably also finish first and second on IRC handicap corrected time, provisionally with boats still finishing.

Strong north to northwest headwinds of 23-26 knots in Spencer Gulf today slowed the smaller yachts over the last 40 nautical miles to the finish of the 156n mile race. Later finishing boats encountered head winds of up to 35 knots off Dangerous Reef, 15n miles from the finish.

Third to finish was the Reichel/Pugh 47 Shamrock (Tony Donnellan), from the Mornington YC, Victoria. She is Geoff Boettcher's previous Secret Men's Business.

While Scarlet Runner's slightly bigger downwind sails have increased her handicap rating over the similar-sized Secret Men's, they more than paid off in the tricky light air running along the bottom of the Yorke Peninsula.

Her owner-skipper Robert Date said his crew of 13 had changed through every downwind sail they had on board, up and then down again during the night, to handle the variations in wind speed and direction.

"I think we would have changed spinnakers ten times during the night," he said. "Every time we dropped them, we had to re-wool them, so it was a lot of work.

"I don't think that any of us would have had more than an hour or so sleep."

Date said the strongest wind Scarlet Runner encountered was 14 knots, just 100 metres before the finishing line.

Scarlet Runner had passed Secret Men's soon after the start as both yachts set light air Code Zero reaching headsails and genoa staysails.

"We were a bit quicker and just gradually eased away from them."

"Once their lights disappeared we knew we had a fair bit of time on them. I think we had to beat them by about a minute an hour and they have been a bit unlucky because the

wind had died to nothing in Boston Bay as we finished.

“The crew’s been great. So far we are having a great time in the regatta and it’s fantastic.”

Geoff Boettcher said that Scarlet Runner had been very quick on the tight reach to Marion Reef and had saved her handicap time on Secret Men’s by then.

Secret Men’s had tried to run deeper, towards the shore off the Yorke Peninsula as the wind backed from southeast to northeast. “That wasn’t the way to go. We fell into very light conditions and the boats behind powered up on us.

“At Dangerous Reef Scarlet Runner was probably three and a-half miles ahead of us. We were hoping it would go flukey in Boston Bay. And it did, but not for them, only for us. We lost heaps in the bay here.”