

2010 Lincoln Regatta day one

Mishaps dramatically affected placings at the grand prix top end of the fleet in the first day of the Lexus Lincoln Week regatta on Boston Bay, Port Lincoln today.

Conditions were near perfect for the first of the two windward-leeward course races sailed by the IRC handicap division in a light to moderate 8-13 knot sou'-wester.

The Lexus Adelaide-Lincoln race IRC handicap and line honours winner Scarlet Runner (Rob Date), a Reichel/Pugh 52 from Sandringham Yacht Club, recovered from a poor start to win by just eight seconds on IRC corrected time from the well-sailed Port Lincoln yacht Fresh, a Sydney 47 owned and skippered by Kym Clarke.

Only another five seconds behind in third place was Geoff Boettcher's Reichel/Pugh 51 Secret Men's Business 3.5, from the Cruising Yacht Club of South Australia.

The sou'-wester freshened to a strong and steady 21 knots with gusts over 25 that began to damage boats and bodies in race two.

First of the dramas was at the start when Fresh sailed on for some distance before realising she had been recalled for a premature start. That cost her any chance of a podium placing and she finished equal eighth.

Scarlet Runner and Secret Men's alternated as race leader in the race's early stages.

Secret Men's, while leading, was in the process of dropping the spinnaker nearing the second leeward mark of the three and a-half lap course when a crewman fell overboard with the yacht still speeding along at 17 knots. The crewman dislocated his shoulder on being hauled aboard.

Scarlet Runner then blew out her A4 chute at the bottom of the second run. So she had to use her Code Zero reacher down the last run, which although not as effective as the A4, kept her in the lead.

The Code Zero furled, ready to be dropped nearing the mark, unwound from its furler and defied the efforts of the crew to furl or drop it. It fell over the side, set underwater and tore in half.

The crew had to cut the sheets, halyards and tack line securing it to drag the sail back on board over the stern. The ropes wrapped around the rudder and propeller.

"Once we had it on board I said we've got to finish this race no matter what," said Date. So Scarlet Runner sailed very slowly the finish to place tenth.

With sailmakers working overnight, Date said Scarlet Runner would have enough downwind sails to race tomorrow in the single long passage race of the regatta.

"We are here for sailing and will be racing tomorrow even if we've got handkerchiefs sewn together as spinnakers," he said.

At the end of the day Secret Men's Business 3.5 led the series with 3-1 placings for four points from Tony Donellan's Reichel/Pugh 47 Shamrock, 4-2, six points and

Andrew Saies' Beneteau First 40 Two True from the Cruising YC of South Australia,
5-3, eight points.