

A Great Start to the Inaugural Spring Programme Wednesday Wonders Spring 2020

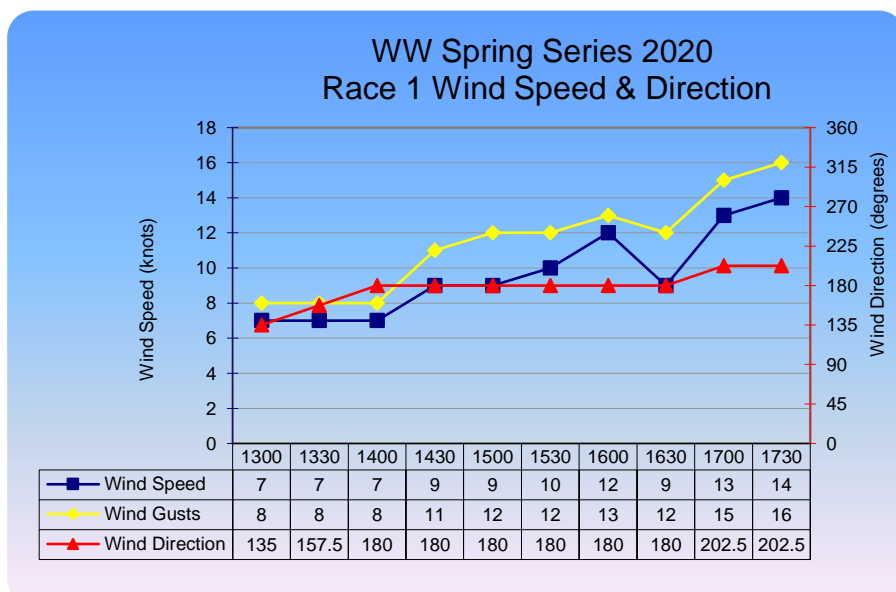


Covid 19 brought an early end to the 2019-20 Wednesday Wonders Summer Series with the final race taking place on 18 March 2020. With such a long layoff without a winter series there was an enthusiastic response to the announcement of a Wednesday Wonders Spring Series. Fifty one yachts entered the 10 race programme starting 28 October. (58 yachts contested the 2019-20 summer series). The programme comprises individual races (no aggregate) and yachts are limited to the number of crew depending on their length. ([https://syc.com.au/coronavirus/.](https://syc.com.au/coronavirus/))

The programme got off to a great start with 27 yachts lining up for the first race. Most of the yachts had taken part in the summer 2019-20 series but there were two less familiar yachts. Both were Jeanneau's – Sun fast 3600 MAVERICK (Anthony Hammond) and Sun Fast 3300 RAGNAR (Richard Ekberg).

There were some concerns that the long winter layoff had taken its toll on some sailing capabilities but that didn't show on the water. The challenge for Start of the Day was as keen as ever with 16 yachts starting the race within 10 seconds or less of their handicap. There was a tie for the best start with both ARCH DE TRIOMPHE and ESPRIT crossing the start line right on their respective handicaps.

The race took the fleet around the 7 leg 9.8 nautical mile course 13 in a breeze that started at about 7 knots, finished at around 14 knots and averaged about 10 knots for the afternoon. ALEX – TEAM MACADIE (Jock Macadie) sailed the course in the fastest elapsed time to win the race by 1 second from ARABESQUE (Milton Green) with SUMMER WIND (Martyn Sly) finishing 3rd. Of the 27 starters, 3 yachts retired leaving the remaining 24 to cross the finish line within 20 minutes 16 seconds of each other.





ALEX was the next to the last yacht to start the race, 9 seconds late for her 56 minute handicap. By the first rounding of SYC 4 she had overtaken more than half the fleet to be in 2nd place. It took her 33 minutes 26 seconds to complete the last 3 legs of the course and took the lead in the last moments of the race. ALEX sailed the entire course in 1:44:41 – the fastest time of any yacht – and crossed the finish line at 16:10:41 one second ahead of ARABESQUE.

ARABESQUE started the race from 9th place 16 seconds late for her 36 minute handicap. She completed the first 4 legs of the course in 1:25:03 rounding SYC 4 in 4th place. It took 35 minutes 23 seconds to sail the last 3 legs of the course and crossed the finish line at 16:10:42 missing out on her first win of the spring by the narrowest of margins.



SUMMERWIND followed up her win in the last summer series race (Jaffa Cup) with a 3rd place in the first spring race programme. She started the race from 5th place 14 seconds late for her 18 minute handicap. She led the fleet around SYC 4 for the first time by a margin of 1 minute 58 seconds. This was not enough to withstand the challenge of ALEX and ARABESQUE in the later stages of the race. SUMMERWIND sailed the course in 2:24:16 and was 3rd across the finish line at 16:12:16. (Photo from summer series 2019-29 race 22).

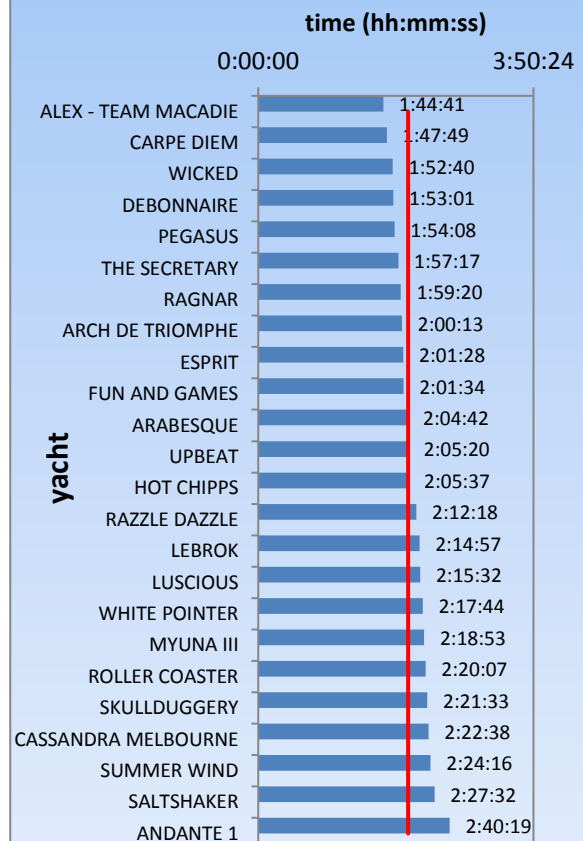
WW Spring 2020 Race1 Start of the Day



With a median start time of 9 seconds this was a good start to the race. ARCH DE TRIOMPHE and ESPRIT started on time. FUN & GAMES (Alan Edwards); SKULLDUGGERY (Garry McCarten); THE SECRETARY (George Shaw) and UPBEAT (Peter Dunne) all started within 2 seconds of their handicap. Twenty five of the 27 yachts started within less than a minute from their handicaps. Of the remaining two yachts; LEBROK (Theo Korbel) was over the line 1 second early and incurred a 5 minute penalty whilst MAVERICK started 14 minutes 50 seconds too late – a record that could stand for the remainder of the series.

The median elapsed time for the race was 2:05:28 with a range of 55 minutes 38 seconds. The three fastest yachts were ALEX, CARPE DIEM (Paul Commins) and WICKED (Mike welsh) with a margin of 3 minutes 8 second and 4 minutes 51 seconds respectively.

WW Spring 2020 Race 1 Elapsed Time





Above left: MAVERICK before retiring from the race.

Above right: WHITE POINTER running with the wind.

Below left: CARPE DIEM on her way to finish 4th.

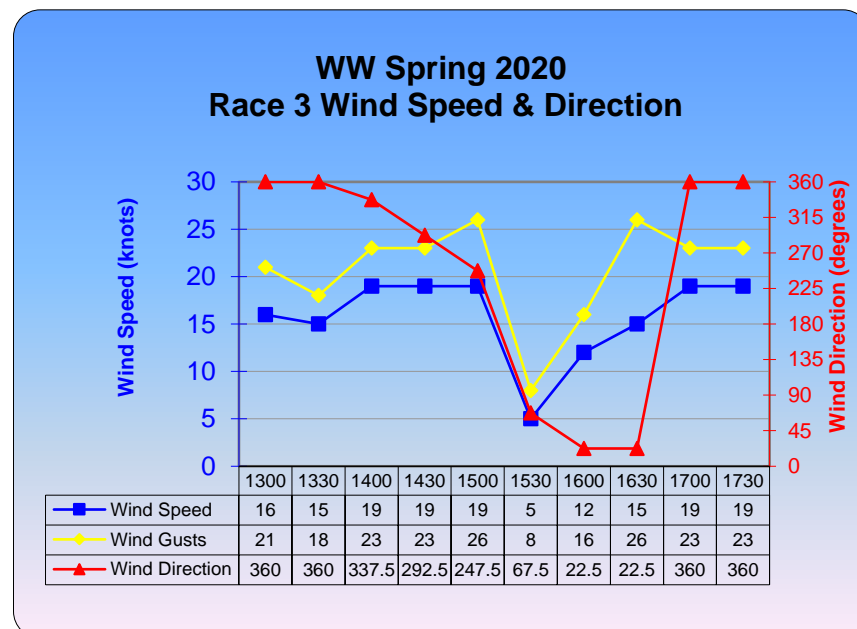
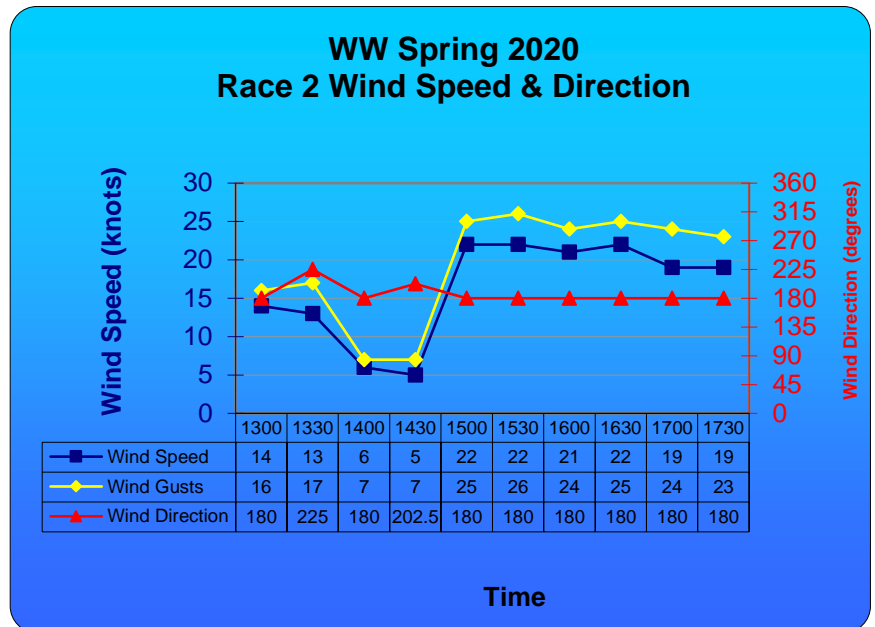
Below right: ALEX and ARABESQUE close to the finish line.



Photos by Bruce Parry

With both races 2 and 3 abandoned, the great start to the spring programme was seriously interrupted by the infamous Melbourne weather. The forecast for race 2 was for “North to north westerly [winds] 15 to 25 knots shifting south westerly in the morning.” By the time the race was due to start the wind had already shifted into the south and was easing.

Some of the fleet had already crossed the start whilst others were left wallowing in a breeze of around 5 knots. Shortly after 1400 the wind increased from 5 knots to reach 22 knots with gusts of over 25 knots at 1500. By this time the race was abandoned.



A strong wind warning was issued for the Wednesday of race 3 with wind up to 30 knots in the late morning early afternoon. The race was abandoned in the late morning. Although speeds of that magnitude were not recorded at Fawkner Beacon there were significant changes in both speed and direction during the afternoon. The wind shifted from a northerly through the west to the south before moving back into the north in the late

afternoon. There was also a significant drop in wind speed from around 19 to 5 knots in mid afternoon before an increase back to 19 knots in the late afternoon. A maximum wind of 23 knots gusting to 31 knots was recorded at Fawkner Beacon at 1417.

Race 4 is scheduled for Wednesday 18 Nov 2020

Graham Finness