



Immediate Release Feb 25th:

2023 Offshore Superboat Championship - Excitement Reigns Supreme

The return of powerboat racing brought smiles to competitors and spectators alike. However, some smiled more, and for good reason, after the first day of Round One of the 2023 Offshore Superboat Championship at Wyndham Harbour in Melbourne. Yes, there were some sad tales, like broken alternators, but even this could not cast a negative spell over the day.

Hary Bakkr from Razorcraft Boats drove his virtually brand new vessel, Nut Case, to an emphatic win in the first race, which meant a lot to he and Shane Paton. Put simply, you could tell by the arms in the air and fist pumps, and they had not even completely crossed the line yet, such was their winning margin. Maiden race, maiden win. Nice.

They climbed to the front of this super-close class, where the speed is limited to 65mph, and the GPS is checked afterwards. "I just couldn't have anyone come up on the inside of me. So I thought, as soon as I had the lead, I have to keep it, and if that happens, we'll get the win. So it was my aim to just stay in front, and it worked", said Bakkr.

"In the second race we were over by two miles per hour, at 67. So that's it, we were disqualified in that one. We saw it, and we were like, well, we've broken out already, so let's just go have fun and punch it. Tomorrow, tomorrow's a new day!"

"It might not have looked it, but there was chop out there. The boat did really well, and Shane is all in one piece. It was a really good day." The Razorcraft they are racing is one of their fishing hulls, and trainspotters will not the seats are 600mm further forward than the production craft. Normally this means you bounce around a bit more. Bakkr refers to the fact that their boats like forward balance, which in turn means the bow is working to cut the path for the hull.

Karl Wall with Mike Ratcliffe had the gloriously yellow Supercat Outboard, The Sting, literally floating above the waves like a butterfly, and also delivering real venom with the best part of 100mph averages around the track. They looked, good, sounded great, and made just about every post a winner. By the time they secured the lead you just knew they were on for a big lead, and it was mission accomplished by the time their 30 minutes had elapsed.

They proved that you can just leave the quay, put the helmet on, go out there and win a race, but remember; there is a lot of racing history that they can draw on. Wall



commented, "It's not bad for a pair of 20 year old engines. She held her own today and it was actually quite good to show these young engines up."

Just like Razorcraft Racing, The Sting did not have it all their own way, either. They needed some wide shoulders early on, but once through, their corner speed was clearly superior to the competition. "We got tangled up a little bit in the washes of the extreme boats, which gave the crews on the outside a bit more advantage to get around." TCR certainly did that, and was the early leader, but soon all were seeing The Sting's rooster tail, about which Wall says, "It was just that boat was consistent every lap."

Today would have been even more special for Wall, as his son (Lachy) would have been old enough to race with him by now, and even celebrate with a beer after wards. It was definitely a win for everybody. "I always think that Lachy's my crew chief, just watching me out there on the on the boat every time we race. I always feel good in the boat when I know that. He's made that boat just an absolute rocketship for me. Every team in the offshore all think of Lachy and they all do tribute their racing to Lachy as well, which is great. The offshore family is a very good family."

Tom Barry-Cotter is the Driver of the Maritimo Racing Supercat Extreme, and together with the inimitable Ross Willaton they showed ballistic power as they blasted away from the start and made the most of their pole position. Two things occurred, in what seemed like rapid succession, which put their plans asunder. Barry-Cotter explains, "The boat felt really good in the first few laps after a great start. We had a rookie error from me, in missing Mark Charlie, where I headed directly to Delta instead. There was a bit of cloud up there in the distance, a boat that distracted me, and the next thing you knew, we had gone past it." Remember that this is at 200kmh plus, so do not be swift to judge...

"Next event was when we were going down the back straight, directly opposite the spot where I had missed the mark on the other side, and the motor just jumped out of gear. It wasn't a nice clean jump out, either, and we could hear something mashing itself up. We'll check the boat over, and make sure dropbox is okay so that we can run for tomorrow."

The drop box is what feeds the power into the surface drive, which is the long, articulated shaft that extends out the back of the boat to where the surface piercing screw resides. There was no oil in the engine room after the incident.

"So the engines running fine, it's just a bit of a gut punch that we'll lose our pole position, and have to start on the outside in position three. Superbad is a fast boat in the straights, and they'll be even better tomorrow. We'll have our work cut out for us as we try to pass two boats instead of having a nice clean run at it", said Barry-Cotter.

Darren Nicholson is the Driver of 222 Offshore, so smart in its Royal Australian Navy livery. He and Peter McGrath on the throttles grabbed the win in the Supercat Extreme Class today. He'd been a sailor before he found the superboats, and said, "It's very similar. Speed's different; same preparation, however. You still have to see the mark,



see your opposition, work out what lines they are taking, and of course, look out for wind. Not so much as in sailing, but if there's a wave at the mark, you think twice about exactly where you are going to turn, and where you want to be on the way out."

Interestingly, in a world so data driven, Nicholson is glad he and Peter McGrath are not face down looking at screens, but rather looking out of the boat and being attuned to their surrounds.

Highlighting this very point, and reflecting on the ability to feel the boat, and all that it is going through as you push it, Nicholson said, "It certainly helps. When I first had a run in with Pete, I don't know, 10, or 12 years ago, he said to me, 'You'll do!' I was like what does that mean? He responded with I'm happy to drive with you because I can tell that you have a feel for what's going. Because if you don't, you can kill me.' So I thought that's fair. You have to have feel, and you have to be calm."

"Anybody can get in there and shove the throttles down hard. No real skill in that at all. It's when to pull it back. That's the hard part and what counts. So feeling, and especially on a rough day in big waves, is critical. Power, and when to apply it or remove it seriously affects the way the boat runs, especially when landing. If there's no power on then, well, it's like having a hand brake on. It can pull all the gear out the back. It'll seriously just drag it straight off the transom", said Nicholson.

Racing continues on Sunday from 11am local time, with two races for the Supercat Outboard and Supercat Extreme classes, and just the one for the Sports65 and Sports85 classes.

Further information at superboat.com.

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Wayne Ruddell waves at his daughter, Tessa, as she flies by on Special Edition.

Offshoresuperboats_Wyndham-6931.jpg

222 Offshore Racing on their way to a win

Offshoresuperboats_Wyndham-7025.jpg

The Sting - Viciously quick on the water. Wonderfully friendly on land.



Offshoresuperboats_Wyndham-8822.jpg

Razorcraft Racing's new boat, Nut Case, with Hary Bakkr driving and Shane Paton as Co-Pilot

Offshoresuperboats_Wyndham-8828.jpg

Colonel Racing – great boat, wonderfully raced by Jason and Scott Kelly.

Offshoresuperboats_Wyndham-9192.jpg

Maritimo Racing were brutally quick before issue beset them.

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