

Newsletter - Sunderland to Whitby Overnight

The NECRA Sunderland to Whitby overnight race this year turned into one of the best ever. The weather was super clear so we had a brilliant sunset lighting up the spinnakers from behind, an orange orb moon rising out of the sea followed by a glorious sunrise. It was a spinnaker reach most of the way, with winds up, down and swirling around. There were dead spots with no wind, wind at one side and not at the other. Boats were sailing away and then stopped. It didn't seem to matter what the boat rating was they were all grouped together and even the slowest could be leading.



Winds were light and fluky but that made for a very captivating and interesting sail. The slower boats ran out of time but the quicker ones were continuously vying to get ahead. Glory Days sailed away from the fleet but then stopped and was overtaken. Tarka, Icon and Madhatter were jockeying to get in front of each other. One would get wind the others didn't and sail away only to be stopped and overtaken by the others.



The wind was gradually coming around more southerly which meant the spinnakers being sheeted tighter and tighter. Eventually well forward of the beam but because it was light still filling the sail. The time just melted away. The sun set, the moon rose, the sun rose and we were still playing the spinnaker sheets. Finally near Runswick Bay the wind was too far forward and the Genoa was needed although it was still just as fluky it was from the south (on the nose). There was more wind and more tide offshore. Do we go inshore or stay out?

Seamanship was much in evidence but luck was also a major factor. There was no obvious right or wrong course but a glorious night of intense competition where 12 hours of sailing flew past in what seemed like minutes.