

Special OTB Safety Information Session

13 Dec 2025

Jenni Maclean, Club Captain



BLAIRGOWRIE
YACHT SQUADRON

OTB Safety Information Session - Outline

- Saturday weather front during racing 6 Dec 2025
 - Pre-race forecast conditions assessment
 - During race weather monitoring
 - What did we do when the front arrived
- Opportunities and learnings
- Safety information



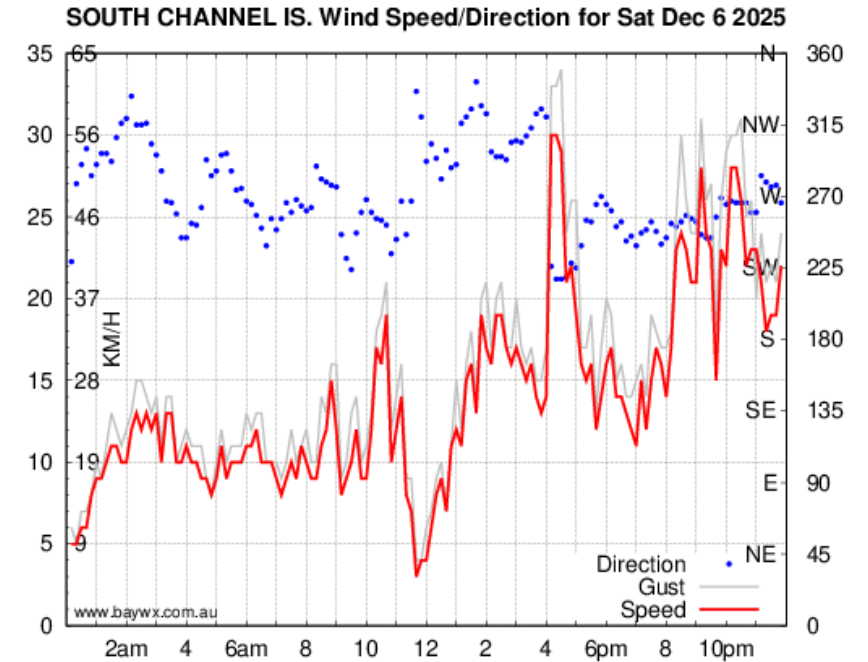
Weather and assessment – 6 Dec 2025

- Pre-race forecast conditions assessment
 - Weather review
 - Sailor briefing
 - Decision making



Weather and assessment – 6 Dec 2025

- During race weather monitoring
 - On course
 - From the tower



Weather and assessment – 6 Dec 2025

- When the front arrived
 - Gusts higher and more severe than expected
 - Race immediately abandoned
 - Course boats directed to position downwind of the fleet – for initial front
 - Course boats commenced rescue and recovery
 - Escalation for external support



Opportunities

- Communication
- Tagging / notification
- Towing / recovery techniques



Learnings

- Cool head – we're in all this together
- Boat readiness hull and sail identification
- Personal safety and clothing
- Communication – biggest opportunity
- Strategies in strong winds: sailors, rescue
- Towing
- Resources



Emergency Response procedures reminders

- Chain of command: PRO > CRO > Course boats
- Escalate early
- If in doubt, call 000
- Emergency services can be stood down if not needed



Sign on and SailPASS

- Sign off and off – OFF ASAP
- Visitors: SailPASS, entry, sign on/off



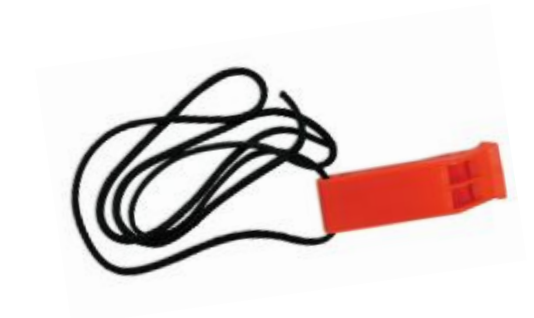
Identification

- Sail numbers
- Hull numbers



Personal safety equipment

- Lifejacket: correct buoyancy
- Easy extras – whistle, knife, spare rope, shackles, and velcro
- Clothing suitable for conditions: dress for worst case weather
- Consideration of clothing colour and visibility



Strategies for strong wind - sailors

- Capsize, sit on hull – wait out front. Traditional ILCA technique.
- Aeros: difficulty in staying turtle – other options?
 - Granny lines
 - Knife and cut halyard
 - Strategies from current aero sailors?



Strategies for strong wind - rescue

- Patrol boat fleet positioned downwind of fleet
 - Crucial if offshore breeze
 - 'Picket line' or 'Ring-fence' the fleet
 - Proceed to rescue and recovery when fleet is contained
- Sailor missing from OTB dinghy
 - Boats blow downwind faster than a person in the water
 - Search upwind from a boat without a sailor
- Priority is always people over boats - sailors AND volunteers



Strategies for strong wind - rescue

- Towing
 - Ask sailor to assist
- Recovering abandoned yacht
 - Personal safety



VHF radio use – key reminders

- Radio Check: On? Volume? Squelch? Frequency / Channel? Hi/Low Power? Dual watch? Lock?
- Listen before transmitting
- Think before you speak
- Press to talk – wait a second before speaking
- Speak clearly and slowly – keep mic out of wind
- Plain language – keep it concise
- Use standard phrases: over, out, repeat, negative, yes, stand by



VHF radio use – Emergency Response

- Stay calm – don't shout into mic
- Emergency comms: WHO, WHERE, WHAT
- Medical – person closest to injured person to call 000
- Report up
 - Incident controller needs help with situation awareness, course boats should report what they are doing.
 - eg: attending to capsized, crew John Smith on board, boat 1234 missing sailor



VHF radio use – Training available

- VHF Marine Radio Operators Course (licence) – Friday 9 Jan 2026 at BYS, \$210
- Marine Radio Operators Handbook – online, free
- VHF refresher workshop – Sat 28 Feb 2026



Patrol boat equipment

Skipper and crew should be familiar

- Battery switch
- VHF Radio – instruction manuals on BYS website
- Tow lines
- Safety kit



Safety kit contents

Skipper and crew should be familiar

- Basic first aid kit
- Knife
- Zip ties
- Spare kill cord – why?
- Torch
- Tape
- Flares (when no fixed VHF)



Resources available

- AS Special Regulations Part 2
- Victorian Recreational Boating Safety Handbook
- Marine Radio Operators Handbook
- BYS On Water Emergency Response Guidelines
- Australian Sailing website
- Volunteer training: workshops, e-learning, powerboat handling etc.

