

## Team Australia 70km/h without a hand brake

Conditions have abated to steady for the weary Team Australia crew now past the half-way point of their Sydney to Auckland record bid.

At 7pm tonight yacht tracker is showing them travelling east at 18.7kts. With a front coming from behind, respected meteorologist Roger 'Clouds' Badham says they can expect 20 knot average winds all night.

At 4.30pm (Sydney time) Team Australia had chewed through 620 nautical miles and made it through the roughest patch of the 1,260nm voyage in terms of swollen seas and high winds, which turbo-boosted the 60-footer to a top speed of 38kts, or 70km/h, without a hand brake.

For the crew, being on deck at extreme speed on this imposing 5.6 ton multihull is akin to being under a high-pressured fire hose. Down below is less fire hose more steady leak with water infiltrating the living space through the hatches and making it tough to find somewhere dry to grab a kip.

There could be another rough patch up ahead requiring a different type of concentration. Light winds are forecast to plague the final stages of the attempt, as the crew make their way around New Zealand's North Island and down the east coast to the finish between the southern edge of Auckland's North Head and the front light beacon of the Rangitoto Channel leading lights.

Skipper Sean Langman measures his ocean conquests in terms of the yachting classic he's best known for. A 23-time Rolex Sydney Hobart veteran, without any of the fanfare Langman took on Bass Strait and the passage record from Sydney to Hobartback in February and set a new benchmark for the famous stretch of water of 29 hours 52 minutes 23 seconds. Today Team Australia completed the same distance, only two hours quicker, and the total distance he needs to cover to again be added to the World Sailing Speed Council's annals is... "two Hobarts".

Five of the six crewmen have settled into a routine while navigator and boat captain Josh Alexander takes naps when he can and eats to stay awake. "The boys have a little rotation going, roughly three hours on three hours off," Alexander said late this afternoon, adding one gripe, "It's hard to teach the young blokes to be tidy, they leave stuff everywhere!"

Today was a day of firsts for a couple of the new crew.

Andy Woodward saw his first flying fish and Ben Kelly drove the 60-foot trimaran faster than he's steered any boat.

Team Australia's sprint to Auckland can be tracked via the website <http://teamaus.net.au/>

Updates posted regularly on the official [Facebook page](#)

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